

**Walk Worthy**

**8-16-09**

**Ephesians 4:1-6**

When a person joins an organization he obligates himself

To live by the standards of the group

A citizen is obliged to live by the laws of the country

An employee is obligated to work according to the rules of his employer

Members of clubs obligate themselves to abide by its standards

When I was in college one of the fraternities got kicked off campus

They were known for their wild parties

One of them was wilder than most and they lost their recognition

It eventually led to their losing the fraternity franchise

That fraternity no longer existed at the college

The charges against them read something like this

For conduct unbecoming of students at Northern Illinois University

Apparently the governing board was just waiting for the incident to occur

They had been looking for a reason to suspend the group

They lived a life that was considered unworthy of students

And they lost their privilege

Aren't you glad that God doesn't watch us from heaven with a critical eye

Judging our behavior and when we cross the line – kick us out

He doesn't do that and He won't do that but let me tell you

**God wants you to live a life worthy of being called by His Son's name**

We have come to a major turning point in Paul's Letter

For three chapters Paul has given us incredible truths of the Christian life

We were chosen before the foundation of the world

Blessed with every spiritual blessing

Predestined to adoption as sons

We have redemption – forgiveness of sin

An inheritance awaits us

We are forever sealed by the Holy Spirit – never to be let go

And it's all free

**Everything in the Christian life including the life itself**

**Has come to you by grace**

You have done absolutely nothing to deserve it

You can do absolutely nothing to deserve it

**All you have in Christ**

**God reached down from heaven and handed it to you**

God with His great love of you held out His hand and said – here 2X

Now there is a Christian principle that input - what you have been taught

Should result in output – practical works of Christian service

For three chapters Paul has been discussing input

What God has put into you

Much of the rest of Paul's letter is about output

The word therefore that begins chapter 4

Marks the transition from positional truth to practical truth - how you live

From doctrine to duty – from principle to practice

**You see right doctrine is essential to right living**

It is impossible to live a faithful Christian life

Without knowing biblical doctrine

There's no way even the most sincere believer can live a life pleasing to God

Without knowing how God wants him to live

**Those who discard biblical theology will almost always discard Christian living**

We want to purchase a new building

But being in a new location will not impact our spiritual lives

Church renewal does not come from buildings or programs or methods

**Church renewal begins with the renewing of our minds**

Later in this chapter Paul prays

That you would **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**

Our minds are the key to renewal

**It is only when the spirit of our minds**

**Grasp the holiness and righteousness of God's truth**

## **That we are renewed**

Peter tells us that growing in grace is linked with growing in knowledge

**Paul writing to Timothy – All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work**

**The Word of God gives us Christ's adequacy**

**So that we can do the works which God created for us to walk in**

In our passage today Paul appeals to us to walk worthy of our calling

In describing that walk he discusses

**Its call - its characteristics – and its cause**

**First let's look at the Call to the Worthy Walk (READ VERSE 1)**

Before giving his appeal Paul reminds his readers

That living for Jesus might come with a price

He is a prisoner because he obeyed God

If you would rather have a promotion than please God

You won't walk worthy

If you are more interested in pleasing your friends than pleasing God

You won't walk worthy

If this world has its hooks into you and your hope rests in the world

You won't walk worthy

But you see Paul became the Lord's prisoner on the road to Damascus

And he never wanted anything else

He was no longer his own man – he had been bought with a price

Here he calls himself the prisoner of the Lord

In other Letters he is the slave of the Lord

The translators use the nicer softer word servant or bond-servant

But the literal translation of what Paul calls himself is slave

He is the slave of Jesus Christ – he is the Prisoner of Jesus Christ

Paul has the ability to see everything in light of how it affected Christ

Everything he planned did and said was in relation to the Lord

He was in the fullest sense a captive of Jesus

I bring this up because every one of us is the slave of something or someone

We are slaves to this world system or we are the slaves of Christ

We are imprisoned by what the world offers

Or we are prisoners of the Lord

Who is your boss – the wrongest answer is – you are

**You are a slave to sin or slave to Jesus - there is no exception**

Most of us will admit that we are kind of self-oriented

We see things first of all and sometimes only – in relation to ourselves

The great human question of the ages – How does this affect me

**But the one who is the Lord's slave**

**Is concerned with how things will affect the kingdom**

Paul makes no apology for asking people to do what is right

Paul is not giving suggestions but divine standards

If these standards aren't followed

Then you will not be living like a child of the King

Ever seen a Christian living just like the world

And trying to witness for Jesus at the same time – doesn't work does it

**The word walk is used to refer to our daily conduct**

The word translated worthy comes from the concept of balanced scales

Someone worthy of his pay is one whose work corresponds to his wages

**The believer who walks in a manner worthy of his calling**

**Is one whose daily living corresponds to his position as a child of God**

His practical living matches his spiritual position – there's balance

Your calling speaks to God's sovereign choice of you

Now most people think of their calling as their profession

But people don't get called into a profession – they choose it

Your skills may match your job perfectly – but you chose the job

It didn't choose you

**But you are a Christian today because God called you**

Jesus said – **No one can come to Me unless the Father draws him**

Paul writing to the Romans had this to say – **Whom God predestined, these He also called, and whom He called, these He also justified**

That is us – we are the called ones – the predestined ones

Hebrew refers to our calling as a “heavenly calling”

Timothy refers to our calling as a “holy calling”

We are called and that is why the faithful Christian is determined

**To press on for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus**

The faithful Christian is determined to walk worthy

**First we have the Call to the Worthy Walk**

**Now let’s look at the Characteristics of the Worthy Walk (READ 2,3)**

Paul gives us five essentials for faithful Christian living

The first of which is humility

**Humility is the cornerstone of the Christian’s worthy walk**

Paul invented the word translated humility

Neither the Romans nor the Greeks had a word for it

The very concept was foreign and distasteful to them

To them humility was a pitiable weakness

When they borrowed this word for their own literature

They always used it derogatorily

But to us as Christians it is the foundation of Christian virtues

**We cannot even begin to please God without humility**

**What Does God require of you – to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God**

**Humble yourselves before the mighty hand of God and in due time, what will He do - He will exalt you**

**Our Lord humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross**

Humility is an interesting thing

**We don’t see humility in ourselves we see it in others**

**And once we claim to have it we have just forfeited it**

The world exalts pride not humility

Just like the Romans and Greeks our society loves to recognize and praise

Those who they think have accomplished something outstanding

One year I think I counted at least a dozen award shows on television

Well God's work cannot be accomplished the world's way

**God's work is accomplished only through our humility**

The first sin was pride – Satan said - I will exalt myself above the heavens

And every sin thereafter has somehow been an extension of that first sin

Humility involves correct self awareness

**We are unworthy sinners whom God has saved**

Humility involves Christ awareness

**Our standard is not other Christians – it is the Lord**

When we judge ourselves by others – it leads to pride or discouragement

When we judge ourselves by Christ – it forces us to humility

As we study His life in the Gospels

We see Jesus more and more in His human perfection

His perfect love, His perfect submission to the Father – His perfect humility

**Paul says that our adequacy not from within it is from God**

Salvation is impossible without God

The Christian life is impossible without Christ

Out of His incomparable love God chose us redeemed us called us

Made us His children and prepared a place for us to live forever

That is the love of God for us

The hymnwriter put down the perfect reason for humility

And from my smitten heart with tears, two wonders I confess; the wonder of His glorious love, and my unworthiness

**Humility comes from a right understanding of who we are and who God is**

**Humility always produces meekness**

You cannot possess meekness without first possessing humility

The Greek word translated meekness or gentleness in some translation

### **Means mild-spirited and self-controlled**

Jesus said of Himself – **I am gentle** – same word

Gentleness is one of the Spirit's fruits and should be seen in every Christian

### **The definition I have heard of meekness is power under control**

This characteristic does not mean timid

### **The meek person is capable of anger and action about the things of God**

No one was more gentle or meek than Jesus

But He had confrontation after confrontation

What makes the meek person angry

Is that he is aroused by that which maligns God or is harmful to others

Martin Lloyd Jones observed

### **To be meek means that you are finished with yourself**

One of the marks of true meekness is self-control – do you have it

### **A third attitude of the worthy walk is patience**

I'm almost certain that some guy out there said to his wife

I knew he was going to bring that one up

We live in a get it now get it quick finish your business and move on society

That means we live in a society of impatient people

A few months ago I watched as one car honked at the car in front of him to get going.

The light hadn't even changed yet – but it was about to

### **The patient person endures negative circumstances and never gives in to them**

Patience is listed as one of God's virtues

### **The Lord is not slow as some count slowness, but is patient**

Aren't you glad God is patient with you

Shouldn't you extend that same kindness towards others

### **The patient saint accepts God's plan without grumbling or complaining**

American journalist H. W. Stanley found Dr. Livingstone in the jungle

He lived with him for some time and was amazed at Livingstone's patience

In his journal he wrote this - When I saw that unwearied patience, that unflagging zeal, and those enlightened sons of Africa, I became a Christian at his side, though he never

spoke to me one word.

A fourth characteristic of the worthy walk is

**Forbearance to one another in love**

**Proverbs 10 – hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions**

Forbearing love takes abuse from others while continuing to love them

**Forbearing love can only be agape love**

**Because only agape love gives continuously and unconditionally**

Eros love is essentially self love because it cares

Only for what it receives from others

Phileo love is primarily reciprocal love – loving and being loved

**Agape love is unqualified and unselfish love,**

**Love that willingly gives whether it receives anything in return or not**

**The outcome of humility gentleness patience and agape love is unity**

It doesn't take an expert in human relations

To tell us that we aren't the easiest group to love

Listen to Paul's description of the church

**1Cor – For consider your call brethren (there is that word called again) there were not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world (that is us) to shame the wise, the base things of the world (that's us) and the despised (that's us)**

**God has built His church out of the weak and the wounded**

Everybody in this room has some scars

Everybody in this room has tender places that bruise easily

For us to live in unity we must have humility gentleness patience and love

In other words

**For us to live in unity we must live supernatural lives**

Preservation of unity and the bond of peace

Should be the constant concern of every believer

That is what Jesus prayed for the church

**That they may all be one, even as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they**

**may also be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me**

Remember we are on a mission from God

And it is not to save the orphanage

It is to bring men women boys and girls to Jesus

And the primary way we will do that is through

Humility gentleness patience love and the unbreakable bond of unity

I can't recall who said it but it goes like this

Remember: preach the Gospel; preach the gospel; if necessary - use words

**The greatest preaching of the Gospel comes from how we live our lives**

**In the world and particularly the way we interact with each other**

We began with the call of the worthy walk

We looked at the characteristics of the worthy walk

**Let's finish with the Cause of the Worthy Walk (READ 4-6)**

Paul uses the word one 7 times in these three verses

You may find this hard to believe but

**Everything that relates to salvation the church and the kingdom of God**

**Is based upon the concept of unity**

And the basis for outward oneness is inner oneness

Practical oneness is based upon spiritual oneness

**Our oneness is based upon the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is like the glue of the church binding us all together

**There is one body of believers indwelt by the same Holy Spirit**

**All having the same hope**

The Holy Spirit is the sure sign that we are saved

Have the Spirit – saved – don't have the Spirit – not saved

**The Holy Spirit is the seal and the pledge of our future glory**

He is the guarantee that believers will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb

Our oneness is based upon the Holy Spirit

**And our oneness is based upon the Son of God**

Salvation comes through Jesus Christ and Him alone

We all entered into the kingdom of God through the same narrow road

Each one of us has professed faith in the Lord

We all have the same faith in the same Lord

The same baptism could be speaking of the baptism of the Holy Spirit

Or water baptism`

Because this is about unity in Christ – I believe it is water baptism

**We have all made the same public profession of faith**

Baptism is important in the U. S. but in some countries it is critical

In some cultures being baptized in Christ means leaving family and friends

Believers have been ostracized beaten imprisoned and murdered

Because they were baptized into Christ

**Baptism is a statement of faith – sometimes daring -**

**That separates believers from the rest of the world**

Those who are one in Christ testify to our unity through baptism

Our oneness is based upon the Holy Spirit – it is based upon Jesus Christ

**Our oneness is based upon God the Father**

He is over all and in all

The basic doctrine of Judaism and its creed called the Shemah is this

Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one

The Hebrew word translated one actually means - unity

It could easily be read – Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is unity

**The New Testament reveals the more complete truth**

**That the one God is in three Persons**

Paul's point here is not to separate or segregate the Trinity

But to note their unique roles with respect to the body and yet focus on unity

I don't think we really have any idea

How important the unity of the body is to God

We are to set our own desires aside for it

We are to sacrifice for it

We are to work for it

**Unity is in God's nature**

And that is what He desires for the church of Jesus Christ

And what He witnesses on the planet must sometimes just break His heart