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God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

The Book of Ephesians

Alive In Christ: Discovering Our Identity & Purpose

Part 5: Walking Worthy Of Our Calling

Ephesians 4:1-16

Today we continue our historical and chronological journey through the New Testament with Part 2 of The letter to the Ephesians. This Letter was written by the Apostle Paul during his first Roman imprisonment, around AD 60–62. Paul composed four letters now known as the Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians.

Over the past three weeks, we have been living in the first half of Ephesians — and what a journey it has been.

We began in **Chapter 1** with the breathtaking declaration of who we are *in Christ* — chosen before the foundation of the world, adopted into God's family, sealed by His Spirit, and seated in the heavenly realms.

We moved into **Chapter 2:1–10** and stood at the edge of the graveyard — dead in sin, controlled by the world, the flesh, and the devil. And then we heard those two words that changed everything: "***But God.***" Rich in mercy. Overflowing in love. He reached into the grave and pulled us out. He made us His masterpiece.

He saved us by grace — not because of anything we did, but entirely because of everything He is.

And last week in **Chapters 2:11 through 3:21**, Paul widened the lens. He showed us that our position in Christ is not just *vertical* — it is also *horizontal*. Not just *personal* — it is *communal*. We were once complete outsiders — without Christ, without citizenship, without hope, without God. But through the blood of Jesus, the wall came down, the veil was torn, and the door swung wide open.

We are no longer strangers.

We are citizens of heaven. Members of God's family. Living stones being built together into a holy temple for the living God. Entrusted with the sacred mystery of grace. Given access to the glorious, unlimited resources of Christ's love. And called to display the manifold wisdom of God to a watching universe.

And Paul closed that magnificent first half with a doxology that soars to the heights of praise.

Eph. 3:20,21... "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."

Now here is where everything changes.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe observed that Ephesians moves in **two great movements** —

POSITION and **PRACTICE**.

Chapters 1–3: Our POSITION in Christ
(*Doctrinal / Vertical*)

Answers the question: *Who are we in Christ?*

Chapters 4–6: Our PRACTICE on Earth
(*Practical / Horizontal*)

Answers the question: *How then shall we live?*

You cannot have the practice without the position.
You cannot walk worthy of a calling you do not yet understand.

But here is the critical truth: **now that you understand it — you are responsible to walk in it.** Paul spent three chapters building the most magnificent theological foundation in all of Scripture. And now — right here at the great hinge of this letter — he turns from declaration to application. From doctrine to duty. From what God has *done* to how we are to *live*. And the bridge between the two is a single word.

Therefore.

"Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God." ([Ephesians 4:1](#))

Therefore — *in light of everything I have just told you about who you are in Christ —*‘]

WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING!

- Not to *earn* your position. You already have it — completely, permanently, by grace.
- Not to *maintain* your salvation. Christ secured it — fully, finally, forever.

But because **WHO YOU ARE MUST IMPACT HOW YOU WALK.**

Today, in Chapter 4 we cross the hinge.

**We move from the
DECLARATION OF OUR IDENTITY
to the
DEMONSTRATION OF IT.**

From what God has done *for* us, *in* us, and *between* us — to what He is now calling us to do *together*, as one body, walking worthy of the extraordinary calling we have received.

The question is no longer *"What has God done?"*

The question is now: *"How will we respond?"*

- **The Call to Walk Worthy** (4:1–3) — The Character of the Walk...Humility, gentleness, patience, and the unity of the Spirit
- **The Foundation of Our Unity** (4:4–6) — The Seven "ones" that anchor the church together
- **The Equipping Gifts Christ Gave** (4:7–12) — Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers — Equipping the saints. Empowering the Church's Walk.
- **The Goal: Maturity in Christ** (4:13–16) — Growing up into the Head, speaking truth in love

I. THE CALL TO WALK WORTHY

Ephesians 4:1–3...¹ *Therefore I, Paul, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.* ² *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.*

The Character Required for the Walk

Paul does not command this from an ivory palace. He writes as a **"prisoner for serving the Lord."** A Roman chain is around his wrist, but his soul is free. And with pastoral urgency, he says: *"I beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling."*

The Greek word translated *"worthy"* is *axios*. It comes from the ancient marketplace of scales and balances. It means to balance the beam — what is placed on one side of the scale must equal the weight on the other side.

On one side of the scale, God has placed the staggering weight of His grace: chosen, redeemed, sealed, forgiven, loved with an immeasurable love.

Paul is saying: **Now let your daily conduct balance the weight of that calling!**

And what does a worthy walk look like? Paul does not begin with dramatic spiritual feats or public

performances. He begins with quiet, inward virtues (vv. 2–3):

1. **Always be humble** (*tapeinophrosyne* ταπεινοφροσύνης): In the Greco-Roman world, humility was despised as weakness. But in the Kingdom of God, humility is seeing yourself honestly before a holy God. Pride builds walls; humility builds bridges.
2. **Be gentle** (*praotes*-πραΰτης): Not weakness, but **power under control** — like a spirited stallion harnessed to the master's bridle. Gentleness never uses its strength to crush others.
3. **Be patient** (*makrothymis*- μακροθυμίας): Literally, "long-tempered." It means having a long fuse when people rub you the wrong way.
4. **Making allowance for each other's faults because of your love:** It means giving people room to grow, bearing with their quirks and shortcomings, because grace bore with yours.
5. **Making every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit:** Notice Paul does not say *create* unity — the Holy Spirit already created it at the cross! Our assignment is to **guard, protect, and maintain** that unity through the bond of peace.

Practical Takeaway: *A worthy walk is not measured by how loud you sing on Sunday, but by how much grace you extend on Monday.*

II. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR UNITY: THE SEVEN "ONES"

Ephesians 4:4–6... ⁴ *For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.* ⁵ *There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,* ⁶ *one God and Father of all, Who is over all, in all, and living through all.*

Walking in Agreement

The prophet Amos once asked a penetrating question:

"Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"
(**Amos 3:3**)

To walk together, you must be in agreement on the destination, the direction, and the path. Paul knows that unity in the church cannot be manufactured on superficial smiles or polite handshakes. It must be anchored in deep, unshakeable theological reality.

So Paul lays down **Seven "Ones"** — the indestructible foundation upon which the church walks together:

THE SEVEN "ONES" OF CHRISTIAN UNITY (vv. 4–6)

1. ONE BODY → The living church of Jesus Christ across all nations. There are many local congregations, but only one universal body of Christ.

2. ONE SPIRIT → The Holy Spirit who convicts, regenerates, and seals every believer. Not different spirits for different factions, but the one Holy Spirit animating every believer.

3. ONE HOPE → The glorious future: Christ's return and eternal life. We are all marching toward the exact same glorious finish line.

4. ONE LORD → Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and reigning. **One Lord Jesus** who bought us with His blood.

5. ONE FAITH → The unchanging truth of the gospel handed down to the saints

6. ONE BAPTISM → The Spirit's baptism placing us into Christ, pictured in water. The core doctrinal deposit of the gospel — not negotiable, not up for revision.

7. ONE GOD & FATHER → The sovereign Creator who is over all, in all, and living through all. We share the same spiritual initiation into Christ.

Notice the Trinity woven through these verses: **One Spirit** (v. 4), **One Lord Jesus** (v. 5), **One Father** (v. 6). The church's unity is rooted in the very unity of the Godhead!

Practical Takeaway: *When minor disagreements threaten to divide us, we anchor ourselves in the Seven "Ones." We may have diverse personalities, but we share one foundation.*

III. THE EQUIPPING GIFTS: EMPOWERING THE CHURCH'S WALK

Ephesians 4:7–12...⁷ *However, He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.* ⁸ *That is why the Scriptures say, "When He ascended to the heights, He led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to His people."* ⁹ *Notice that it says "He ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world.* ¹⁰ *And the same One who descended is the One who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that He might fill the entire universe with Himself.* ¹¹ *Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.* ¹² *Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ.*

How Christ Builds and Unifies His Body

Unity does not mean uniformity. A choir is not made of everyone singing the exact same note; it is made of different voices singing different parts in harmony.

Look at verse 7: *"However, He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ."*

In vs. 8–10, Paul quotes Psalm 68, painting a triumphant picture of an ancient Roman conqueror returning from battle, leading his captives in a victory parade & distributing the spoils of war to his citizens.

Christ descended to our lowly world, conquered sin and death, ascended back to glory, and from His throne He showered gifts upon His church!

And in verse 11, Paul highlights **FOUR DISTINCT GIFTED ROLES** that Christ gave as leaders to the church:

THE FOUR EQUIPPING ROLES (v. 11)

└— APOSTLES → The foundational messengers sent with authority to plant and establish

└— PROPHETS → The truth-tellers who proclaimed God's direct revelation

└— EVANGELISTS → The frontline burden-bearers who proclaim the good news to the lost

└— PASTORS & TEACHERS → The shepherd-teachers who feed, guard, and guide the flock
(Note: In the Greek text, "pastors and teachers" are bound together by a single grammatical article — pastor-teachers — describing shepherds who feed their sheep with sound doctrine).

Now, why did Christ give these four gift-roles to the church? Look at verse 12: *"Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ."*

This is one of the most revolutionary verses in the entire New Testament!

The pastor's job is **not** to do all the work of the ministry while the congregation sits in the bleachers and watches.

The Greek word for "equip" is *katartismos*. It was used in secular Greek in two vivid ways:

1. **Medical:** For setting a broken bone back into place so the limb could function again.
2. **Maritime:** For mending and repairing torn fishing nets so the fishermen could catch fish again (used of James and John mending nets in Matt. 4:21).

The pastor-teacher is not a solo performer; he is a **net-mender**. He is a coach, an equipper, setting bones in place and repairing nets through the Word of God so that **every member of the body can do the work of ministry!**

When every believer uses their gift, the church walks forward in power and unity.

Practical Takeaway: *Every member is a minister. You are not a spectator in the church; you are an essential part of the workforce.*

IV. THE GOAL OF THE WALK: MATURITY, TRUTH IN LOVE, & CHRISTLIKENESS

Our Ultimate Life Goal – Maturity in Christlikeness

What is the finish line of all this equipping, unity, and walking?

1. Spiritual Childhood vs. Spiritual Maturity

(vv. 13–14)

Ephesians 4:13–16...¹³ *This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.* ¹⁴ *Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.*

Children are easily distracted, easily deceived, and unstable. They chase every shiny novelty. Paul says an unequipped, disunified church is like a boat without a rudder, tossed by every wind of cultural ideology and clever deception. But a mature church is anchored in the truth of God's Word.

2. Speaking the Truth in Love (v. 15)

¹⁵ *Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, Who is the head of His body, the church.*

This is a key aspect of Christian maturity.

- If you have **truth without love**, you become harsh, legalistic, judgmental, and destructive. You bludgeon people with the Bible and drive them away from Christ.

- If you have **love without truth**, you become sentimental, compromising, and spineless. You tolerate sin and leave people in spiritual ruin.
- But when you unite **truth AND love**, you create the exact environment in which spiritual growth happens!

Truth without love is a weapon; love without truth is an illusion. **Truth in love is the healing balm of the gospel.**

3. The Ultimate Life Goal: Measuring Up to Christ (v. 16)

Look at how verse 16 describes the fully mature church:

"He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

Your ultimate life goal is not financial success, worldly status, or personal comfort.

YOUR ULTIMATE LIFE GOAL IS TO GROW UP INTO THE LIKENESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

He is the Head. We are the body. And when every ligament, every joint, and every member does its part — speaking truth in love, anchored in the Seven Ones, equipped by the Word — the church becomes a living, breathing portrait of Jesus Christ to a broken world!

CONCLUSION & INVITATION

Church, look at where Ephesians 4 has brought us today:

- We have been called with a **sovereign, holy calling** — now we must **walk worthy of it**.
- We have been anchored in **Seven indestructible "Ones"** — walking in agreement and unity.
- We have been **equipped by Christ's gifts** — every member activated for ministry.
- We are called to **speak the truth in love** — growing daily into the image of Jesus Christ, our ultimate goal.

Pastoral Invitation:

To every believer here today:

Are you walking worthy of the calling you received? Are you guarding the unity of this body, or are you letting pride, impatience, or bitterness create fractures? Are you using the gifts Christ placed in your hands to build up His church, or are you sitting on the sidelines?

Today is the day to step into the stride of grace — humble, gentle, patient, speaking truth in love, and committed to growing into the likeness of Christ.

To anyone who has never trusted Jesus Christ:

You cannot walk the Christian walk until you have received the Christian life. You cannot balance the scale of grace until you let Jesus place His righteousness on your account.

He died for your sins, rose from the grave, and offers you complete forgiveness today.

Step across the threshold of faith today. Come to Christ.

Let us bow our heads and pray together.

"Father, we thank You for the high and holy calling we have received in Jesus Christ. Forgive us for the times our walk has not matched our wealth in Him. Teach us to be humble, gentle, and patient with one another. Guard our unity in the Spirit. Equip every member of this congregation for the work of ministry, and help us to speak the truth in love every single day — that we may grow up in all things into Christ, our living Head. In His mighty and matchless Name we pray, Amen."

Ephesians 4:1-16 (New Living Translation)

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