

## Eph Ch 4 vs 2-6

### A worthy walk (part 2)

We've been examining the elements here in the beginning of Eph ch 4 concerning what all it entails to have a "worthy walk", or what it means to walk worthy of the calling with which we were called. Because in light of all of the fundamental, foundational truths that Paul has spent ½ his letter establishing, the command in the 1<sup>st</sup> vs of Ch 4 is to walk accordingly. Walk in such a way, utilizing all of the resources that we have in Christ so as to have our practical lives correspond to our spiritual position.

As soon as Paul commands us to walk worthy of the calling with which we were called the 1<sup>st</sup> thing that he begins to lay out is how that walk will evidence itself or begin to unfold in our lives, what are the earmarks in a persons life who is walking worthy of the calling with which they were called? Is it in the fact that they've got it all together, never making a mistake, never failing, as I said last week Mr. or Mrs. Sufficiency? Not at all, as a matter of fact that stands in antithesis to the reality of how this worthy walk is to be being revealed in our lives.

The way the worthy walk begins to unfold in our lives is (notice vs 2 of Ch4, read), not with pride and arrogance, and/or conceitedness, with a sense of haughtiness or self-confidence, those are the things that God hates. The walk that is worthy before God is the walk that reveals itself in all lowliness from the heart, gentleness, longsuffering, and love. Why, because those are the qualities of His Son coming into fruition in your life by the power of the Holy Spirit and the walk that is being conformed into the image of Christ is the walk that's worthy in the sight of God. But again the catch is, is that you'll probably never realize that it's even taking place, because if you do then you've lost that quality of lowliness and replaced it with loftiness. You've forfeited humility and have been swallowed up in haughtiness, but God desires that a deep inner humility be ingrained into our very hearts by the power of His Spirit, and that's where we left off last week, examining this quality of humility. That quality that's highly sought, yet never claimed, the only person who has ever been able to claim the quality of humility and still be justifiably humble is Jesus Christ Himself, who 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, (or humble) in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*"

Jesus, who came to earth as God's Son, yet was born in a manger, who stepped out of a heavenly kingdom, to be raised by a peasant family, being the Son of the One who owned the cattle on a thousand hillsides, all creation being His, yet never owned any property except for the clothes on His back. He was even buried in a borrowed tomb, and at anytime He could've used or exercised His divine rights, and prerogatives but in obedience and humility He refused to do so because that would've violated His Father's will. Jesus said of Himself, "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*"

So if the Lord of glory walked in humility while on this earth, how much more should we who serve Him do so? John said in 1 John 2:6, "*He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*" and Jesus taught the same thing, do you remember when Jesus was eating the Last Supper with His disciples? and He was (in the big picture) just hours away from being mocked, betrayed, beaten and crucified, now He could've very easily been like, guys, there's a lot coming down and I've got a lot of things on My mind, could you just rub my back and get my food and help Me to forget about life for just a few minutes?

But He wasn't, instead He, the Lord of glory, humbled Himself, rose up from the supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself, and after that He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples (dirty, smelly, worn out, day labored, stinking) feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. and He said to them, "*You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*"

In other words you ought to relate to one another through humility, with all lowliness, not some lowliness now and then, but with all lowliness, serving one another. Phil 2:3 says, "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*" Again just another reinforcement of what Jesus had already taught, do you remember when Jesus was at a feast and He saw how all the Pharisees were scrambling for the best seats? Let's look at it together (Luke ch 14 vs 7-11), in other words don't be doing things through selfish ambition or conceit thinking that you're a little bit better than everybody else, but rather in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself or herself. Everything about the Christian walk finds its roots in true humility, even salvation itself is granted to you and to me by means of humility, by you and me humbling ourselves and agreeing with God that we are sinners worthy of only condemnation, but by God's grace through faith we receive the righteous covering of Jesus Christ Jesus said, "*Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*"

Again we could make an entire study examining these guys whom we see in the scriptures walking in humility. John the Baptist, at the height of his own fame, him holding tremendous influence over scores of people said concerning Jesus, I'm not even worthy to carry His sandals, and I must decrease, but He must increase.

Consider all the gospel writers, Matt, Mark, Luke, and John, and how they hide themselves in all of their writings and place all the focus and attention and magnification and glorification on Jesus. It would've been so easy for them to just sort of subtly include certain accounts that were favorable toward themselves; sort of made themselves look good. But instead Matt identifies Himself as nothing more than a tax collector (one who was despised, in the same class as prostitutes and sinners), but he says nothing of the huge feast that He held for Jesus upon Jesus' calling of him to Himself in order that all of his other friends might meet Jesus. Why, because of the humility that was in him, the only way we know that it was Matthew that gave the feast is due to Luke telling us, what does the bible say, Prov 27:2 "*Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.*" It's believed that Mark wrote his gospel account under the tutelage or guidance of Peter, and if that be the case that would explain why Marks Gospel doesn't report 2 of the most amazing things that happened in Peter's life during the earthly ministry of Jesus, his walking on the water and his confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, by divine revelation. John never mentions his own name, but refers to himself as simply the disciple whom Jesus loved, a title that any disciple of Jesus can rightfully claim.

The bible says that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble, the one who understands that when he or she comes to God, it's with nothing to commend him and everything to condemn him. But when you come to the Lord like the tax collector found in Luke 18 (Lets look at it together, vs 9-14), humility, lowliness, a vital attribute the worthy walk, the Christian walk. Paul says here in Eph (vs 1-2)

Vs2

Humility or lowliness always produces gentleness, or your bible may say meekness. Again that Christ like quality as He said, "*I am meek and lowly of heart.*" Meaning mild spirited or as it's translated here in the NKJV "gentle", remember last week as we were considering the position of lowliness or poverty of spirit we mentioned that in the sermon on the Mt that that was the 1<sup>st</sup> thing that Jesus addressed, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*", well in that same sermon He addressed this same disposition of heart as well when He said, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*" In Gal ch 5 we see where meekness or gentleness is one of the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit, or one of the qualities that come into fruition in a persons life who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

So it only makes sense when we read in Col 3:12 that meekness *should* characterize every child of God. “*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.*” You see, are you the elect of God? Are you a child of God? Is gentleness one of the foremost characteristics of your life? Now understand that meekness doesn’t mean weakness, one has defined meekness as power under constraint, and I like that, but I read where one commentator described the biblical definition of meekness as a “willingness to stand and do the will of God, regardless of the cost, meekness is bowing yourself to the will of God.” (McGee) and I think I like that better, because that completely alleviates this false concept of weakness that seems to seek to attach itself to meekness. Because there’s no doubt a sense of humility and mildness that comes along with meekness, but not because of cowardice or a lack of means to be any other way.

In Num ch 12 we read where Moses was meek above all the men on the face of the earth, and yet when he saw the children of Israel worshipping the golden calf, this meek man took it and, “*burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it.*” and Then whoever wouldn’t repent he had killed with the sword, about 3,000 people, Jesus who was also meek and lowly of heart on more than one occasion drove the money changers out of the temple, over turning their tables and in Johns Gospel we read where on one occasion He used a whip to do it. So meekness and gentleness in no way indicates weakness, it can encompass some pretty radical actions, under the right circumstances, that being when unjust harm is being brought on others or when God’s word or His name is slandered or mocked. Later on in this ch we’ll read, “*be angry and do not sin*”, it’s called righteous indignation, it’s not angry or vengeful because of a self centered motive, but it desires to vindicate the righteousness of God.

John MacArthur put it like this, “When the meek person becomes angry, he is aroused by that which maligns God or is harmful to others, not by what is done against himself. and His anger is controlled and carefully directed, not a careless and wild venting of emotion that spatters everyone who is near.” and Again we see that in Jesus, people spat on Him, beat Him, insulted and hurled all kinds of false accusations against Him, and yet never once did He seek to defend Himself.

Yet when it came to His disciples coming under the scrutiny of the Pharisees or some leper or lame individual, or at times a certain woman. He was always right there to expose their hypocritical theology and defend those who were unable to defend themselves and then lift the one up who was in need and direct their hearts toward the Father in a mild and gentle manner. So you might say that a trademark of meekness or gentleness is self-control. Able to refrain, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, when being personally attacked and scrutinized from lashing back and engaging in a like manner. Yet being able to carefully funnel the balance of that in the defense of the Gospel or a brother or sister in need. Prov 16:32 says that, *“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.”*

Now, next in this progression in these attributes of the worthy walk we see that which is an outgrowth of lowliness and gentleness; that being longsuffering, or patience. Literally long-tempered which of course is the opposite of short tempered, and again this may seem a bit familiar to many of you because having just come out of the letter to the Galatians this should still be fairly fresh in your minds. Gal 5:22-23 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”*

The fruit of the Spirit is love, but encompassed in that is all these other attributes, a few of which we’re reading of right here, longsuffering, bearing with one another in love. You might say that love (agape’) is that which is to oil our relationships, it keeps them running smoothly by means of all these other characteristics that we’ve been studying. 1 Cor 13 tells us that, *“Love suffers long and is kind.”* It’s patient with others, how many years did Ab have to wait patiently to obtain the promise of a son from God? Noah spent 120 years building the ark and preaching of the righteousness of God and the coming judgment while waiting upon the flood.

Aristotle once said that the greatest Greek virtue was refusal to tolerate any insult and readiness to strike back. But in reality that’s just the opposite of a godly virtue 1 Thess 5:14 says that we’re to, *“be patient with all.”* Again with Jesus as our example who never once returned evil for evil or complained to His heavenly Father for the circumstances that He was in. We’re to bear with one another in love, why, well, there are a number of reasons all of them being significant. We read in 1 Peter 4:8 *“above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”* Prov 10:12 says, *“Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.”*

It was the love and grace of God that has covered your sin, if you know Jesus Christ and only the love of God in your life can cause you live a life like we're speaking of this morning, because only the love of God gives continuously and unconditionally. Every other type of love is selfish, it either loves for what's in it for you or it'll give as long as it gets in return, so it's either totally selfish, not caring what's in it for the other person, or it will give, as long as it gets in return, and when you stop scratching my back, I'll stop scratching yours. But only the love of God can cause one to walk in a continual state of lowliness and gentleness, being patient with all and bearing with others faults and shortcomings and those things that seem to get on your nerves. Because agape' isn't in it for selfish reasons, agape is in it for selfless reasons, it doesn't matter if love or grace or kindness is ever reciprocated or given back to me, I just want to bless your life. and That type of love my friends isn't natural, it's supernatural, it's the love of God, Agape' gave God's only begotten Son so that whoever would believe on Him wouldn't perish, but have everlasting life. and Agape sent the only begotten Son of God to this earth, not when everything was hunky-dory and it was a high time to enter into this world because He would be exalted and worshipped as the Most high God. But rather He came knowing that the world would hate Him, that He would be despised and rejected by men, that was God's demonstration of love, people say I want God to prove that He loves me.

What greater proof do you want, no greater love has anyone then this, than to lay down ones life for His friends, but yet in a sense Jesus out did Himself because He didn't lay down His life for only His friends, but for His enemies as well. Even after He'd been scourged and spat upon, beaten, humiliated, ridiculed, had a crown of thorns beaten down on His head and crucified, Jesus said, "Father forgive them, they don't even know what they're doing."

Rom 5:8 says that, "*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" and Agape' can't be fabricated, it can't be worked from the outside in, it's not an outward conformation but an inward transformation, so these truths found here in vs 2 show us the fact that Christian unity doesn't begin with external structure, but rather in the inward attitudes of the heart.

Vs2-3

This word "endeavoring" is the Greek word "spoudazo (spoo-dad'-zo)" it means, "to use speed" or "make haste" it means "be diligent". You know when Paul told Timothy to "Study", or "be diligent" to show himself approved unto God, it's the same Greek word, it means, "make every effort" in a consistent ongoing manner. So you and I are to study how we might keep the unity of the Spirit, or to make every effort and be quick about it, when it comes to keeping or preserving the unity of the Spirit; that is the Holy Spirit. and Notice that, Spiritual unity is not nor can it be *created* by the church. It already exists and has been created by the Holy Spirit, so we're not to *produce* the unity, but to *preserve* the unity.

This the unity that Jesus was praying for in John 17:21-23 when He said, *“that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and (why?) that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”* You see that’s what it’s so important that we seek to maintain the unity of the Spirit, but instead all too often because of our foolish pride we’d rather splinter off and do our own thing rather than be reconciled to our brother or sister, and we scar our witness and the integrity of God, instead of becoming peacemakers we become peace breakers. But what is the bond that preserves the unity of the Spirit? Peace, that’s why the bible says, *“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”*

That’s why Jesus said, *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.”* Now again this isn’t in reference to organizational or denominational unity, because all that involves is compromise after compromise in certain uncompromisable areas of doctrine, (of which we emphasized the importance of last week) in or to get everybody into the same boat. You cannot compromise the major doctrines of the word of God, yes we’re to be peacemakers, and we’re not to be troublemakers, but peace isn’t to be had at the price of compromise. That’s not wisdom, James 3:17-18 tells us that, *“the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”* 1 Cor 1:10 *“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* So it’s not an organizational unity, but rather a Spiritual unity that already exists by the work of the Holy Spirit and we’re to walk in it and maintain it. Why, because in reality there is only one body (vs4)

Vs4-6

Of course the emphasis in these vs is on the Triune God as Jesus said, that we would be one even as He and the Father are One, and our unity is rooted in the Triune God. The Spirit being emphasized in vs 4, the Lord Jesus in vs 5 and God the Father in vs 6, there is only one body, and that is the body of Christ, which the one Spirit, that is the Holy Spirit has created. There may be several denominations but there’s only one body, you’re either in the body of Christ or your not.

It doesn't matter what name you paint on the sign, you're either in Christ or not and you're brought into the body of Christ by the work of the one Spirit, the Holy Spirit upon your placing your faith in Jesus Christ Rom 8:15-16 says, "*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*" and You were called in one hope of your calling, there are 7 areas of "oneness" here that Paul mentions, though he doesn't expound on them but they are, one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father. But here we read, one hope of your calling ultimately the call to salvation, the call from darkness to light, from eternal death to everlasting life, and from separation from God, to salvation unto God. Titus 2:13 "*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*" 1 Tim 1:1 speaks of the "*Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.*" Our hope isn't just some event, but it's a person involved in that event, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ coming back for us, not just going to heaven, the fact that He's going to be there is what makes it heaven, the Lord Jesus is our common hope.

Vs5

One Lord, again obviously the Lord Jesus Acts 4:12, "*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" Rom 14:9 "*For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.*" 1 Cor 8:6 speaks of, "*one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.*" and One Faith, speaking specifically of the word of God, the bible tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, the faith that unifies us and weaves us together is the word of God, Jude vs 3 tells us to "*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*" The faith, the word of God that was once for all delivered to the saints, and we're to contend earnestly for the faith, again rightly dividing the word of truth, seeing what God has to say concerning the issues of life, not what our opinion is, that doesn't matter. What matters is what does God say, now we're not to be contentious, but we are to contend for the faith, there's a difference, we're not to be spitefully argumentative, but we should stand vehemently for the truth of the word of God, one faith, and one baptism. Again into Christ, 1 Cor 12:12-13 "*For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*"

Now again not the baptism of the Spirit, that's something completely different that is for the purpose of empowering you to lead a godly life in the midst of a godless people and generation. But that's not what this is speaking of here, because in the baptism of the Spirit, the baptizer is Jesus, the element is the Spirit, and the result is power. But in this context the baptizer is the Spirit, the element is the body and the result is unity, you see those are two different things. This is the baptism that makes us one, being plunged by the Spirit into the body of Christ.

Vs6

One God and Father of all, again that is all believers and we developed that in a previous study so we won't now, but this is in reference to Him being the Father of us who have placed our faith in Jesus Christ. So again this epistle has such tremendous emphasis on unity, all of the resources that are ours in Christ are to be utilized 1<sup>st</sup> in living loving unity so that the body of Christ might be properly built up, so that the world might see and come to Jesus in and through the way that we live and lead our lives.