
Sermon Notes

September 11, 2016

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Bear With One Another

Ephesians 4:1-3

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Promise... Possibility... Potentiality

- ❖ When we come to saving faith in Jesus Christ, we are given a new identity that is overflowing with potential
 - in Ephesians 4, Paul calls us to live up to and flesh out the potential God gives us as part of our new identity
 - "Since this is who/what you have become in Christ, this is how you must live as a result."
- ❖ We must walk in a manner worthy of the calling we have received

The Worthy Walk

- ❖ Verses 2-3 give us five practical indicators of what living and walking in this worthy way looks like

- a worthy walk is built on a foundation of right attitudes in our hearts
- the goal of walking in a worthy manner is church unity!
- ❖ Four pillars on which the unity of the Spirit rests
 - *all humility* [total humility]
 - pride has always been an issue
 - pride lies at the heart of the very first sin and the temptation it came wrapped in, "You can be like God."
 - pride tries to make me think there's something about me or something I have done that deserves praise or glory
 - humbling ourselves requires that we have a right perspective/understanding of God and who/what we are in relationship to Him
 - "They that know God will be humble, and they that know themselves cannot be proud." (John Flavel)
 - *gentleness* [meekness]
 - a quiet, willing submission to God and to others
 - power under control (like the tamed lion in the circus or the horse with a bit in its mouth)
 - gentleness is power that is willingly submitted to the guidance and direction of someone else
 - ◆ when it comes to **me**, I won't retaliate
 - ◆ when it comes **to God**, I will stand up for Him

■ *patience*

- being long-tempered as opposed to being short-tempered
- patient with others and patient with your circumstances

■ *bearing with one another in love*

- "exercising self-restraint and tolerance, enduring patiently, putting up with another"
 - ♦ suppressing something with silence
 - ♦ throwing a blanket over sin (Genesis 9:20-23)
 - ♦ 1 Peter 4:10, Proverbs 10:12
- love does not ignore sin, but it does step in to throw a blanket over sin in order to minimize the shame, embarrassment, and fallout that comes along with sin
- to every fire, you can bring one of two buckets
- because of God's great love for me, I am going to commit myself to loving the other person with a forbearing love that has room in it for failure
- no matter what someone else says or does to me, I will not seek revenge, I will not seek to retaliate
- I will love them in the middle of it all with the supernatural, superhuman love God gives me for them
- I **WILL** seek the highest good of someone else no matter what the price is to me

A Challenge

- ❖ Bearing with one another in love is a challenge under any circumstances, but it is especially challenging when people work intently, intensely and closely with each other for a sustained period of time
 - battle fatigue
 - "I've got you under my skin!"
- ❖ We need to stay on guard and be prepared to resist any of Satan's schemes to trip us up and sabotage what the Lord is doing among us
- ❖ How can you keep on loving and caring about a person who doesn't like you or who rejects your ideas?
 - maintain a posture that is lowly in spirit so that you can patiently endure both their differences and their sins
 - remain aware of the immensity of your debt toward God
- ❖ Protecting the unity of the church will be a natural byproduct of our being humble, gentle, patient, and bearing with one another in love

Personal Application

1. Who/What presents you with the biggest challenge when it comes to bearing with one another in love?
2. Where do you need to seek and apply more of God's grace to bear with someone else in love?
3. If you are suffering from "battle fatigue" ask one or two trusted friends to pray for you to have persevering grace.