

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for September 30, 2018**

**Walk Worthy**  
**Ephesians 4:1-3**

Introduction:

- The turning point in the book of Ephesians
  - Doctrine to duty
  - Position to practice
  - Paul has written in this format in other letters
    - Romans 1-11 vs. 12-16
    - Colossians 1-2 vs. 3-4
    - 1 Thessalonians 1-3 vs. 4-5
  - So in Ephesians 1-3 vs. 4-6

I. The command to walk worthy (4:1)

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

- First, we are reminded of the person giving this command to walk worthy
- “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord,”
  - Literally, “a prisoner *in* the Lord”
    - Some versions have “of” or “for”
  - He had already encouraged the Ephesians to not lose heart regarding his own sufferings
    - Ephesians 3:13 “So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.”
    - Regarding his safety, Paul was still very much “in the Lord” and in God’s will
  - Regarding his authority or credibility, he was not to be maligned just because he was in jail
    - His status as prisoner did not diminish the truthfulness or the demands of the gospel
    - From prison, Paul still spoke as an Apostle who was “in the Lord”
- Second, we see the command to walk worthy
- “Urge you to walk in a manner worthy”
  - “Urge”
    - This is not urging in the sense of begging or pleading
      - ESV, NET, NIV - “urge” (press or push)

- NASB - “implore” (beg urgently)
    - NKJV - “beseech” (beg eagerly)
  - This is urging in the form of exhortation and command
  - Given the gospel details and the authority of Paul as an Apostle, he commands the Ephesians to act
- “To walk”
  - Notice first that Paul’s agenda was not one of finding relief for himself
    - He does not demand that food or clothing be brought to him
    - He does not demand that a group come and appeal for his release from prison
  - He commands the Ephesians to walk, live or conduct themselves in a certain way
    - The word, “walk,” does not just refer to daily living and conduct but it also sets the tone for the rest of the letter
    - “Walk” statements
    - The Ephesians were not to be unaffected by the truths of chapters 1-3
- “In a manner worthy”
  - Paul commands the Ephesians to walk or live “worthy” lives
  - “The adverb ἀξίως, ‘worthy, worthily, suitably,’ literally means ‘bringing up the other beam of the scales,’ ‘bringing into equilibrium,’ and therefore ‘equivalent’ or ‘worthily, a manner worthy of, suitability.’”<sup>1</sup>
    - Walk in a way that is “worthy, suitable, balanced, matching” everything I have told you about who you are in Christ
  - Paul has told the Ephesians wonderful truths and it was necessary that the Ephesians respond appropriately in way that matches the truths
- Third, we see the basis of the command to walk worthy
- “of the calling to which you have been called,”
  - Paul refers to the calling that is upon the Ephesians
  - Paul refers to everything that he has already stated in chapters 1-3
    - If you are in Christ that began with the Father choosing you in eternity past
    - If you are in Christ that was accomplished through Christ’s work on the cross which forgave you your sins

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<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 504.

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1808.

- If you are in Christ that was displayed through your faith in the good news of Jesus Christ
- If you are in Christ that was secured by the Holy Spirit's indwelling and residence inside of you
- If you are in Christ that was because He made you alive when you were dead in your sins
- If you are in Christ that means you are now a member of His church along with people from every nation, language, and background
- If you are in Christ that means the angelic realm is in awe of God's wisdom on display in and through you in the church
- If you are in Christ, then there is a high calling for your life
- It is with these glorious truths of our calling in view, that we must walk worthy
- Our lives must properly and suitably represent the God who has saved us from our sin and brought us together to be one in the church
- The mere communication of this information should be enough to motivate the Ephesians to move and act upon what they have heard
- You cannot hear about God's calling upon your life to be saved unto eternal life and into unity with other believers without acting upon it
- You cannot be unaffected
- Paul is telling you that you must now walk worthy

## II. The components of walking worthy (4:2-3)

*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.*

### A. Humility

- The concept of humility was absent in the cultural climate of the early church
  - The word that Paul uses for humility is not found in ancient Greek writings
  - “‘Humility’ is a term not found in the Rom. or Gr. vocabularies of Paul’s day. The Gr. word apparently was coined by Christians, perhaps even by Paul himself, to describe a quality for which no other word was available.”<sup>2</sup>
- Of course, we know too well that the concept of humility still appears to be absent from the cultural climate of our day
  - What Jesus taught, still holds true today
  - **Mark 10:42-45** “And Jesus called them to him and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great

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<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1808.

ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- Jesus’ example of humility clashed with the example of the Roman leaders
- Why?
  - Because the concept of humility has to do with lowliness of mind or thinking
    - “Humility includes a low estimate of one’s self, based on the consciousness of guilt and weakness, and a consequent disposition to be lowly, unnoticed, and unpraised.”<sup>3</sup>
    - This does not come naturally for humans
  - How is this lowliness cultivated?
    - Awareness of God
      - Respond like Isaiah, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5)
    - Awareness of Christ
      - Respond like Peter, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (Luke 5:8)
    - Awareness of Self
      - Respond like Paul, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” (1 Timothy 1:15)
  - Such humility and lowliness was key if the process of unifying Jew and Gentile was to be taken seriously in Ephesus
    - Philippians 2:3 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”
    - “The more lowly-mindedness the more like-mindedness.”<sup>4</sup>
  - Is there an area of your life where you could grow in humility and lowliness of mind?
    - Do not say no because no one is immune to the attacks of pride
  - How might your commitment to humility help situations where you are relating to others?
    - Being unified with believers
    - Or being at peace with unbelievers

## B. Gentleness

- Gentleness carries with it the idea of being mild as opposed to rough

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Hodge, Ephesians, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 122.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2312.

- 1 Corinthians 4:21 “What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?”
- It shows itself most frequently in the way that one demonstrates self-control in all their interactions with others
  - This is not a synonym for weakness
  - One may have strength but possess also the ability to display that strength at the proper times
    - Concept of being meek
  - “that excellent disposition of soul which makes men unwilling to provoke others, and not easily to be provoked or offended with their infirmities”<sup>5</sup>
  - Does not become easily angered by others or easily anger others
- Christ demonstrated gentleness
  - Matthew 11:29 “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”
- Gentleness is required in our interactions with believers and unbelievers
  - Galatians 6:1 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness...”
  - 1 Peter 3:15 “... always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,”
  - 2 Timothy 2:25 “correcting his opponents with gentleness...”
- This self-controlled gentle spirit would be necessary as Jews and Gentiles of Ephesus would learn to interact with one another
- Is there an area of your life where you could grow in being gentle, meek, and self-controlled?
- How might your commitment to gentleness help situations where you are relating to others?
  - Speaking boldly for Christ in gentleness with unbelievers
  - Encouraging one another in Christ with gentleness

### C. Patience

- The concept of patience can be restated as one who suffers long
  - “The Gr. word lit. means long-tempered, and refers to a resolved patience that is an outgrowth of humility and gentleness”<sup>6</sup>
- God is the great example of patience
  - In the Old Testament. God is long-suffering or slow to anger

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2312.

<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1808.

- Exodus 34:6 “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger (μακρόθυμος), abounding in love and faithfulness”
    - In the New Testament we learn that God remains patient with us in order that we might come to repentance (Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9)
  - Patience would be paramount for the Jews and Gentiles of Ephesus to be unified
    - Even in their attempts to be humble and gentle with one another, they were bound to sin against one another
    - Thus they needed to suffer long and be patient with one another
  - Patience must characterize our lives if we are to walk worthy in unity with one another
    - **James 5:9-10** “Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.”
    - “For the believer, patience is that cautious endurance that does not abandon hope. It pertains to waiting patiently without immediate results, like the farmer who waits for his harvest and the OT prophets who waited for God’s action”<sup>7</sup>
  - Is there an area of your life where you could grow in being patient and long-suffering?
  - How might your commitment to patience help situations where you are relating to others?
    - Patience with those who still have not expressed faith in Christ
    - Patience with fellow believers and their preferences or shortcomings

#### D. Forbearance

- “Bearing with one another”
  - “It means ‘to take up, to bear up, to endure.’”<sup>8</sup>
  - “Robertson suggests that it is a direct middle meaning ‘holding yourselves back from one another.’ In other words, differences between believers are to be tolerated.”<sup>9</sup>
  - Colossians 3:13 “bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”
- “In love”
  - This phrase, “in love” helps us realize exactly how we are to bear with one another
    - People bear with others in life all the time

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<sup>7</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 508–509.

<sup>8</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 509.

<sup>9</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 509.

- Sometimes this is done through neglect or avoidance
      - While the situation may not get worse, it certainly does not get better
      - More importantly, this can be often done without any exercise of love in thought, word or deed toward the other person
    - The phrase, “in love” informs us that we must lovingly put up with one another
      - Not by grumbling or complaining about one another behind each other’s back
      - But instead, we must offer up persistent prayers of love for one another
      - We must strive to love others from our speech and actions toward that person in addition to our thoughts about that person
  - Think of how important this would be for the Jews and Gentiles
    - Without this exercise and practice of love, resentment would grow between them
    - Conversely, their commitment to love one another in their difficult pursuit of unity would allow them to continue forward while thinking the best of one another
- How might your commitment to forbearance help situations where you are relating to others?
  - Bearing with fellow believers and choosing to love them no matter how difficult the situation you are enduring

#### E. Unity

- “Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit”
  - This clearly communicates a necessary element of walking worthy for the Jews and Gentiles
  - Notice, they were not called to attain unity among themselves
  - They were commanded to *maintain* the unity of the Spirit
    - This means that unity in the body of Christ is something that we already possess
    - If we are a believer, we are in Christ with all others who are believers in Christ
    - The Holy Spirit has already made us one in Christ
      - Ephesians 2:22 “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

- 1 Corinthians 12:13 “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”
  - Thus, the responsibility for believers is to *maintain* or preserve that unity
- This is supposed to be a high priority for believers since Paul commands the Ephesians to be “eager” in this maintenance or preservation of unity
  - “The second participle σπουδάζοντες is from σπουδάζω, which, in the intransitive use, as it is here, means ‘to be busy, eager, to make haste.’”<sup>10</sup>
  - The Jews and Gentiles needed to expend themselves in order to maintain the unity of the Spirit among themselves
  - Philippians 1:27 “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,”
- “In the bond of peace”
  - The environment of peace must be evident in the Ephesian church’s attempts to remain unified in the Spirit
  - They must allow their worthy walking to foster a place of peace
  - After all, there is no way that their unity would be evident if there was not peace among them
    - Again, Paul is calling them to simply live out what is already true of their church
    - Ephesians 2:14-16 “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”
- How might your commitment to maintain unity help situations where you are relating to others in the body of Christ?
  - Are you encouraging negative speech and practices in our church?
  - Are you striving to protect others and build up those around you here at this church?

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<sup>10</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 510–511.