

## Series: "Ephesians"

"The Power Of Unity!"

Ephesians 4:1-6

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Video: The Power of Unity – [www.sermonspice.com](http://www.sermonspice.com)

### SLIDE – The Power of Unity

Now if you are anything like me you walk away from that video clip and didn't hear a thing of what it said about our topic for the day! All you got out of it was the desire to run to Caribou or Starbucks or Gloria Jeans! But it really did have a great point to it! At least you got the topic of today's message...didn't you? UNITY!

We have been studying through the book of Ephesians at Bethany on Sunday mornings and today we come to Chapter 4.

Take your Bibles, please and open them to the New Testament book of Ephesians 4. If you didn't bring your Bible with you today I would encourage you to reach forward and grab that burgundy colored Bible and turn to page 1158. (1<sup>st</sup> Service Video Café – Raise hands for a Bible and someone will come by and hand you one! Keep it up!)

Now I know it pretty well goes without saying but the first thing I want to remind you of today is that Chapters 1-3 in Ephesians come before Chapters 4-6. I know I know...I'm not trying to insult your intelligence. I'm trying to get you to recall what was in Chapters 1-3 so you will know where Chapters 4-6 get their basis.

Let me remind you by way of this chart...

### SLIDE – (These are timed to unfold in as I talk...)

#### Ephesians 1-3

Spiritual Wealth

Position

Riches

Doctrine

Blessings

Work of Christ

Heavenly Standing

#### Ephesians 4-6

Spiritual Walk

Practice

Responsibility

Duty

Behavior

Walk of the Christian

Earthly Walking

So we can see quite clearly that...

- The teaching of God's truth in our lives has to come before the living of God's love is expressed through us.
- We have got to know who we are as a result of what Christ has done for us when He saved us before we can know how to live for Him on a day to day basis.

And what we are going to get a grasp of in Chapters 4-6 is this: Now that I know my wealth; my position; my riches; my doctrine; my blessings...I can walk the Christian life; I can practice the Christian life; I can live the Christian life; I can be the type of Christian God wants me to be! LISTEN NOW...

### SLIDE – What Type Of Christian Does God Want Me To Be?

Are you ready for the answer?

It's not as scary or difficult as you might think!

Are you ready? He wants me to be...

### SLIDE –

A worthy Christian!

Look with me at...

### SLIDE – Ephesians 4:1

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Many of your versions read... "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you have been called to."

Do you see that word "worthy"? It is a word that means...

### SLIDE – axios

...weighing as much as, of like value, worth as much.

It is the Greek word "axios". We get our mathematical term "axiom" from it. An "axiom" is a proof that shows one side of an equation is equal to the other side of the equation. It means being of equal weight of another thing and so being of like value or worth as much.

Worthy (axios) is literally "bringing up the other beam of the scales" and therefore indicates equivalence. In other words—what is on one side of the scale should be equal in weight to what is on the other side.

Am I conveying this to you properly? Are you getting the picture? He is truly saying - you have all this in Chapters 1-3. It is called our "calling". Now...the way to balance it out is to LIVE for Christ!

In other words...what good is all of this that Christ gives to us if it isn't lived out?

## SLIDE – WALK CALLING

True grace in the heart must show itself by true goodness in the life. **Walk** is on one side and **calling** on the other side of the "scales".

So here is what it is telling us...I implore you to let your walk be balanced by your calling. He is exhorting us to demonstrate a balance between who we are in Christ and how we live for Christ. And our lifestyle is supposed to match our position in Christ.

ILL -

Have you heard about the guy who was having trouble getting 2nd dates? He started reading books and listening to tapes on how to interest women. He discovered that to be interesting to women you have to find out what interests them and then be or do that. He went to a baseball game and happened to sit next to a beautiful single girl, so he thought he'd try his new discoveries. He said, *"I see you like baseball. What kind of men do you like?"* She thought for a moment and said, *"I've like Native American men, Jewish men, and I've even dated a few good ole boys. What's your name?"* He said, *"Geronimo Goldstein, but my friends call me Bubba."*

Well, too many Christians don't live who they really are! That brings me to our second question...

## SLIDE – What Does A 'Worthy Walk' Look Like?

I.e. - (In other words...)

- If my walk/lifestyle is to balance out 'who I am in Christ', how am I supposed to live? What is my conduct supposed to be like? What are some Christian character traits I'm supposed to have now that I'm saved?

## SLIDE – READ vv. 2-3

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

There are 5 traits here of a 'worthy walk' which all of us who are saved are supposed to be incorporating into our lives. John R. W. Stott calls these "Stones". Let's look at them briefly...

The first trait here of a 'worthy walk' is...

## SLIDE – Humility - low mindedness

In a word **humility** is "low mindedness", an attitude that one is not too good to serve. Humility means putting Christ first, others second, and self last. It's not popular. You won't read about it in the Wall Street Journal. You won't find it in the business section. In fact, back in Biblical days it was a 'slavish' mentality. The Greeks prided themselves on being better than other men, and they considered it something to be proud of to acknowledge their superiority.

**Humility** is not thinking less of ourselves but is really not thinking of ourselves at all. This supernatural attitude in believers has its source in our association with the Lord Jesus and the enablement of His Spirit. Humility makes believers conscious of our own nothingness and enables us to esteem others better than ourselves.

Humility is not a doormat. True humility is not putting ourselves down but rather lifting up others. If we concentrate on lifting up others, putting down ourselves will take care of itself. As we go through life exalting Christ and others, then genuine humility will be inevitable. If we exalt ourselves then God will take care of our humiliation for He promises to humble the proud.

ILL. -

I think there are a number of ministries at Bethany that require 'humility' in order to serve in them. But one is that of our PARC ministry. The PARC ministry consists of 2 sometimes 3 men who stand at our front doors and park the cars for anyone who wants or needs to be dropped off. They are out there EVERY Sunday. You seldom know they exist. In fact, they don't get a Sunday off because there aren't enough men working in it to take off. It is such a 'humble' job that no one else volunteers. They could use about 6 other people (men or ladies) so these 2 or 3 could get a Sunday off every now and then. But it requires humility! You lift others up who normally don't get lifted up. See Jeff at the front door!

The second trait here of a 'worthy walk' is...

## SLIDE – Gentleness - Strength under control

This is a synonym for weakness in many people's minds. But meekness/gentleness is not weakness. The background to this word has reference to a horse that is broken. Is a horse that is broken any less strong than when it is not broken? No! It is just under control.

It is no longer dangerous and out of control. You can work with it. This is the absence of any disposition to assert personal rights. Is that rare in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Very!

Gentle people are not harsh with others; don't strive to get their way. Instead, they are considerate and don't complain when things don't go their way. When gentle people get mad it is usually more at wrongs done to others than wrongs done to them.

Gentleness, like humility, is vital to UNITY because it smoothes our rough edges and creates a safe place for everyone. I often say to men, "*Men, be a 'gentle man' with your wife and kids.*" They will love you!

Think of it with me. The One...

- Who made the worlds,
- Who flung the stars into space and calls them by name,
- Who preserves the innumerable constellations in their courses,
- Who weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance,
- Who holds the waters of the ocean in the hollow of His hand,
- before Whom the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers,
- when He comes into human life finds Himself as essentially meek and lowly in heart.

Gentleness...are you? Am I? Do people know you as a gentle person?

The third trait here of a 'worthy walk' is...

**SLIDE – Patience - long tempered**

Wow! We are so lacking in this trait.

"Makrothumia" - **makros** = long, distant, far off, large + **thumos** = temper, passion, to be furious or burn with intense anger. It is literally **long-tempered**.

**Makrothumia** is used in the OT to translate the Hebrew phrase ('erekh 'appayim) which is literally "long of nose" (I.e. "breathing"). It has the idea that anger indicated by rapid, violent breathing through the nostrils. I like that!

ILL. - Puppy and big dog

- Patience reflects an emotional calm in face of provocation or misfortune.
- It expresses the capacity to be wronged and not retaliate.
- It is the ability to hold one's feeling in restraint or bear up under the oversights and wrongs afflicted by others without retaliating.
- It is manifest by the quality of forbearance under provocation.
- Patience is the spirit which never gives up for it endures to the end even in times of adversity, exhibiting self-restraint such that it does not hastily retaliate a wrong.
- Vine says 'makrothumia' is the opposite of anger. It follows that a lack of patience often leads to wrath or revenge.
- Patience is vital to UNITY.

In America today, we are a people...

- who tap our fingers impatiently while the microwave takes all of thirty seconds to heat a hotdog;
- who practically pull the paper out of the printer because it's not working fast enough;
- who swerve from lane to land on the highway to gain a few car lengths on those around us;
- who honk at the person in front of us if he doesn't move when the light turns green;
- who has to have another isle open if more than two customers are in it.

All you have to do is be at an airport when the flight is cancelled to observe who has patience or not!

Patience is vital to UNITY! It creates an atmosphere of grace that allows us to fail and grow.

The fourth trait here of a 'worthy walk' is...

**SLIDE – Bear With - Put up with**

It means literally to hold one's self upright or firm against a person or thing, to put up with, to bear with, to tolerate, to forbear. It pictures restraint under provocation and includes liberal allowance for the faults and failures of others.

Paul encourages the saints to make allowance for the faults and failures of others, or differing personalities, abilities, and temperaments. Bearing with is not a question of maintaining a façade of courtesy while inwardly seething with resentment but is a Spirit

empowered positive love to those who irritate, disturb, or embarrass you! Not a natural but a supernatural response!

**Application:** How are you bearing up with the idiosyncrasies of your brethren at church, your spouse, your children, your co-workers, your fellow students, etc?

The fifth trait here of a 'worthy walk' is...

### SLIDE – Unity - Oneness

It is a state of oneness or of being in harmony and accord. This does not describe an external, but internal, spiritual unity. It means that Christians should be united in temper and affection, and not be split up in factions and parties. The Spirit in the Body has created a basic unity that nothing can destroy. Thus the apostle is pleading for zeal to guard the unity and live at peace with one another.

Unity is not uniformity. Unity comes from within and is a spiritual grace, while uniformity is the result of pressure from without.

### ILL -

In a Peanuts cartoon Lucy demanded that Linus change TV channels, threatening him with her fist if he didn't. "What makes you think you can walk right in here and take over?" asks Linus.

"These five fingers," says Lucy. "Individually they're nothing but when I curl them together like this into a single unit, they form a weapon that is terrible to behold."

"Which channel do you want?" asks Linus. Turning away, he looks at his fingers and says, "Why can't you guys get organized like that?"

Do you know how to test a church's unity? Create a building project! Everyone sees something different! A building project tests each one of these traits. But you know what? We can go through it if we "*make every effort to keep the unity in the bond of peace.*"

Even today we will be talking about our building project. We will have differences! That is okay. I have my preferences - and I'm right! You have your preferences and your right. I'm going to make every effort...are you? You see, this building project really is...A BUILDING PROJECT! But the bricks and mortar are secondary. God wants to build our character!

READ VV. 4-6 - Illustration of UNITY! Oneness! Himself!

Let me close today with...

### SLIDE – A, B, C's of Unity

#### 1. Alignment -

The Christian life must be aligned -  
First - a relationship with Christ  
Then - live Christ out in our lives

### SLIDE –

#### 2. Bonding -

Glue - stick to it; stay in the relationship; when we flee and leave we get nowhere.

### SLIDE –

#### 3. Character -

We have to live Christian character of humility; gentleness; patience; putting up with one another; and striving for unity.

### SLIDE –

#### 4. Doctrine -

Doctrine is what unites us. The truth of God's word. Not my preferences.

### SLIDE –

#### 5. Effort -

It takes hard work to keep the Unity!

Will you strive for it?

- Church?
- Family?
- Friends?

Pray...