



Ephesians

Part 25

Ephesians 4:1-7
Week of August 29, 2021

Before Connect Group

- Read Ephesians 4:1-7
 - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
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I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Ephesians 4:1-7, ESV

Sermon Notes

Your success or failure in obedience cannot and does not reflect the success or failure of Christ's ultimate success in obedience to the Father.

Have you ever been a part of a team? Have you ever experienced the pressure of representing something bigger than you? There is a real pressure that comes with living up to standards that are set out by someone else.

Chapter three ends with a doxology of praise and glory to God. "Amen" marks the transition of this passage. If you are willing to say "amen" to the previous three chapters, then you are bound to work through the next three. By nature, the next three chapters are significantly more practical. There are over 40 imperatives (commands) given in the text of chapters 4-6. Clearly Paul is seeking to see us do something with this glorious calling we have upon our lives. This is contrasted to the 1 imperative we see in the first three chapters. There is a clear movement of transition that we spent our time last week talking about. The Gospel work of God to the response of His people.

- From Theology to Praxis
 - If we are in agreement with the gift of God's grace and the outworking of the mystery of Christ in our own hearts, then we must conclude that this Theology finds its end in practical outflow of our lives.
 - What good is it to believe in something that does not have the power to impact the very purpose and direction of your life.
 - The one who attends church on Sundays and claims to be a Christian, but does not live a life worthy of that description is one who is engaged in merely social religion and not New Creation Faith in Jesus Christ!
 - When we see the Glory of Christ clearly on top of the mountain, it changes the perspective and the way we direct our lives when we come down off the mountain.
- From walking worthy of sin to walking worthy of our Calling.
 - I only introduced this point at the end of my sermon last week, because we are going to spend most of our time today on this very one.
 - There is so much to consider and see within this phrase here in our text... "I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called"
 - Here is what I want to challenge you with this week. I want you to work through this opening part of chapter 4 with me and I want you to take every observation we make about this text and measure it up against your heart. I want you to not simply agree with or disagree with what I am saying, I want you to open these words up with me and leave no corner of your heart unchecked.
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Do You Truly Believe That You Are Living On The Foundation of the Grace of God in Christ?

- God moves first, then we move
- You have "been called"... The awkward construction of this is to point out that Paul's urging of willful obedience is founded upon the faith and understanding of what God has already done in full grace and fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- What we are doing here today is opening up a discussion of Sanctification that will consume Paul's attention in this chapter.
- We are not questioning the completeness of the work of Christ. This is important for us at

this point.

- Your success or failure in obedience cannot and does not reflect the success or failure of Christ's ultimate success in obedience to the Father.
- It is important to know that Paul has sealed the victorious and full work of Christ to bring about God's blessings upon all who would believe. Adoption, redemption, sealing of the Spirit, the resurrection of dead hearts to life, the New Creation through faith, the One new man who is built up with no division as the house for the very presence of God... None of this is in question. The words of Christ on the Cross "it is finished" are words that confirm the complete nature of His work.
- If we are struggling in our lives right now, if we step back and take an objective and honest look at our lives, not beating ourselves down in self-deprecation or arrogantly declaring ourselves "good," we cannot declare the work of Christ insufficient, if we truly have faith in Christ, we also cannot declare ourselves failures and just give up or find comfort in any sin.
- The full power that God worked in Christ is at work in you!
- The only question that can arise within you is in regards to your faith. This is both a relief and also a concern for many.
- It is a relief in that the victory and the power of Christ is a fact. It is a guaranteed victory over every enemy and all sin and death.
- The overcoming of sin and your labor in this life is not based upon you. This morning, you can lay down all that has built up this past week and you can walk in righteousness and holiness! The impossibility built into this statement is the very power and victory that is in Christ!
- *1 John 5:4-5 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*
- And by concern, ongoing sin that finds a comfortable home in our lives as an accepted rhythm can only call into question the truth and validity of our own true faith and conversion in Jesus.
- We would rather question the value of the Church or the teaching of the Bible than to question our own faith. We would rather try to detach truth from the convicting word of God than to face the facts that I may not truly believe in Christ as the one and only Son of God.
- The problem we have here are with Paul's words "walk in a manner worthy"

Where Is Your Life Really Headed?

- "walk" - *Peripeteo* This word can mean anything from literally walking on a path to the true consumption of your life. The latter is how Paul most often uses this word in His writings. Even further, the NT authors often associated this word with the external reality of the internal truth of faith.
- *1 John 1:6-7 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*
- We could go many directions to try and navigate the understanding of this idea of "walking" but let's just walk through some of the ideas based on the way it is used here in Ephesians which has more instances of this word than any of the other Epistles.
- Walking is used to describe the opposing contrast between the one who has faith and the one who does not.
- *Ephesians 2:1-2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit*

that is now at work in the sons of disobedience

- *Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
- Faith is not just a private matter of the heart, it is a transforming moment when we are internally transformed with external impact.
- Walking is used here in our text as an act of the will to live a life reflecting this transformation.
- This highlights the will in obedience. You are not a robot who simply gets reprogrammed and must follow your new directives. This is also not just a natural outflow for those who believe. By which I mean that it is an ongoing battle (that is worth every fight) to conform to obedience to the will of God.
- *1 Peter 1:13-19 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*
- *Ephesians 4:17-24 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*
- Walking is used in regards to imitating the Characteristics of Christ in our obedience.
- *Ephesians 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*
- Walk in light (Ephesians 5:8) in Christ
- Walk in wisdom (Ephesians 5:15)

Are You Worthy?

- This is a question that is intentionally concerning. However, I think this is a key part of the text we are working through. Walk worthily of your calling. There is great potential to honor the Gospel in this understanding, but there is also great potential to die in the lack of merit in our misunderstanding.
- I think there are a few ways for us to think through what is being said here.
- We are to strive to uphold the family name.
- *1 Thessalonians 2:12 we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.*
- We are to live in complete dependance upon the Gospel.
- *1 John 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*
- Allow the Spirit to work within us.
- *Colossians 1:9-14 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you,*

asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- You are not doing this work alone.

Worthy is not a matter of your value. That has already been set in Christ. It is a matter of your valuing the word that has been done to joyfully live a life that aligns to the greatest Glory you have ever known.

Connect Group Discussion Questions

- What is the relationship between our standing with God and our works? Which one comes first? Why is this order vital to our understanding of salvation and faith?
- What does it mean to be worthy? Who is it that makes us worthy? How is the worthiness of God imputed to us?
- If someone were to take an outside look at your life, what would they say drives you? What would you be “walking in” as displayed by your life?
- How do we put our foundation on the grace of God? What changed in our life when we are founded by the grace of God?
- What is the difference between walking worthy and having value? What defines each of these?
- What difficulties do you face as you seek to walk in the manner worthy of the calling you have received? What internal struggles make this difficult for you?

Challenge For The Week

Out of the doxology of our worship of God comes a transformed and renewed life according to the calling we have received. Our life, everything we do, comes alive because of the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.

- Consider where you need to wage war against the sin in your lives to seek to move you away from the purpose and plan that God has for you. Find a discipleship partner and walk through steps together.
- The Gospel has the power to turn the dead into living and restore our relationship with God. Find someone you know who needs to hear the Gospel. Pray for them this week and look for opportunities to invite them to church.

