

A "Worthy Walk"
Ephesians 4:1-3

1. The _____ of the worthy walk: To live in a way that _____ the salvation that we have been given in Christ. (4:1)

2. The _____ of the worthy walk: To live in _____ with one another. (4:3)

3. Four _____ of the worthy walk (4:2):

1.

2.

3.

4.

Discussion Questions

1. Why doesn't the Apostle Paul begin the book of Ephesians with chapter four, but with chapters 1-3?
2. What are the challenges of "preserving the unity of the Spirit" in the Church?
3. In what ways do Ephesians 1-6 help preserve the "unity of the Spirit"?
4. Which of the four characteristics listed in verse two do you personally struggle with and need to grow in?
5. What are some other verses that can help renew your mind (Rom 12:2) when you are tempted to act prideful, harsh, impatient, or intolerant towards your church family?

INTRO:

Let's just take a minute to survey the first couple chapters in Ephesians to see what God has done in the believer's life, because these truths are really important for what the Apostle Paul says in our passage this morning in Ephesians chapter 4.

In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul lays down a solid foundation of Christian doctrine, that teaches the incredible standing with God and riches that believers have in Christ.

Starting in Ephesians one:

- (V3) He has **blesed us with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places in Christ
- (V4) He **chose us in Him before the foundation of the world** that we would be holy and blameless before Him.
- (V5) In love, **He predestined us to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself.
- (V7) We have been **redeemed (purchased) by God through His blood** (the blood of Jesus), and our **trespasses are forgiven**
- We have **obtained an inheritance** (v.11) - which peter says in [1 Peter 1:4](#) is "imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you."
- Verse 13 - "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of the truth the gospel of your salvation - having believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.**

In Chapter 2, We see a Paul continue to unfold these rich truths of who the believer is in Christ through what Christ has done:

- We were once dead in our trespasses and sins (v.1)

- (V4-5) But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.
- And (verses 6-7), He raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And we could go on because there's even more in these chapters...

But these are rich truths that declare the mercy and grace of God towards us in salvation, truths that declare who we are in Christ because of what God has done. And we see in chapter one that it is ought to lead us to the response of the apostle Paul in chapter 1, "to the praise of His glory!"

But these truths are meant to cause more than rejoicing! They are also meant to shape the way we think and the way that we live!

Starting in chapter four, after declaring all these wonderful truths from the first 3 chapters, Paul shifts **to** how these truths ought to impact our thinking and living - especially in the area of unity and purity of God's people.

Ephesians 4:1-3 NASB95

¹ Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The main message from chapter 4 on through the rest of the Ephesians, from which the rest of the instructions in this book flow from is found in these words in verse 1: "***Walk*** in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called."

"***Walk***," is referring to daily living or behavior.

And "*worthy*" - is the word that we get our English word *axiom* from, "*to be equal in weight*."

So the call of the worthy walk is this: to live in a way that matches the salvation that we have been given in Christ.

1. The **call** of the worthy walk (4:1): To live in a way that **matches** the salvation that we have been given in Christ. (4:1)

Or another way of saying it is this... **therefore**, because of all the grace and mercy, and kindness that God has shown you in saving you and making you His children, and because of who God says you are now are in Christ, make that obvious by the way you live.

It is what God has done for us and who we are in Christ that is to drive how we now live!

We see this truth in [Romans 12:1](#)

[Romans 12:1](#) (NASB95)

¹ **Therefore** I urge you, brethren, by **the mercies of God**, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.

In other words, because of all the mercy that God has shown you (chapters 1-11), the appropriate response of worship is to lay down your life as a living sacrifice before the Lord.

As we move forward in Ephesians we see the call for believers to “walk” in a certain way because of what God has done for them and who they now are...

Flip to...

Ephesians 4:17 NASB95

¹⁷ So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

We see it in the negative here, how believers are to not walk ... but they are instructed not to walk as the Gentiles walk.

Gentiles often is referring to those who do not know God.

Why not live like those who do not know God? Because you have come to know God and have been called out of that life. That is who you were but not who you are anymore.

God desires children to live differently than the world. Remember this was the case for the Israelites as well, they were chosen by God to be His special people and were **called** to live differently than the nations around them. They were to be a **light to the nations**.

Look at [Ephesians 5:8](#)

Ephesians 5:8 NASB95

⁸ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

Look at what [1 Peter 2:9](#) says:

[1 Peter 2:9](#) (NASB95)

⁹ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has **called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

We have been called out of darkness and into His marvelous light. We are now children of light, therefore we are to live in that reality.

One more...

Ephesians 5:2 NASB95

² and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Why should we walk in love? Because Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us.

Go back to [Ephesians 4](#)

Notice the cause of this worthy walk in verse 3.

Ephesians 4:3 NASB95

³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

2. The **cause** of the worthy walk: To live in **unity** with one another. (4:3)

To walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called is to walk in unity with one another...

Notice that Paul doesn't say that we are to create unity...

The church has already been made one through the triune God. We see 7 realities of this in verses 4-6:

Ephesians 4:4-6 NASB95

⁴ *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;* ⁵ *one Lord, one faith, one baptism,* ⁶ *one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

Notice the trinity in these verses:

The Spirit

We share in the same body of Christ through the Spirit that indwells us.

We were sealed with the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit of promise through faith in Christ. ([Eph 1:13](#))

And we have the same hope of our calling through the Spirit- “who is the guarantee of our inheritance” (1:14)

The Son

We have the Same Lord - the Lord Jesus Christ

We share the same saving faith in Christ.

We share in the same baptism into Christ.

The Father

We have the same God and Father through adoption, who is over all and through all and in all believers.

According to [Ephesians 4-6](#), God has made us one, one, one, one, one, one, one.

This is true of every believer, everywhere.... God has made us one.

Which is one of the reasons why it is so important to maintain, to preserve the unity that we have.

And Jesus prays for it [John 17:20-21](#)

John 17:20-21 NASB95

²⁰ “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me

and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

This is incredible! ***Jesus prays that we would share the same oneness that is shared in the trinity! That we would be one in each other and one in the Godhead!***

Jesus prayed for it. God created it. And We are to preserve it...

Or some of your translations may say “maintain” or “keep” it.

It is important to do regular maintenance on a car, to get the tires rotated, the oil changed, a tune up every so many miles... because it is important for the overall health and longevity of the vehicle, and that with out maintenance, it will fall apart.

The same can be true of the church, the Spiritual reality is that God has made us one, that is who we are... but that does not mean it is a practical reality in the church.

We know that disunity can exist within the church...

We see that here in the church at Ephesus:

- Paul addresses lying in verse 25
- He addresses stealing in verse 28
- He talks about using unwholesome speech in verse 29
- We see a problem with bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander in verse 31.

These are all issues within the body at Ephesus that were causing division, but problems that were not unique to them but we see issues with unity at Philippi, the Corinthian church, and can be a problem for any church, including our own.

So how can we preserve unity?

We see four characteristics of the worthy walk: humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance.

3. Four **Characteristics** of the worthy walk (4:2):

These are characteristics that are key for maintaining unity in the body of Christ.

And as we go through these characteristics... I want you to notice how these are primarily inner character qualities of a person...

And as we hit on each one, ask yourself the question, how clearly do these character qualities show up in my life?

1. **Humility**

A well-known Christian was once asked what the most important quality that a Christian can possess ... he responded with... “humility.” He was then asked what the second most important quality was... he responded with, “humility.”

This is something that was foreign to the values in the Greco-Roman world. The “self-sufficient” man was applauded and humility wasn’t even in the language of the culture. Not much has changed in the 21st century.

I think of the cameras that linger on the NFL player who struts and parades over another player after making a tackle.

The sports and music and movie and social media world gushes with a kind of **self-orientation** that God is opposed to.

[James 4](#) tells us what God thinks of proud:

James 4:6 NASB95

⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

He is opposed, against, the proud.

God says “that there is a type of person that He is looking for in [Isaiah 66:2](#)...”

The type of heart, the type of life, that He takes note of and pays attention to...

Isaiah 66:2 NASB95

² “For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being,” declares the LORD. “But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

The type of person that God is looking for is the one who walks in **humility**.

Humility is the glue that binds believers together in [Philippians 2](#).

At the beginning of [Philippians 2](#), Paul says he wishes that the believers had the same love and affection, and one-ness that is united in spirit and intent on one purpose, and then he says, here is how you do it:

[Philippians 2:3-4](#)

- Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with **humility** of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.
- Do not merely look out for your own personal interest but also for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4 NASB95

³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

... Verse 5: Have this attitude (this mind, this thinking) in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus:

Philippians 2:5 NASB95

⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

What attitude is that? An attitude of **humility**!

Philippians 2:6-8 NASB95

⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- Christ had all the rights and privileges of God, being God Himself, but He refused to cling to them.
- In humility Christ took on the status of a slave.
- And in Humility He gave and gave and gave of Himself until He gave everything He had to give - His very life.

And Paul says: pick up, take on this same attitude.

The Church is to look different from the world around us in the matter of humility.

Look at what Paul says in...

2 Corinthians 4:5 NASB95

⁵ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

1 Corinthians 3:5 NASB95

⁵ What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one.

What is Apollos, what is Paul, only **servants**... that's it, we are just servants to the Lord **for your sake...**

1 Corinthians 4:1 NASB95

¹ Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

We are servants of Christ... under-rowers on the lowest part of the ship serving our master, the Lord Jesus.

But this kind of humility takes a right view of self, and eyes that are fixed outward on others rather than inward on self.

I was reminded of the rhetorical question that James asks in [James 4](#) as I was thinking about this:

James says to the church: What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?

And he goes on to say ... you want to know why there is so much quarreling and fighting among you, it is because you want what you want and you don't get what you want so you fight and quarrel and murder.

And then he goes on to say you do not have because you do not ask, and even when you do ask, you ask with the wrong motives, so that you can spend it on your own pleasures.

And what we learn from James is that when selfish desires and pride rule the heart, disunity follows.

Let me just acknowledge the difficulty of this calling, Paul says in **all humility**. Oh how we need God's divinely empowered grace to live out this humility in our church.

But I must say, I am so encouraged by this body, to see characteristics of humility on display in the life of the church as you selflessly care for serve one another. It is evidence of God's grace among us.

#2, out of this humility flows...

2. **Gentleness**– some of your translations may say “meekness.”

This word was used in the first century to describe a domesticated animal. An animal that was under control was a **gentle** one.

Meekness is often referred to as power under control.

And that couldn't be more true in the case of Jesus. Jesus, perfect in power and yet perfectly under control.

Listen to what Dane Ortlund says about the gentleness of Jesus:

Dane Ortlund - “In the four Gospel accounts given to us in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - eighty-nine chapters of biblical text - there's only one place where Jesus tells us about his own heart... We read about his birth, his ministry, and his disciples. We are told of his travels and prayer habits. We find lengthy speeches and repeated objections by his hearers, prompting further teaching... Consider the thousands of pages that have been written by theologians over the past two thousand years on all these things. But in only one place - perhaps the most wonderful words ever uttered by human lips - do we hear Jesus himself open up to us His very heart... In the one place in the Bible where the Son of God pulls back the veil and lets us peer way down into the core of who he is we are not told that he is 'exalted and dignified in heart.' We are not even told that his 'joyful and generous in heart.' Letting Jesus set the terms, his surprising claim is that he is 'gentle and lowly in heart... at the innermost recesses of his being - what we find there is: gentle and lowly.”

Gentleness is at the heart of Jesus, and is to be at the heart of His people.

Let me point you to what may be a familiar verse to you that has been used within many homes...

Proverbs 15:1 NASB95

¹ A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:1 “a **gentle (delicate, soft) answer turns away wrath**, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

What does a harsh word do? It pours gasoline on a fire...

I think we know this to be true... I remember this being the case growing up: a harsh word many times receives a harsh word back, which in turn receives a harsh word, which in turn receives a punch in the eye.

But what happens when someone responds to a harsh word with a gentle answer, it is like throwing water on the fire... many times it calms a situation down, or prevents it from escalating.

One more verse on this.. a good one to write down and memorize... this is what the Lord desires...

Romans 12:18 NASB95

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

This doesn't guarantee that all situations will end in peace, it says “as much as depends on you,” but it places the responsibility on us to try and live at peace with others.

So we have, humility, gentleness, and number three: patience...

3. **Patience**- *This is also translated **longsuffering*** – to suffer long.

And it is the ability to endure difficult people without giving up or losing control and fighting back.

I heard someone say: “Aggravating people need to be responded to in the way that God has responded to us because we ourselves our aggravating people.”

Jesus' patience with His disciples when they were argumentative and focused on themselves and argued about who was the greatest was an awareness of the fact that they were still under construction.

And this is true of all of us. What a helpful thing to remember that we are all still under construction and in need of patience as we grow in Christlikeness.

Let me just say this and then we will move on...

It is difficult people that the Lord uses in our lives to produce in us the kind of patience that He desires for us to have.

I really struggled with patience as a young Christian... and so I prayed for patience. And then I was more frustrated when someone would make a comment or stick a elbow between my rib and rub me the wrong way... And I remember thinking, what is up with that? I prayed for patience!

Yep, you did... and the Lord is using others to develop it!

Last one...

4. **Tolerance**

Showing tolerance for one another in love.

In today's culture, tolerance means that you accept everyone's opinion and views while refraining from including your own view that may be different or seem to criticize another's view.

But tolerance here is bearing with, or holding up under complaints or threats or mistreatment of others.

But it is not enduring while clenching the jaw and seething on the inside, but enduring in love.

Instead it is:

- Seeking to love the other person by not snapping back with a sharp criticism, or sarcastic reply, because there is a desire to care for and love the other person well.
- And instead of attacking the person, love focuses on listening to the other person to see if anything they say about you is true or not - and acknowledging and confessing those things that may be true.
- It is looking for ways to peacefully resolve the situation and restore peace.

If a harsh word results in a harsh word, what happens when mutual forbearance is practiced by brothers and sisters in the church? The first angry word is never spoken.

Although this mainly speaks to bearing up under mistreatment from others, there is a need to show patience and tolerance towards others with non-sin issues.

In our body there are different maturity levels, different life experiences that shape the way we view things, differences in musical tastes and styles of worship, and different personality quirks that can cause friction between different members of the body...

Patience and tolerance are needed in the church just to deal with the diversity that exists.

Kent Hughes describes this loving tolerance as the oil of our relationships.

Kent Hughes - "Imagine an engine that has been drained of oil and is still running. It will quickly shut down because of the friction between parts. Likewise, friction among people causes a church to breakdown without the 'oil' of loving tolerance."

I want us to catch one last thing here from the text....

Verse 3 says that we are to be diligent in preserving unity.
(4:3)

Diligence here means "intense desire and effort..."

At the end of Titus, Paul tells Titus to "make every effort to come to me"... hurry it up, rush it along.

This is also use in [2 Timothy 2:15](#) to speak of the effort given to present ourselves to God as one approved.

Paul is talking about having a zealous, intense desire that makes every effort to walk in unity through practicing humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance with one another.

Why is that so important?

- Because God cares about the unity of His church, and when the church lives in unity, it shows Christ to the world.

Our society is full of division and factions and when we live as one, it shows something that is entirely different than what we see around us, and it puts the grace and mercy and love of Christ on display through His people who display His grace and mercy and love to one another.

Listen to what Jesus says what identifies us with Him:

John 13:35 NASB95

³⁵ “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Jesus says that this is how a watching world will be able to identify us with Jesus, will know that we belong to Him, by our love for one another.

There’s that song that you may know: “They will know that we are Christians by our Love”

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand... and they will know we are Christians by our love by our love, yes they will know that we are Christians by our love.

One last reason why this is so important:

- Because unity came at a high price... Jesus gave his life for the Church! He paid for her with His own blood.

Let’s make every effort to keep it!

A "Worthy Walk"

Ephesians 4:1-3

1. The call of the worthy walk (4:1): To live in a way that matches the salvation that we have been given in Christ. (4:1)

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

EPHESIANS 4:17

NASB95

8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

EPHESIANS 5:8

NASB95

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

1 PETER 2:9

NASB95

2. The cause of the worthy walk:
To live in unity with one another.
(4:3)

4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

EPHESIANS 4:4–6

NASB95

3. Four Characteristics of the worthy walk (4:2):

1. Humility

6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

JAMES 4:6

NASB95

2 "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the Lord. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

ISAIAH 66:2

NASB95

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3–4

NASB95

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

PHILIPPIANS 2:5

NASB95

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

PHILIPPIANS 2:6–8

NASB95

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:5

NASB95

5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:5

NASB95

1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:1

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2. Gentleness

Dane Ortlund - "In the four Gospel accounts given to us in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - eighty-nine chapters of biblical text - there's only one place where Jesus tells us about his own heart... In the one place in the Bible where the Son of God pulls back the veil and lets us peer way down into the core of who he is we are not told that he is 'exalted and dignified in heart.' We are not even told that his 'joyful and generous in heart.' Letting Jesus set the terms, his surprising claim is that he is 'gentle and lowly in heart... at the innermost recesses of his being - what we find there is: gentle and lowly.'"

1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

PROVERBS 15:1

NASB95

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

ROMANS 12:18

NASB95

3. Patience

4. Tolerance

Kent Hughes - "Imagine an engine that has been drained of oil and is still running. It will quickly shut down because of the friction between parts. Likewise, friction among people causes a church to breakdown without the 'oil' of loving tolerance."

35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

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