

## Eph Ch 4 Vs1-2

### A worthy walk

Chapter 4 introduces the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> section concerning the division of this epistle, or the way that it's divided up. (The end of Ch 3 obviously closing the 1<sup>st</sup> division) and I don't know if you remember way back when we started this letter, but I took the time at that point to make you aware of the fact that this book is basically divided into 2 main sections, chapters 1 through 3 and chapters 4-6. Ch's 1-3 being those chapters whereby Paul shares with us and speaks concerning the exalted position that we have in Christ, and the unlimited resources from which we have to draw upon in Him in order to lead a victorious and successful Christian life. and Then this 2<sup>nd</sup> half being where Paul explains to us how that's to be set in motion, ch's 4-6 are where the rubber meets the road, it's where Paul deals with us concerning the godly lives that we should be living in light of all the resources that we have in Christ equipping us to do so. So basically ch's 1-3 are doctrinal, and ch's 4-6 are practical, Ch's 1-3 are, "this is what you have", and ch's 4-6 are, "this is how it is worked out in my life practically." It's the practical application of the doctrine, so it goes, doctrine 1<sup>st</sup>, duty 2<sup>nd</sup>, foundation then application, from creed to conduct, from the wealth, to the walk, the exposition to the exhortation, and from the principle to the practice.

Now that we know what God had done for us, how are we to respond to that, how is this exercised practically or worked out in an everyday sense in my life? You see when we gave our hearts to Christ; we became citizens of His kingdom and members of His family. But along with those privileges come responsibilities and obligations, you say obligations Jeff, I thought this was a free gift, no strings attached, and such is true, the gift of salvation is absolutely free, but when you come to Christ and are made a new creation in Him, God expects that we act like the new persons that we've become in Him. His standards are to be our standards, His purposes our purposes, His desires, your desires, and His nature your nature.

You see God expects there to be conformity with in the church, that being the body of Christ, not a forced legal conformity to external rules and regulations, but rather a willing inner conformity allowing the Holy Spirit to conform us into lives of holiness, love, and the will of the Father. Or in short into the image of His Son, Rom 8:29 "*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.*" Phil 1:27 says, "*Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ.*"

But before you can lead a life that's worthy of the gospel, you need to know what the gospel is, you have to have the doctrine before you can get to the duty, you have to have a proper foundation before you can get proper application. Right practice is always based on the right principle, because it's impossible to have a "Christian life-style", with out knowing the realities of the life that Christ has provided. That's why Paul has spent ½ of his writing here in the book of Eph developing doctrine for us. Because right doctrine is absolutely essential to right living, the word "doctrine" simply means teaching, and so it's impossible for even the most sincere believer to lead a life pleasing to God with out know biblical doctrine, with out knowing what God Himself is like and knowing the sort of life that God wants us to live. People that try and belittle the significance of doctrinal issues are only showing a lack of understanding concerning the importance understanding proper biblical doctrine, because right doctrine; right living. Wrong doctrine; wrong living.

Now concerning doctrine here's a few scriptures regarding the significance of them. In 1 Tim 4:13 Paul commands that we "*give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*" 1 Tim 4:16 says, "*Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*" 2 Tim 3:16-17 "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" 2 Tim 4:3-4 "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*" Titus 2:1 "*But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.*" One more, 2 John 9-11 "*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.*"

Is doctrine important? I believe it is, that's why we need to labor in the word, and be those men and women who study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Because doctrine can make or break a believer, because what you believe undermines your entire lifestyle, what you *believe* determines how you *behave*, so Paul spends ½ his letter here developing proper doctrine for us, and this is typical of Paul's writing, he does the same thing in Col ch 3vs5 and in Romans he does it again, the only difference is that in Romans he doesn't take up ½ the book laying out the doctrine that comes before the duty. But instead he takes up nearly 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the book are devoted to the character, and provision and work of God for man, it isn't until you get to ch 12 that we read a phrase like we have here in ch 4 of the book of Eph. "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*"

You see in the NT, God relates to man in a completely different way than He did under the Old covenant. Under the old covenant it was if you obey Me, I will bless you, but under the new covenant God says, I've already blessed you, now in response to My love and grace and mercy, and due to the fact that I've already granted you the necessary resources, live in obedience to Me. That's the difference between law and grace, law says, do this and live, do this and I'll bless you, grace says, I've done this, I've blessed you, now you can do this that pleases Me and serves My purposes.

You will find, particularly in the NT that God doesn't ask anything of you, but that He doesn't first take the time to make you aware of the fact of what He's already done for you, He always initiates, we always respond, always. Even in our own salvation, we didn't choose Jesus, He chose us and appointed us to bear much fruit and that our fruit should remain, to His glory.

So the word "therefore" in vs 1 here of ch 4 marks the transition from positional to practical truth, from the base of foundation to everyday application in my life. Let's read these 1<sup>st</sup> 3 vs and then begin to look at what it is that in light of all that God has done for us, how limitless the resources that we have been given in Christ, that God would have us be utilizing those resources for and what He would have us do.

It kind of goes back to even the meeting of Paul the apostle with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus when the young man who at that time was named Saul was knocked off his high horse by Jesus Christ and taken to his knees. Do you remember what Saul said to Jesus, he said, who are you Lord, and what would you have me do? That's Christianity in a nutshell; you can't make the Lord known with out knowing Him yourself.

Once you know Him what are you to do with that knowledge, those are the 2 questions we all should be asking who are you Lord, and what would you have me to do. Well in these 1<sup>st</sup> 3 chapters we get, "who are you Lord" (and what He's done for us), and in the last three chapters we get, "what would you have me to do?" Now we're only going to touch on the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 vs this morning but we'll read the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 so as to get the whole thrust of where he's going.

Vs1-3 (Repeat vs1)

Paul says I, therefore, and again this word "therefore" encompasses so much, in light of the fact that you have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. That you've received adoption as sons by Jesus Christ, you've been accepted in the Beloved and have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

Since He's made known to us the mystery of His will, and you have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will. In light of the fact that you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and have been given the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, therefore, because of these things...

That doesn't even take us out of ch 1. That doesn't even bring into account that fact that in Him you've been made alive, that you've been raised up and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, or that you've received the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness. Or due to the fact that you are His work of art, and that you were once far off but now you've been brought near, by the blood of Christ, you see because He has granted you peace with both the Father and fellowman, having abolished the enmity of the law.

Since He's given you access by one Spirit to the Father, made you citizens with the saints and members of the household of God even though you were once strangers and foreigners, in light of the fact that you are being built together as a dwelling place of God in the Spirit and have become fellow heirs and partakers of His promise in Christ. In light of the fact that in Christ we have been granted boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him, being strengthened with might in the inner man, Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith, you being rooted and grounded in love, both love for God and love for each other, and because God is making known to you the vast expanse of His love and you are being filled with all the fullness of God, Vs 1 of Ch 4 now walk worthy of it!

You just have to go wow! That blows my mind, and I'm sure you can find more than what I just said, that was just a brief overview of what we've spent the last few months exploring and examining. Paul says I, "therefore" because of all of these things, in light of this incredible foundation that's been laid, beseech you or really beg you, or plead with you to walk worthy of this calling with which you were called. (and Since we've taken the time to note Paul's incredible ability to maintain eternal perspective even in the midst of what would seem to be the most horrid of human circumstance, back in ch 3, we won't touch on this statement "the prisoner of the Lord" this morning.) But Paul says I beg you, or I exhort you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.

But he exhorts in this manner only after he's spent a significant amount of time establishing the premise or the foundation, too many times, too much time is spent emphasizing the walk, to the neglect of the "therefore" or the principals that are to establish that means of walk.

Paul has taken the time to establish the “what”, the “why”, and even the “how”, in these 1<sup>st</sup> 3 chapters, and because we serve a God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or think, receive that strengthening with might through His Spirit in your inner man and now (which is the “when”) walk in it.

By the way, have you noticed in passing, though I haven’t brought it specifically to your attention the way I’m about to, but have you noticed the beautiful forward progression of the way that this epistle is laid out? 1<sup>st</sup> of all in ch 2 learning that we were dead (spiritually speaking,) in trespasses and sins, then we were made alive, so 1<sup>st</sup> of all dead, then made alive, and in vs 6 of ch 2, raised up and then made to sit. So dead, made alive, raised up, made to sit, and now we see walk, do you see how it’s progressing?

When we get to ch 6 we’ll see that we’re to stand, now this word “walk” obviously indicates a forward movement, if you’re walking you’re going a certain direction. So you see it goes something like from death to life, being raised up and caused to sit in heavenly places in Christ, moving forward in our earthly spiritual walk and standing our ground, no retreat no surrender but always moving consistently progressively forward in Christ.

Another way to view this book in light of that progression is that the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 chapters deal with the wealth that is ours in Christ, the last 3 ch’s deal with the walk of the believer, ch 6 specifically dealing with the warfare in the life of the believer, so you could consider this book as the wealth, the walk, and the warfare of the believer. and When Paul says I “beseech” you, or “implore” you, or your bible may say, “beg” or “urge” you, don’t miss understand the emphasis, this isn’t a suggestion to the believer, it’s not a hey, I’d encourage you to do this but you can take it or leave it. Paul’s not laying out suggestions, but rather divine standards apart from which you and I can’t live in a manner that corresponds to being a child of God. So don’t misunderstand the language that’s used here, just because he doesn’t say I’m an apostle of God chosen to lay down the foundations of our lives in Christ according to the word of God, doesn’t mean that it makes his word any less effective.

Paul often chose to implore of the basis of love rather than authority Philem 8-9 says, *“Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you--being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.”* Same type deal here, Paul is saying you’re a child of God, now live like one walk worthy of this calling with which you were called, and again what does it mean to walk? It means taking one step at a time from where you are, in the direction to where you need to be going.

The word walk is used over and over again in the NT speaking of our daily conduct, and the way that lead our lives day by day. Time would fail us to go over all of the vs in the NT that refer to the way that we are to live our lives as a “walk”, you can jot down, Eph 2:10, Eph 5:2, 8, and 15, Phil 3:16,17, Col 1:10 and 2:6 and the list could go on and on. Our lives are to reflect that which are in Christ, that’s what that word “worthy” means. The Greek word that’s been translated “worthy” here is the word “axios” from where we get our English word “axiom” which actually means “of equal weight”. It carries the idea of balancing the scales; in an equation the axiom indicates doing something to each side of the equation so that it remains true, or equal.

In other words Paul is saying that we should be seeking to lead lives that are equal to the blessings that we have been shown in Ch’s 1-3. That our practical lives should be matching, or corresponding to our spiritual position, again Col 1:10 Paul praying, “*that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*” That you would lead a life that corresponds to all that He’s done for you and provided for you in Jesus Christ

It’s like the story of the man who was out handing out bible tracts and he handed one to a man who couldn’t read or write and the man said, “what is this?” and The guy said, “it’s a tract.” and The other man said, “well, I can’t read it; so I’ll watch your tracks.” In other words I’ll read your life, I’ll watch your walk, and people are watching our lives, and our walks with the Lord, again are they getting the gospel? Does your life correspond to all that you’ve been given and all that’s been done for you in Christ?

Now, don’t be confused here and slip into work related righteousness, because that’s not at all where this is headed, it’s not about you and what you do, it’s about Jesus and what He’s done, we’re just to lead lives that are appropriately responsive to that which He’s done, it’s not about what we do. We’re just responding to His work, we just want to walk intimately with Him, we want to know Him and make Him known, that’s what we’ve been called to so what we do isn’t the focus, Paul has spent 3 chapters seeking to get into our heads the fact of what He’s done, don’t think that He’s contradicting that here. This is simply here’s what He’s done, and this is how it’s to effect our lives. So a worthy walk is not a self centered, self-focused, self-resourced, self-improvement walk. It’s a walk that is Christ centered, Christ focused, with Christ as our resource, conforming us into His image, it’s about leading a life that’s so self transparent that when people look at our lives and see our good works (not us) but rather our Father in heaven is glorified. (Read vs1)

Now, we're getting ready head into how it is that this walk is evidenced and unfolded in our lives, but let me just jump ahead of that for just one second, because what do you think it is, that after emphasizing all that we've been given in Christ, the "what", "why" and "how" of the Christian walk, that God would stress 1<sup>st</sup> as to where it's to be utilized? Maybe He'd stress now get out there and get busy working, or maybe the 1<sup>st</sup> priority would be that it's time to heal the sick and raise the dead, or that we're to battle the enemy with all our might. But He doesn't stress any of those things here, (though this work "walk" can include all of those things) but the specific addressing of the scriptures here don't emphasize evangelism 1<sup>st</sup>. But rather we're to take all of these resources that we've been given in Christ and apply them practically 1<sup>st</sup> to what? To living in loving unity so that the body of Christ might be built up properly and we'll see that as we move on.

It's as if he's saying hey 1<sup>st</sup> things 1<sup>st</sup>, we are to labor for the Lord, sure the world needs to be reached for Christ, God wants to touch sick hearts and dead lives, and there's a very real battle with the enemy that needs tended to. But if we as a body aren't together on these issues, nothing else is going to be effective, Jesus said a house divided against itself can't stand, it's the whole "united we stand, divided we fall" principle. We can't walk together (the bible says) unless we be agreed, and if we're biting at and devouring one another then we'll only consume ourselves from the inside out and then we'll be totally ineffective. and So the 1<sup>st</sup> priority is for us as the body of Christ to take all of these resources as mentioned in ch's 1-3 and apply them towards like-mindedness and being of one accord. But back to the calling with which we were called it's interesting how God begins to describe this worthy walk and how it's to unfold in our lives. Because at 1<sup>st</sup> thought, or at least in the natural reasoning, one would be prone to think of a worthy walk as one that's all together and in charge of it all. Never making a mistake, never failing, Mr. Sufficiency with head held high, now that's a worthy walk. Not according to God's estimation, the worthy walk as evidenced according to God's standard of worthy 1<sup>st</sup> begins to unfold or come into fruition into a person's life how?

Vs2

In other words, the worthy walk in God's eyes is a walk (as one might expect) that emulates the life of Christ, with all lowliness or humility and gentleness, where have I heard that before. In Matt 11:28-30 Jesus said, "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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.*" The worthy walk is to be exemplified in lowliness and gentleness, that's what the Lord wants to develop in our lives. Lowliness, or humility in other words as Paul put it we're not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. In other words we're to be sober minded concerning who we're not and who God is.

That doesn't mean that we're to be constantly belittling ourselves either, because that has a tendency to lead to false humility, which in reality is a radically escalated form of pride. But God wants to work humility into our lives, and humility is one of the most fundamental and foundational qualities of the Christian life. Because if you think about it with out humility we can't please God, because the opposite of humility is pride and God hates pride. Now one may be thinking, ok how is this humility brought into or worked into my life, simple, by you seeing God in truth and in return getting a deeply profound sense of your innate or intrinsic spiritual and moral bankruptcy.

Again we don't have time but the bible has several examples of people who caught the vision of who God is, His holiness, righteousness, and purity, and in light of who He is they saw their own wretchedness and as a result their lives were never the same, there was a humility that was ingrained in them that lasted a life time and we examined that even in the life of Paul back in ch 3. The very 1<sup>st</sup> beatitude addresses this position of brokenness and humility when Jesus said, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" Jesus also said that there is none that is good except for God alone, and walking in lowliness is simply walking in agreement with that, recognizing that in me, that is in my flesh there is no good thing that dwells. If you were to extract the Lord out of my life that you would be emptying me of all goodness that is with in me, to recognize that is to walk in lowliness.

But there's sort of this catch 22 that goes along with it because humility is an incredibly elusive characteristic, because as I said if it's focused on too much it turns into pride. You might say it's a virtue that's to be highly sought, yet never claimed, because upon the instant it's claimed, it's forfeited, Hi, my name is Jeff and I just want you to know that you can watch my life to learn of Christ because I walk in such humility... You see; that's not humility, that's pride and again God hates pride, what was the 1<sup>st</sup> sin that sent a shock wave throughout the endless ages of eternity of which the ripple effect or maybe I should say the title wave effect is still being felt to this day? Pride, pride cause Satan to seek to exalt himself over and above, the Most High God. Isa 14:13-14 tells us concerning Satan, "*For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'*" Pride filled his heart. Because of that God cast him out of heaven and there's been warfare ever since, but I've read the end of the book, we win.

Remember Satan is not the equal opposite to God, Satan is a created being, an angel, God is the Creator, they're nowhere near the same in power or in might or any other characteristic. Prov 16:18 tells us that, "*Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall*". Prov 29:23 says that, "*A man's pride will bring him low,*" and Prov 18:12 says, "*Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.*"

Again that humility is worked into our lives by a proper view and understanding of God, pride is the sin of competing with God, as to where humility is the virtue of submitting to His glory and understanding that it rightfully belongs to Him anyway. Next week (Lord willing) we'll maybe look at this virtue of humility just a little bit more and continue to examine what it means to have a worthy walk, because along with humility we see that God also wants to work into our lives a true sense of gentleness and longsuffering, that we would bear with one another in love. In short, again, a worthy walk is a walk that's been conformed into the image of Christ, these are Christ-like attributes, lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering, and love.