

Ephesians 4:1-3

Today's passage marks a characteristic shift in Paul's writing from the indicative (the truth of the Gospel of Christ) to the imperative (how we should live in light of the truth). We see this quite clearly in v. 1 as Paul writes, "I therefore..." The "therefore" is the flashing light to signify the connection between what has gone before (the teaching of the mystery of the Gospel and our calling to walk in it) to what is coming. Today, we are going to examine how the four admonitions that Paul lists in v. 2 make sense in light of the Gospel.

1. Humility

- a. The first admonition that Paul gives the Ephesians is to live with humility
- b. The term is easily defined as "modesty"
- c. The point here is quite clear... the Christian life is a humble life
- d. Why?
 - i. The answer is just as obvious
 - ii. The Gospel is the good news that Christ came to redeem sinners
 - 1. Jesus is our Savior and Lord
 - 2. He deserves our praise and adoration and allegiance
 - 3. We are the sinners, the lowly ones who were unable and unwilling to heed the law of God
 - 4. We were desperate and hopeless or, as the Apostle says "dead in our sins" (2:1)
- e. The Gospel engenders humility for the precise reason that it is a message of God's love directed towards lifeless and impotent individuals
- f. How can I think too highly of myself when all of the blessings and privileges I enjoy are a product of God's grace? Where does pride (the opposite of humility) fit in the life of a true believer? The answer is that it is absurd to be prideful when I know the Gospel of Christ

2. Gentleness

- a. This term means "kindness" or "meekness"
- b. Whereas humility deals with my soul's disposition, gentleness has bearing on my interactions with others
- c. A gentle person is one who is predisposed to grace and grace flows from a proper understanding of my own predicament and a desire to show the kindness I have received
- d. We are gentle with others when we realize that God is gentle with us
 - i. Those who insist upon "justice" and "judgment" for others are rarely all that in tune with the grace and mercy God offers them!

ii. When we contemplate the fact that God bears with us in love every day

1. When we consider the fact that God patiently and lovingly leads us to truth, corrects us without harm and bears with us in love, gentleness flows

e. The Gospel tells me that God had every right to be wrathful towards me but, in His mercy, He gently leads me day by day

f. How can I turn around and be wrathful towards my brother when I have been forgiven so much?

3. Patience

a. The term patience could also be rendered “forbearance”

b. It denotes the practice of lovingly and regularly walking with those who are imperfect and in need of continued sanctification

c. I don’t need to be patient when I agree and jive with the people I am around

i. I need to be patient when I am tried and upset by the sinful imperfections of others

d. Patience flows from the Gospel because the Gospel reminds me that God has been, and is being, patient with me!

e. God was patient and longsuffering with me in my sin

i. He could have justly killed me when I was an insolent and arrogant teenager

ii. He could still pour out His wrath on me as I continue to struggle in sins that have not totally been removed from my life

f. Nevertheless, God extends mercy to me and I should extend mercy to others!

g. Furthermore, patience flows through faith

i. How can I be patient with a brother or sister in Christ? In part, I can be patient with them in the conviction that God will finish in them what He started (Philippians 1:6).

ii. I can know that He will eventually sanctify these individuals entirely which means that I can trust that He is working in their lives, even when they annoy or frustrate or hurt me

4. Bearing with one another

a. The term literally means “to put up with”

b. Sometimes, the moment calls for me to simply strive with someone who is not easy to be around!

c. I bear with others when they do things that are:

i. Foolish

ii. Sinful

iii. Annoying

- d. Why would I do these things? The answer is that God bears with me!
- e. How often do I continue in patterns and struggles that He has warned me about, convicted me over and condemned?
- f. All the time!
- g. God in Christ was always bearing with His disciples
 - i. He was bearing with Peter and his big mouth
 - ii. He was bearing with James and John and their presumptuous mother
 - iii. He was bearing with the men who asked foolish questions
 - iv. He bears with me when I continue to wander when He has warned me not to
 - v. He bears with me when I make foolish mistakes