

Unity and Purity

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Ephesians 4:1-6

We have finished going over the first three chapters. Badveli Kevin covered chapter three. He used those terms: “Church culture. Gospel people are to be gracious, God glorifying people; Gospel people are to be hopeful people. Gospel people, demonstrate that they are God’s people, by doing the good that God has prepared for us; Gospel people, having been reconciled to God, desire to be reconciled to (live in unity with) each other.”

Welcome church to the fourth chapter. Let me show this list summarizing the Letter to the Ephesians:

Eph 1-3	Eph 4-6
The Believer's Wealth	The Believer's Walk
Our position	Our Practice
Being (Who We Are)	Doing (How We Live)
Identification with Christ	Imitation of Christ
Our Calling	Our Conduct
Being (Adopted)	Becoming
Divine Sovereignty	Human Responsibility ¹
Calling of the Body	Conduct of the Body
Positional Truth: Belief	Practical Truth: Behavior
Doctrine: No Commands	Exhortation: 35 Commands
Privileges of the Believer	Responsibilities of the Believer ²

From Theology to practical theology. From doctrine to a new life, a new community, a new character. “Paul sees an alienated humanity being reconciled, a fractured humanity being united, even a new humanity being created.”³

This new community, new family, it has two major characteristics. It should be **united**, unity, one body, both Jews and Gentiles; and second, it has to be **pure**; it is called to holy life; it is set apart from the world. Two important topics: **unity and purity**.

“ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with 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.⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism,⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Eph 4:1-6 ESV)

-Prisoner

Why in the world Paul is starting this section reminding his audience that he is writing this from prison?

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling...(4:1)

Paul would like to say that it is not an easy life. “I am writing this from prison, let me remind you there can be persecution.” Jesus did say:

“But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. ¹³This will be your opportunity to bear witness.” (Luke 21:12,13 ESV)

Paul is ready to be in prison for Christ.

Christianity is not a calling for a comfortable life. **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:10 ESV)**

The testimonies of persecuted Christians from prison are so strong. Do you know how many believers are in prison because of their faith in Jesus Christ?

Thousands, and the blood of those martyrs will not go in vain.

-Worthy of the calling

Paul wants to make sure they (Ephesians) understand that the life they chose is a serious calling.

Illustration: Alexander the Great one day asked a guard who was sleeping on duty, “What is your name?” The guard replied, “Alexander.” The commander said, “Then either change your name, or change your behavior.”

Let me remind you again who are we serving? Who called us?

-Jesus died for me and for you. Just remember by looking at the first three chapters what it means to be IN CHRIST JESUS. How once we were nobody, dead, in sin, alienated, separated, doomed for eternal damnation. But Now IN CHRIST JESUS, we are alive, not alienated but reconciled, and adopted to be His CHILDREN.

-Paul is saying you better walk worthy of your calling, brothers and sisters.

“The worthy walk is not a call to perfection, because we will make mistakes. The worthy walk is a call to honesty and authenticity in the Christian community.” John Heneman.

Please don't take lightly your calling, individually, and collectively. (be a church)
In CHRIST we are united, (4:1-16) and In CHRIST we will have a holy life. (4:17-5:21)

I urge you... I beg you.... (like Romans 12 I appeal to you therefore...)

-walk in a manner worthy...

Be now who you are...not double standard.

Walk in Christian life is a central idea in chapter 4-6. How Christians should walk, behave. What does it mean to “walk” in, by, and with Jesus. Once we were walking in sinful life, walking dead... but in Christ we walk in new steps.

What is difference falling in love and walking in love...for example?

Falling in love is beautiful and emotional. Yet not reliable. Walking in love:

with all humility and gentleness (meekness), with patience, bearing with one another in love (4:2)

-Humility was not a virtue in the Roman and Greek societies. Where do we learn humility except in Jesus? He humbled himself and came to this earth to die for our sins. Pride kills humility.

We need to be aware that humility does not mean we don't have standards, biblical principles. It does not mean we will compromise the truth. “Everything is Ok, truth does matter. We can twist the truth.”

Illustration: *Once in Lebanon a person asked for fake diploma so he get the US visa. He wanted to make big donation to the church and personally to me. I refused; he was angry. He told me everyone does. ...*

Paul writes later in the same letter saying how we need to be grounded, rooted, and growing in the knowledge of Jesus so that:

we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, (14,15a)

Illustration: Eugenie speaking the truth in love. She had a big family, mother in law, 4 children and daughters and son in law, 9 grandchildren. She always tried to speak the truth in love. Watch out, there are many churches talk only about love

and no truth. And there are many churches talk about truth and no love. You need both.

-Gentleness (meekness)

Gentleness was not an esteemed quality in the First century, either. I am not sure we understand this virtue. We think gentle people are weak.

Well, in fact it is not a weakness; it is a strength. This is wisdom of restraining oneself. This is a strength; it is the self-control not to retaliate. Also, it is not being a doormat. No, it is the strength to not allow the outside factors fill you with anger and rage.

-Patience and bearing in love

with patience, bearing with one another in love,

Patience, *makrothymia*, long suffering towards aggressive people....hmmmm.

Example, God has shown in Christ towards us.

Which leads us to bear each other as we experience God's love, we can bear each other.

Jesus is the best example for these **two** virtues, humility and meekness and love.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly (humble) in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29 ESV)

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (Mat. 5:5 ESV)

We need to walk in imitation of Christ. R.C. Sproul says: "Christ was strong; He was assertive; He was confident; He didn't shrink from difficulties; He didn't run from controversy and neither did the apostle Paul; yet Christ became the ideal example of a willingness to endure humiliation and lowliness." ⁴

Where are we going with this?

-Unity of the Body

³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Eph 4:3-6 ESV)

We are called to walk in a manner worthy to our calling.

One of the evidences of walking worthy of our calling is **the unity of the Church.**

Last year we did spend time on those verses. Please visit sermon on Sept 11, 2022 Paul brings here an essential common element that unite us.

It is not automatic to have those sevenfold ones.

Paul uses the verb **Eager, Endeavoring (KJV), Make every effort (NIV) being diligent (NASB20)** ζαῖνον ἠριεργ. So as you see it is not automatic that we are untied.

These are seven-fold oneness Paul is describing for the church: (theology of oneness)

one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

Seven is a biblical number, but also there is trinity. (one Spirit, one Lord, the Lord Jesus; and one God and Father of us all).

Seven-fold ONES. "All seven express the reality that there is **only one gospel**. Christianity is a shared faith. "⁵

-One body. There is one universal body of believers. This is universal church of Jesus Christ. This is the inadvisable church that unite us together in JESUS CHRIST. Christ is the Head; believers make up the body. This is not an organized church but a living organism.

-One Spirit. The Spirit gave us life. Each of us have new life because the Spirit came over us. The same Spirit is given to all believers as a pledge, guarantee or down payment (sermon about this???) . "**By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit**" (1 Cor 12:13).

-One hope of your calling. Whoever believes in Jesus is called. And we are chosen by God the Father, even before our birth, before the universe was created. And what is our hope? Hope in Jesus Christ. He is already here with us, and one day our Hope Jesus will return for enteral life and glory. Jesus will return and establish His Kingdom that already started. This is what Paul is referring to in Colossians: "**the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**" (Col 1:27).

-One Lord. There is only one Lord. Jesus is the Savior of the World, evn thou the world does not recognize Him. Jesus is the Lord of the Church. Jesus died and rose from the dead, , and ascended into heaven, and everyone who believes in him has eternal life. But Jesus isn't just a Savior: He is Lord, he is Head of the Church.

“For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11).

-One faith. Last week Kevin explained about faith. How daily we should have that faith in Jesus, to trust Him daily. Faith in Jesus, nothing else. Jesus is the object of the faith which allows man to be brought into fellowship with God. **“if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”**

-One baptism. This is the baptism **into Christ**; we die with him and we have new life with Jesus. Those who have been **“baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”** (Gal 3:27). Romans 6 says that Christians have been baptized into his death, burial, and resurrection.

-One God and Father. Paul ends his list by mentioning the third person of the Trinity, reversing the usual order. Deuteronomy declares: **“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one”** (Deut. 6:4). God is one, and he is the Father of every believer in his family. There is one family, with one Father who loves us and cares for our every need.

So this is not an artificial oneness. Those seven things are essential doctrines. I will stress one more time. We cannot have unity without accepting and living the first three chapters where Paul explained how God works in our lives to be IN JESUS. TO BE.

Then we can arrive here, and we talk about the **unity of the body.**

John Stott put it this way: “First, the one Father creates the one family. Secondly, the one Lord Jesus creates the one faith, hope, and baptism. Thirdly, the one Spirit creates the one Body.”⁶

Application:

-How can I not walk in a manner worthy of my calling when I experienced God’s GRACE in my life?

1. Character is the first concern of a worthy walk.

Churches spend time to have good by-laws, structures, rules, and regulations. Those are great. What is use of those structure when the leadership does not have a Christocentric character?

2. A worthy walk also demands healthy relationships in the church family. A worthy walk is a call to unity; unity of the body, in humility and meekness, in

bearing each other with love. All those virtues point to having healthy relationships in the church family.

3. Let me warn you that some of those relationships are difficult. Let us not avoid them. They are part of the body of the Christ.

Thus, I need His GRACE

Grace is something we cannot possibly earn or deserve. How can our attitude in the presence of God be anything but **lowly and humble, meek and gentle?**

Haughtiness, arrogance, self-importance, self-impose, overconfidence, or a high minded spirit and a harshness are attributes of **pride** which is characteristic of people who exalt themselves. (R.C. Sproul)

Here is how Paul will pray

Oh Heavenly Father,

I pray that from YOUR glorious, unlimited resources YOU will empower them with inner strength through YOUR Spirit.

I pray that Christ will make his home in their hearts as they trust in him.

I pray that Your roots will grow down into your love and keep them strong.

I pray that they may have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep is your presence, your grace and your love.

I pray that they experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully.

I pray that they will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from you Oh God.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. (Eph 3:16-21 NLT)

1. Ken Boa, *Bible studies series on Ephesians*. <https://kenboa.org/series/walk-like-a-child-of-god/>

2. Ken Boa, *Bible studies series on Ephesians*. <https://kenboa.org/biblical/ephesians-4-a-worthy-walk/>

3. John R.W. Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today, The Message of Ephesians*, P 109

4. R.C. Sproul. *Ephesians*, lecture: "Be Who You Are" www.ligonier.org/learn/series/book-of-ephesians/be-who-you-are

5. Klyne Snodgrass, *NIV Study Bible Commentary Ephesians*, P 199

6. John Stott, *God's New Society*, P 151.

Outline of chapter 4

- I. Unity in the Body (4:1-16)
 - A. Exhortation to Unity (4:1-3)
 - B. Explanation of Unity (4:4-6)
 - C. Means of Unity: the Gifts (4:7-11)
 - D. Purpose of the Gifts (4:12-16)

- II. Holiness in Life (4:17-5:21)
 - A. Put Off the old man (4:17-22)
 - B. Put On the New Man (4:23-29)
 - C. Grieve Not the Holy Spirit (4:30-32)
 - D. Walk as Children of Light (5:1-17)
 - E. Be Filled with the Spirit (5:18-21)

Ken Boa