

Ephesians 4:1-7

Author: Paul

Recipients: Church in Ephesus

Location: Western shore of modern day Turkey; Aegean Sea

Key Theme: "The Body of Christ is Blessed"

v. 1-3

Walk in a worthy manner

- Because Christ has been given all authority, Paul urges the Ephesian church to walk in a manner worthy of the calling they have received.
- What is that calling? The call is to salvation through Christ. (Ch. 1)
- He says that the model of that is humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, and maintaining unity in the church.

Elements of Walking Worthily

1) Humility

- The Greek word literally means "lowliness of mind".
- We are to walk in a way that we take on the mindset that we are lowly.
- This doesn't mean that we walk around like Eeyore and somber all the time.
- It means that we don't think of ourselves more highly than anyone else.
- It also means that we have a correct grasp of our standing before God.
- Romans 12:3

2) Gentleness

- This is in regard to our dealings with other people, more specifically, the people of God.
- We are called to be gentle in our interactions with others.
- We are called to love others by sharing the truth with them but not in a manner of hostility.

- The command to be honest does not give us license to be a jerk.
- We as Christians are not given authority to be demanding of others, especially those within the body of Christ.
- It is not merely WHAT we say or do but HOW we say and do.

3) Patience

- The context of this Greek word is usually talking about patience during troubles and difficulties.
- This is necessarily talking about dealing with people even though it can be applied to that.
- As we walk in trials and difficulties do we believe that God is still sovereign?
- As we walk in trials and difficulties do we believe that God is still good?
- If the answer to those questions is “yes” then the way in which we walk through the difficult days should be honoring and glorifying to Him.
- We are to walk in these difficult days with patience knowing that He is the One who is guiding us into them, through them, and out of them.

4) Bearing with One Another in Love

- Here’s where the command to walk worthily gets real.
- We are to bear with one another IN LOVE...not hostility.
- The message from the Holy Spirit is to Christians. This is not for unbelievers.
- We are to bear with those who are in the church with love and care.
- This is not simply to tolerate or put up with one another.
- This is to deeply care for one another and to bear one another’s burdens.
- This means walking with people as they face difficult days.

- This means allowing our brothers and sisters in Christ to walk with us and sustain us during the difficult days of our own lives.
- How unloving is it for us not to care for those within the body of Christ when they are hurting?
- How arrogant is it for us not to accept or ask for help when we are struggling?
- Scenarios like this can include things like sickness, death, poverty, destitution, and even sin.
- In order for this to be the case then we must all drop the charade that everything is always going well.
- We know better than that.

5) Maintaining Unity in the Church

- This is something that MANY churches struggle with.
- Infighting and gossip are rampant throughout 21st century Christianity.
- This should not be so.
- We are called to strive for unity amongst the members of the body of Christ.
- We are to work in harmony with one another in order that the Kingdom is grown through the Gospel being proclaimed and disciples being made.
- Many have been hurt within the church.
- That means that many have hurt others within the church.
- If we are going to maintain unity and not promote division then we must handle one another carefully and lovingly.
- If we are disunified then how are we supposed to expect the Gospel to go forward efficiently from our body?

- If we are disunified then how do we expect to make disciples who in turn make disciples?
- If we are disunified then how do we expect to plant churches?
- The local church is a small part of the global church catholic.
- The word catholic means “global or universal”.
- We aren’t Roman Catholics but we are part of the global church or the church catholic.

v. 4-6

Unity in the body

- The Triune Godhead is unified. (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
- Under that is one faith, one baptism, and one body known as the church.
- God is a God of order and unity not confusion and disunity.
- The word “One” is repeated 7 times in this passage.
- There is strong emphasis placed on the fact that the Godhead is unified and ordered.
- His church should reflect this not only in the organization of the church but in the lives of each individual member.
- We are to be unified in Who we serve, what His message is, and what our purpose under Him is.

v. 7

Spiritual Gifts

- Each person who is a part of the body of Christ has been given the gift of grace.
- It is worth noting that not everyone within the church is a true believer but every true believer is a member of the body of Christ and therefore has been given the gift of grace.
- On top of the gift of grace is a functional gift that is sovereignly given to each member.

Romans 12:4-8

1) Prophesying or preaching

- This is not foretelling the future rather proclaiming or preaching the Word.

2) Serving

- Most of the things that make the church move go unnoticed by others.
- That's alright. We are not called to serve in order to be seen. Our Father sees.

3) Teaching

- Some have been gifted with the gift of teaching the Word of God to others.

4) Exhortation or encouragement

- Some are gifted by God with the gift of encouraging others.
- They deeply care for others and the Lord has built this into them.

5) Generous giving

- The Lord has called all of us to give but some are uniquely gifted with the ability to be especially generous.
- This is not only giving to the church proper in the form of tithes and offerings.
- This would also include giving to people as they have individual needs.

6) Leadership

- For some, the Lord has given the gift of leadership.
- In order to be a good leader one must first be a good follower of Christ.

7) Acts of mercy

Put Into Action

- Each one of us has been given a spiritual gift that is expected to be used in the service of the King within the context of the local church.
- No one is exactly the same on earth and that rings true within the church as well.
- We are expected to exercise the gifts that we have been sovereignly given by God to build His kingdom not our own.

Big Idea:

In order for the church to function properly we must be unified in Christ.

Small Group Questions

- 1) As Christians we are expected to walk in a manner worthy of the calling that we have received. What does that look like?
 - We are to walk in humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, and maintaining unity in the church.
- 2) What is that special calling that we Christians have received?
 - God calls His people unto Himself for repentance and salvation. It is a gift that is sovereignly given to His people as He wills it. What a precious gift that we have been given. We must walk in a way that reflects our new standing before Him.
- 3) We have been given grace as believers but on top of that we have been given functional gifts for use within the Kingdom of God. What are those gifts?
 - Read Romans 12:4-8
- 4) What are we supposed to do with these gifts?
 - God has gifted each of us with abilities that are to be used to further His kingdom.
 - This means that exercising our gifts to build our own kingdom is an abuse of said gifts.
- 5) Discuss unity in the church.
 - What are we to be unified under? Christ.
 - What do we do with discord within the church? Weed it out. Repent of it and move forward.
 - Why do we need to be unified? In order for the body of Christ to function properly we must be of one mind, one faith, and one goal.