

Review

In Ephesians 4:1 the Apostle Paul writes, “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called...*”

Paul could have just said, “I beg of you to walk worthy...” This is what some pastors and saying---“Walk right; live right; act right; talk right!” But what they are not doing is teaching their congregations about the calling and the vocation of the believer.

In chapters 1 to 3 Paul is saying, “This is who you are in Christ!” And, in chapters 4-6 he says, “Walk like it!”

Entreat/Beseech

"Entreat or beseech" is *parakaleo*, that means, “to call to one’s side.” It is an appeal. Paul is getting up in your face saying, “*I beg of you, please*”. It is the same word that is used in Romans 12:1.

Walk

When Paul uses the word *walk (peripateo)* he means "to walk about," thus, "to conduct one's self," “to order one's behavior."

The phrase "*in a manner worthy*" is the Greek word *axios*, an adverb, "having the weight of” or “weighing as much as another thing.”

Here Paul is exhorting believers to see to it that the Christian life they live should weigh as much as the profession of Christianity that they make. In other words, they were to practice what they preach.

Now Paul goes on to tell his readers how they were supposed to walk. In verse two they were to walk, ...*with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love...*”

With all lowliness

1.) *all lowliness* - Lowliness, is the *recognition* that we are nothing except for the grace of God—it is esteeming ourselves small and the recognition of ourselves and our agendas as less important than another’s.

In Philippians 2:3-5 Paul says it this way: “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...*”

Gentleness / meekness.

With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love...(Eph 4:2)

Last time we learned that the word *meekness* was used by the Greeks to describe a gentle breeze, a soothing medicine, or a domesticated colt. To the Greeks, those were examples of power under control.

- A gentle breeze brings pleasure, but a hurricane brings destruction
- A soothing medicine brings healing, but an overdose can kill
- A domesticated colt is useful, but a wild horse is dangerous.

Longsuffering / Patience

Paul goes on in our text in verse 2 and writes, “*With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering...*”

Longsuffering (patience -NASB) expresses patience with respect to people and with respect to things.

- The man who’s longsuffering when it comes to *people* is one who deals with caustic or abrasive folk but does not permit himself to be easily provoked by them.
- The man who is longsuffering when it comes to the *circumstances of life* is the one who under a great flood of trials, bears up and does not lose courage.

Forbearing in love...

Next Paul writes, “*forbearing one another in love...*” This word has to do with holding up, sustaining and enduring. Paul is using this word to explain what he means by the word *longsuffering*.

To forbear means “to hold back from getting back.” It means “to restrain from getting even.” It means “to put up with people” you want to shut up. In Colossians, 3:13 Paul writes, “*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*”

But you can’t forbear and suffer long with people through your own strength. This is why the Apostle says, “*forbearing one another in love.*” Love is the only arena in which true longsuffering will take place.

This is the love of the Holy Spirit that is shed abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5). If you have been redeemed (Ephesians 1:7) then as God has been patient with you, you need to show patience to others.

These are the four characteristics of the one who obeys the command to walk worthy (vs. 1):

1. all lowliness
2. meekness
3. longsuffering
4. forbearing love

They all fit together, yet they are all distinct. And there seems to be a flow from one characteristic to another: Where there is "all lowliness" there will be "meekness"; then comes "long-suffering," which results in "forbearing love"; with the end result: the fifth characteristic of "unity" which Paul refers to in verse 3 of our text:

“*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”

We are living in a day when everyone is talking about unity. Whether it is unity in religion, in politics, in foreign relation...the push towards unity is ever so prevalent.

If you have been attending church for even the shortest amount of time you may have witnessed or experienced what could be characterized as a “lack of unity.”¹

Let me share with you two news items depict some of the disunity that goes on in our churches today:

In August of this year the news reported that a group of parishioners in Red Springs, N.C. put a padlock on their church effectively locking out their pastor because they didn't like the way the priest “talked down” to low income members of the congregation.²

Last October, a pastor in Louisville, KY locked his congregation out of their church. There was a disagreement over this pastor taking over when the last two pastors resigned.³

How do we bring about unity when there is so much diversity? Let's look at verse three again.

KJV - Eph 4:3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

NASB - Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace..

First of all, we don't “bring about” unity. It already exists. The instruction in verse three is not to “create” unity or bring about unity—it is to *maintain* or *preserve* that unity that already exists.

According to the context, unity is maintained when believers obey the commands of verses one and two.

In other words, if we walk worthy of our calling with all humility and gentleness, with patience and longsuffering love, unity will be maintained. Strife and discord result from the absence of humility, gentleness, patience and longsuffering.

You can't create or build unity; all you can do is destroy it; this is because the Holy Spirit has already made us one. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “*For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.*”

You need to know that this is not an organizational or ecumenical unity. Why?

1. This unity is not created by rallying together around some philosophical belief.
2. This unity is not created by trying to complete a social agenda.

Unity that centers on or rallies around philosophical beliefs and social agendas is the unity of man, not the “*unity of the Spirit.*” The Holy Spirit has already made us one, all we have to do work hard to keep it and maintain it.

In verse three Paul writes, “*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” “Peace” is the “glue” or the “belt” that holds this unity together.

Why is unity in the church important?

¹ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2004/fall/6.25.html>

² <http://www.churchsolutionsmag.com/hotnews/congregants-lock-pastor-out-of-church.html>

³ <http://www.wave3.com/Global/story.asp?S=11295656>

1.) *Unity is an important factor in bringing people to Jesus Christ.*

Disunity is the excuse many people give for not turning their lives over to Jesus. You may have heard some of them:

#1 - Hypocrites in the church

#2 - So many religions, denominations - which one is right.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

John 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

John 17:23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

2.) *Unity is vital in seeing the manifestation of God's power.*

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

Acts 2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

Acts 2:45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

Acts 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

3.) *Unity is foundational to making our practice match our position.*

In verse four of our text, the Holy Spirit lets us know that unity is foundational to making our practice match our position in Christ. Here Paul begins to deliver the truth that unity is essential if our behavior is to align with our beliefs.

Eph 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Everything God ever designed into the church is all based on the concept of unity. So, in verses 4-6, Paul lists seven "ones," which by the way, is the number of perfection. (MacArthur)

A. **"One Body"**

*Eph 4:4 There is **one body**, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

As mentioned earlier, you will find many religions and denominations within religions, but only one body.

The "body" that the apostle Paul is writing about here is the *body of Christ*. The "Body of Christ" is everyone who has ever, throughout history, trusted the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and received His forgiveness of sin and gift of eternal life.

Romans 12:5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

There is only one body of Christ-- an organism made up of every single true believer. Notice I said "organism" not "organization". The body of Christ is a living organism with Jesus Christ as the Head.

1 Corinthians 12:14 - For the body is not one member, but many.

You can't tell whose these people are by their physical features... the body is made up of Jew, Gentile and people of all nationality, race and color.

Colossians 3:11 tells us that in the body, "...*there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*"

Galatians 3:28 says, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*"

While you cannot tell who is in the body of Christ by their physical features, you should be able to tell them apart by observing their lifestyles.

1 John 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

In Ephesians 5:8 Paul writes to members of the body saying, "*For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light...*"

B. "One Spirit"

*Eph 4:4 There is one body, and **one Spirit**, even as you are called in one hope of your calling;*

Paul says, there is "one Spirit." Here he is referring to the Holy Spirit who is the third person of the trinity.

Did you know that the Holy Spirit is a person? Some religious groups do not believe the Holy Spirit is a person. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person.

He can be grieved.

Eph 4:30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

He can be lied to.

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

These verses tell us that the Holy Spirit has personality—you can grieve Him and lie to Him.

Now the Holy Spirit is He who makes Christian in the body one with each other.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

The Holy Spirit “baptizes” or immerses each believer into the one and same body. He places the believer in the body of Christ and then He seals the believer’s salvation for eternity (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The Spirit of God seals the believer by indwelling each and every believer with Himself. Everyone who has trusted in Jesus as Savior has the Holy Spirit of God living in him or her.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

C. "One Hope"

*Eph 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in **one hope** of your calling;*

We all had one eternal calling-- chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The concept here is that we're only called to one destiny...we're all going to the same place.

And the guarantee of the hope of our calling is the Holy Spirit.

Eph 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Eph 1:14 Who is the earnest (engagement ring) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The proof that God is going to bring us to the marriage supper is the "engagement ring" of the Holy Spirit-- He's the down payment, the first installment. The Holy Spirit guarantees our eternal inheritance.

Notice that verse 4 we find references to the Holy Spirit's ministry:

"one body"-- we are placed into this body by the Holy Spirit

"one Spirit" -- He indwells us

"one hope" -- guaranteed to us by the Holy Spirit

But in verse 5 we find references to the Son, Jesus Christ: "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*"

D. "One Lord"

Ephesians 4:5- "*one Lord, one faith, one baptism...*"

This passage conveys at least two meanings:

1. There is one Lord not many Lords. There is only one Christ, not many.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Mark 13:21-22 - And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

2. There is only one Lord in whom we place our allegiance.

Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Col 2:9-10 - For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Philippians 2:9-11 - Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

E. "One Faith"

Ephesians 4:5- "*one Lord, one faith, one baptism...*"

This is referring to the substance or the content of the revealed Word of God. There is only one Christian faith. There is only one true faith.

*Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly **contend for the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints.*

There is only one true faith!

F. "One Baptism"

Ephesians 4:5- "*one Lord, one faith, one baptism...*"

This is referring to water baptism. Remember this verse is referring to the Son, Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:3-5 – "...do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into

death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection... ”

When a person places his or her trust in the Son, they are then baptized as a public expression of their faith. In water baptism, one identifies himself with Jesus in His death as he goes down in the water and with His resurrection when he comes out of the water.

Baptism doesn't add anything to your salvation. In other words, it doesn't save you! Water baptism is an outward expression of an inward change. If you were to get baptized without first having trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, you would go down into the water as a dry sinner and come forth as a wet sinner.

When you go into the water it symbolizes a dying to sin and self. When you come out of the water it symbolizes being raised to new life in Christ.

G. "One God and Father"

Ephesians 4:6 - *“one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*

Verse 4 refers to the person of the Holy Spirit. Verse 5 refers to the person of the Son. Verse 6 is the Father's verse. There is only one God.

- Jehovah Witnesses believe in two gods. Jehovah God the Almighty and Jesus Christ the Mighty who is a lesser god than Jehovah.
- Mormons believe that there are millions of gods (and goddesses) cohabiting the many planets of the universe spawning celestial babies who will one day grow up to be god of their own planet.
- New Agers believe that everybody is a god.

The Bible teaches that there is only one God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 - Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

1 Corinthians 8:6 - But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

1 Timothy 2:5 - For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

God is “above all” (the sovereign Creator and controller of the universe),

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Psalms 86:9-10 - All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

God is “*through all*” (The providential upholder of the universe),

Psalm 24:1-2 – “The earth is the LORD’S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.”

God is “*in you all*” - observe the Paul’s audience—Christians! (His personal, indwelling presence in the Christian’s life).

Everything God ever designed into the church is all based on the concept of unity that is found in the trinity. Pastor Tim Chester writes, everywhere you look you can trace a trinitarian structure to Christian truth and Christian living.

- At creation the Father creates through his Son, breathing his Spirit into humanity.
- At the incarnation, the Father sends the Son into the world in the power of the Spirit.
- In divine revelation, the Father reveals through his Word (his Son) whose revelation comes to us in the Spirit-inspired word of God (the Bible) and speaks to our hearts through the illumination of the Spirit.
- We pray to the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit.
- The church is the people of God, the body of Christ and the community of the Holy Spirit.
- We have assurance because of the electing love of the Father, the finished work of the Son and the confirming witness of the Holy Spirit.⁴

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit all work together to accomplish a common purpose.

When we endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace we are maintaining a pattern for believers that is characteristic of the Godhead. It’s no wonder that Satan acts this unity in the body because it is a direct affront against the image of God.

Satan also attacks the unity of believers because it is only through unity that Christians will be successful in fulfilling the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20)

Diversity in Unity

Now the Trinity is composed God who manifests Himself in three persons all of whom work together for a common purpose:

- Jesus, God the Son, performed the work of redemption for us
- God the Holy Spirit performs the work of sanctification in us
- Both Jesus and the Spirit work in fulfillment of the Father’s will.

As does the Godhead, the church is diversity in unity. Although we are one together in the body of Christ, each of us has a particular responsibility in the body.

Just as the Trinity is three persons in one Godhead, the church is one body composed of many members each having a distinct responsibility.

⁴ <http://www.theologynetwork.org/doctrine-of-god/the-good-news-of-the-trinity.htm>

Paul elaborates on this next. Jumping down to verse 16 Paul writes, “...*from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*”

Paul is letting us know that in the course of God’s call to the preservation of unity, you don’t get lost; you and I don’t lose our individual contribution and responsibility to the body of Christ.

Each one of us has something to contribute. Each one of us in the body has a responsibility to fulfill.

And, just like with the physiology of the human body, if any of the members in the Body of Christ malfunctions, the entire body suffers the effects.

We will begin to look at this next time, after our Christmas break.