

Ephesians 4:1, 2:8-10

I. Ephesians 4:1: “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling”

A. “Worthy”

Greek: “axios” = two things that have the same weight, are in equilibrium

Image: Marketplace scales: weighing food for purchase

Idea: God’s calling and our walking should be in equilibrium, weigh the same. Our lives should measure up to/reflect what God has done

B. “Calling”

= all that God has done for us, what we’ve received (Eph. 1-3)

-blessed us with every spiritual blessing

-chosen by him

-adopted as his sons and daughters

-gave his son to us; forgave all our sins through the death of his son

-gave his Spirit to us: filled with his Holy Spirit

-destined for an eternity of bliss and happiness

-rescued from Satan’s control and given freedom in Christ

-reconciled to one another, brought into a new family

C. “Walking”

= Our response to God’s call: God calls and we walk (Eph. 4-6)

“walking” is an image of us going about our daily lives

D. Are we living lives that are worthy of God’s calling?

1. In how we spend our time, resources, the words we speak, the things that occupy our thoughts, the way we treat people, the way we model to our children, etc

2. Are we “Living lives that demand an explanation.”

E. Paul is living a life that is worthy

4:1: “I urge you as a prisoner of the Lord”

He has given his life away for the cause of Christ, and he invites us into the same adventure

F. Analogy: Saving Private Ryan

Private Ryan came back from the war with a sense that his life had to be worthy of the men who risked their lives and even died for him in Europe

II. How do we respond to this call to live worthy lives?

A. Some of us probably feel inspired and encouraged

B. Some of us probably feel overwhelmed and burdened

C. We should avoid the temptation of “Treadmill Christianity”: Striving for this worthy life in our own power

2. We should avoid the temptation of “Passive Christianity”: Doing nothing and simply falling back on the idea of God’s grace as an excuse not to grow

III. Two encouraging perspectives from Ephesians

A. This worthy life doesn’t have to be sensational and spectacular. It can simply be about living our daily circumstances out of who we are in Christ

1. Ephesians 4-6 does not describe a spectacular life but simply a faithful life

- Maintain unity
- Use your unique gifts to serve each other
- Walk in the truth
- Walk in love
- Walk in light
- Walk in wisdom
- Husbands and wives
- Parents and Children
- Slaves and Masters
- Stand firm against Satan's strategies

2. So this is not a life that is thoroughly out of our reach. It's simply about stepping into the situations we face every day, and asking: "What would be worthy Christ in this situation? How can I live out of who I am in Christ?"

With spouses, friends, co-workers, with money, thoughts, etc

B. This worthy life is not an obligation that we strive for on our own power. Rather, it's a gift we get to walk into by God's grace and power.

1. Ephesians 2:8-9: We were saved by grace not by any of our works

2. Ephesians 2:10: We are God's workmanship, saved for Good works

So: we weren't saved BY our good works, but we were saved FOR works
God's point in saving us is not just to forgive us, but to rescue us from an old life, change us, and set us on a new course of good works

a. God prepares the works in advance so we would walk in them (2:10)

1) Analogy: God lays out a red carpet of good works that we get to walk into. Fidelity commercial: we follow the green arrow of good works God has laid out

2) So we don't wake up feeling obligated/burdened to try to live up to something. Rather we wake up asking God: "what good works do you have planned for me today that I get to walk into?"

b. God is the one who empowers us to do the works

1) Phil 2:12: work out salvation with fear and trembling, for it's God who works in you to will and to act according to good purpose.

2) 2 Cor 8:1: Paul says that the good works of generosity in a church in Macedonia are the effect of God's grace in their lives: "the grace that God has given the Macedonian church"

3) God's grace is bigger than just what we get when we mess up. It's his whole posture of unmerited favor towards us which also empowers us for living a worthy life

Conclusion

What's an area of your own life you would like to lean into this New Year and aim to live a life worthy of the calling?

Discussion Questions

1. As you consider the call to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling,” where do you see the biggest gaps in your own life where you see a lot of room to grow?
2. Two responses to feeling that gap between how our lives should be and how they actually are were explained on Sunday by the terms “treadmill Christianity” and “passive Christianity.” In your experience, do most Christians tend more towards “treadmill Christianity” or “passive Christianity”? How about you?
3. On Sunday it was argued that truly living lives worthy of the calling can be hard in the context of America (the center of cultural Christianity) and specifically Orange County (the center of wealthy cultural Christianity). Is it actually harder to live out the gospel faithfully in our context or not?
4. Does the phrase “we are not saved BY good works but we are saved FOR good works” accurately convey the truth of the gospel, in your opinion?
5. How did the idea that “God has prepared good works in advance for us” (Eph 2:10) impact you?
6. Explain what was meant by the statement made on Sunday. “Grace is much bigger than just what God gives us when we mess up.” How does that idea effect how we live our lives, if at all?
7. What is a particular area in your life where you feel called to live a more worthy life in this New Year (marriage, job, parenting, thought life, relationships, etc), and what might some first steps be along those lines?