

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 6TH, 2022 // BOOK OF EPHESIANS

BEING UNITED (EPHESIANS 4:1-6)

"WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING..."

In the first three chapters, Paul establishes that **we are children of God, adopted into His family.** Now in the fourth chapter, he essentially says, "act like it."

- When we recognize the great price that our freedom was bought with and the name we have been given, **these truths will be evident in how we live.**

"PRISONER OF THE LORD"

When we fully understand how much God *did* for us and currently is *doing* for us, we will want to serve Him and obey Him out of gratitude.

- We do not "walk worthy" in obedience and gratitude so that God will love us. Instead, **we recognize how much He loves us, and we choose to serve Him out of gratitude.**

UNITY THROUGH THE SPIRIT

Characteristics of someone "walking worthy of the calling" include **humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love.**

- These characteristics work together to produce unity. **We are not responsible for creating unity, but we are responsible for recognizing it and keeping it.**

CHARACTERISTICS OF A WORTHY WALK

- **Humility** is to see yourself as God sees you. Understanding that God has placed value on us, but no more than anyone else (Romans 12:3; 12:16).
- **Gentleness** (or meekness) means "power under control." Gentleness does not diminish our power; in fact, it takes great strength to be meek or gentle.
- **Patience** is displayed when we fully trust that God's timetable and ways are good, regardless of our feelings.
- **Bearing with one another in love** is the willingness to put the benefits of others ahead of our own benefit, preference, or convenience.

WE ARE TO BE UNITED NOT DIVIDED

We are one body unified under one Spirit. There is one authority (Lord), in who we put our faith. There is one (baptism) unifying marker as a Believer in one God and Father of all.

- **Anyone claiming to bring a word of God or teach God's truth that divides the Church, is not doing so under the influence of the Spirit, which brings unity.**

BEING DIVERSE (EPHESIANS 4:7-16)

"GRACE WAS GIVEN TO EACH ONE OF US..."

Paul uses Psalm 68, a victory hymn, to communicate the victory that Jesus has over sin, death, and Satan.

- Just as the victor of war would set free those that were taken captive and distribute the spoils of war to their people, **Jesus gives gifts and offices according to His grace and wisdom** (1 Corinthians 12:11).

"TO THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH?"

Verses 9-10 have erroneously been used to say that Jesus descended to Hell at His death, before His resurrection, and completely misses the point of the text.

- The descension of Jesus started at the incarnation and continued to Him being buried. This communicates that **Jesus, the victor, sets the captive free and gives gifts to His people.**

MATURATION AND EXPANSION

Paul mentions four offices established by Jesus to equip the saints for ministry and to build up the body of Christ.

- The diversity in the spiritual gifts and offices work together to create unity in the body. The individual members of the body grow as they are **being equipped**, and the body grows as **others are invited in.**

"HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE..."

- **Apostles** are special ambassadors of God's work, though not the same as first-century Apostles (Ephesians 2:20).
- **Prophets** speak words of God consistent with the foundations of the OT and NT. Modern prophets do not speak with the same authority as first-century prophets, who communicated God's foundational word (Eph. 2:20).
- **Evangelists** are specifically gifted to preach the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.
- **Pastors and teachers** shepherd the flock of God, primarily through teaching the word of God. There are theologians who separate these two into separate offices, known as the five-fold ministry, and some group them together as one office with two descriptive titles.

FIRM FOUNDATION

Paul says when we are unified in faith and knowledge of Jesus and growing into maturity, **"we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching."**

- **We are to be stable, firmly planted on the foundation** set by the apostles and prophets so we are not targets of deceivers.

SIGNS OF MATURITY

Speaking truth in love shows maturity and that we are **"growing into Christ."**

- To grow up into Jesus means that **we continually seek to be more like Him**, who is the head. When we as individuals **seek to be Christlike and commit to doing our share, then the growth of the whole body will take place.**

LIVING THE NEW LIFE (EPHESIANS 4:17-24)

"NO LONGER WALK AS THE GENTILES DO"

The gentiles are those who are of the world. They were ignorant to the truth and walked in the **"futility"** of their thoughts.

- Paul did not claim that the Gentiles had no knowledge, but that the knowledge they had led them to nothing. Because of our high calling, **we should think and live differently than the world around us.**

"BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS IN THEIR HEARTS"

Paul reveals that the Gentiles are darkened in their understanding and excluded from a life with God because of their ignorance and the hardness of their hearts.

- **It is not an intellectual issue but a heart issue keeping them from God.** They outright deny God and become callous from constantly giving themselves over to every desire.

THE OLD LIFE MUST PASS AWAY

Paul is essentially saying that those who have heard about the truth in Jesus know better and should start doing better. The time has come to **put off the old self and put on the new self.**

- **To not do so is like a prisoner being set free but refusing to change out of the prison-issued clothes and continuing to act like they are still a prisoner.**

PUTTING AWAY THE OLD LIFE (EPHESIANS 4:25-32)

PUT AWAY LYING

As members of one body, we should do away with lying or deceitful speech.

- Why would one member of the body want to lie or deceive another member of the body when the outcome is harmful, not only to the member but to the body as a whole? It is not always what we say that is deceitful, but sometimes what we do not say.

PUT AWAY SINNING IN ANGER

We will sometimes get angry. However, getting angry in itself is not a sin. Instead, how we respond to anger can be sinful.

- We sin when we react in a hurtful or harmful way. **Our anger does not excuse sin.** We also sin when we do not address our anger. **We give the enemy a foothold if we dwell on our anger instead of dealing with it.**

PUT ON THE NEW MAN

The new man **no longer takes what is not his.** Instead, he works hard to provide for himself and others in need.

- The new man **watches his tongue** (any corrupt talk). The mouth speaks what the heart is full of (Luke 6:45).
- The new man **does not grieve the Holy Spirit.** The Spirit lifts up the name of Jesus. When we do the opposite, we grieve the Holy Spirit.
- The new man **has control of his emotions.** When situations arise, he is able to deal with them in a way that glorifies God.
- And finally, the new man **seeks to show the same kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness to others he has experienced and received from God.**

PUTTING AWAY THE OLD AND PUTTING ON THE NEW

- **Have our minds been renewed (Romans 12:2)?**
- **What do we set our minds on?**
- **If who we are is to be reflected in our actions, who or what are we reflecting? Do our actions show that we are of the world, or are we showing that we belong to Jesus?**