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The Christian Walk In Unity
Eph. 4:1-3

Paul the apostle moves on to the practical section of the epistle dealing with the conduct of the believer and practice, in view of all the spiritual wealth God has bestowed on him.

1. The wealth of the believer by the love of God. Eph. 1-3
2. The walk of the believer in the love of God. Eph. 4:1-6:9
3. The warfare of the believer through the love of God. Eph. 6:10-32

The order of Paul's letters is always the doctrinal first then the practical.

1. The first three chapters are doctrinal, our heavenly position "in Christ". Eph. 1-3
 2. The last three chapters are practical, our earthly practice "in Christ". Eph. 4-6
- * This in no way implies there is not doctrine taught in chapter four through six!

The Christian life should never be thought of "doing" but rather "being".

* Jesus taught the Beatitudes, not doattitudes. Matt. 5:1-12

The next section presents the unity of the believer in the body of the church. Eph. 4:1-16

1. Our walk is to be in the unity of the Spirit. Eph. 4:1-6
 - a. The call to unity. vs. 1-3
 - b. The common ground of unity. vs. 4-6
2. Our walk is to be according to the gift of grace. Eph. 4:7-11
3. Our walk is to be with growth, development and maturity to edify the body, in love. Eph. 4:12-16

The new life is in contrast to the old life. Eph. 4:17-32

1. Our walk is to be as a new man. Eph. 4:17-24
2. Our walk is to reckon dead the old man. Eph. 4:25-23

So we want to look at the call of the believer to unity that consists of three things. Eph. 4:1-3

- I. The practice of being one with our new birth. vs. 1
 - II. The process of yielding to our new nature. vs. 2
 - III. The product of striving to live in the Spirit. vs. 3
- I. The practice of being one with our new birth. vs. 1**
- A. The apostle Paul once again identifies himself as the aged old warrior of Jesus. vs. 1a-c
* "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord,"

1. Paul presented himself as one who lived out what he was about the required of the Ephesians.
 - a. He placed the personal pronoun “I” to be emphatic in the Greek.
 - 1) This was not to demand or usurp some superior authority over them, but rather to appeal to them on the basis of love and concern for them.
 - 2) This is because he had been their pastor for three years.
 - b. He was a prisoner of the Lord Jesus.
 - 1) Paul had been put in prison for living out his faith for Jesus.
 - 2) Paul lived what he preached and had suffered for it.
2. Paul was making his transition from the doctrinal to the practical of the Christian life.
 - a. The word therefore “oun”, is a concluding word can be translated accordingly or then.
 - 1) Consequently or these things being so.
 - 2) In view of the facts.
 - b. The reference is to the spiritual wealth of the believer in Christ “in the heavenlies”.
Eph. 1:3
 - 1) The measure of the endowment is “every blessing”, all that is needed.
 - 2) Nothing is lacking when salvation is imparted to a believer.

- 3) God does not impart different quality of salvation to people.
 - 4) Some of the incredible blessings are listed right away, chose, predestined, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, riches of His grace, wisdom, and one day gathered to Christ, an inheritance.
Eph. 1:4-14
- B.** The apostle Paul now based on the wealth of the believer in Christ admonishes them what they are to do, to live a life that reflects their spiritual wealth. vs. 1d
- * “beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”
1. The personal words of Paul are an admonishment to what we are to do.
 - a. The word beseech “parakaleo” can be translated in different ways, depending on the context.

* It can be translated to beg or entreat, imploring someone.
 - b. The context in our text has more the idea of admonishment.
 - 1) The word is a compound word.
 - 2) The word “para” along side and the word “kaleo” to call.
 - 3) Paul is coming along side to admonish the Ephesians regarding their spiritual life.

2. The admonishment is to “walk worthy of the calling they were called to.
 - a. The word walk “peripateo”, means to order one’s behavior.
 - 1) The tense is the aorist active constantly.’
 - 2) This request is based on the divine endowment and enabling.
 - 3) The response is based on human responsibility. Rom. 12:1-2
 - 4) The divine and human is no contradiction, but rather a complement of the truth taught throughout the Scriptures.
 - b. The idea of walking communicates several things.
 - 1) Walking implies progress.
 - 2) Walking implies stability and balance.
 - 3) Walking implies direction.
 - 4) Walking implies not only externally, but internally.
 - 5) Walking implies not by natural ability, but by the Holy Spirit.
 - c. The manner of this walk is to be worthy of the calling they had been called to live.
 - 1) The word worthy “axics”, means in a manner equal in balance or in proportion of their calling. Col. 1:10, 1Thess. 2:12
 - 2) The word calling “kiesis” refers to the divine summons into salvation, their

heavenly calling by Divine initiation.
Heb. 3:1

- 3) The word called “kaleo” refers to what is each believers called to?
 - * “To be conformed to the image of Christ! Rom. 8:29
- 4) The aged old warrior a prisoner, but a servant who desires only to help even from Roman cell, admonishing them to do what he first had lived out.

Illustration

The heart of every parent is to exhort their children to live out their faith before their friends to draw them to Jesus and not reject Jesus for their hypocrisy.

Application

1. The reason the believer is expected, commanded and exhorted to walk according to their calling in salvation is because they have been enabled to do so.
 - a. We were once dead in trespasses and sins, but Jesus made us alive and made us to sit in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:1-6
 - b. We were sons and daughters of disobedience living out our sinful desires and passions, children of wrath, but now we are sons and daughters of God by adoption. Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5; 2:2-5
1. The reason the believer walks according to their call in salvation is due to their understanding of personal human responsibility.

- a. By studying and examining what is taught to be true in order to grow, develop and mature. Eph. 4:11-16
- b. By presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, the temple of God to prove what is the good, acceptable and the perfect will of God. Rom. 12:1-2
- c. By confessing our sins when we fail to maintain fellowship with God. Ps. 66:18; 1Jn. 2:1-2

The practice of being one with their new birth is the first basis of the believer's unity in the Spirit!

II. The process of yielding to our new nature. vs. 2

- A. The apostle Paul was not satisfied with the believer merely living out their Christian life, but was very concern how they lived that life out. vs. 2
 - * “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”
 - 1. Paul declared three virtues that are to be present and affect a life that is worthy of our calling of salvation.
 - a. All three are introduced by the word with “meta”, lowliness, gentleness and longsuffering, dealing with our character.

- b. Two are accompanied with the word all “pas”, lowliness and gentleness, dealing with our attitude.
- 2. Paul declared that these three virtues, lowliness, gentleness and longsuffering are the virtues that bring about bearing with one another in love possible.
 - a. The three virtues are the source or essentials for the ultimate goal “bearing with one another in love?”
 - b. The bearing with one another is the climax of the process with all lowliness and gentleness with longsuffering.
- B. The apostle Paul is being directed by the Holy Spirit about the work of the Spirit in the believer. Eph. 1:18; 2:18, 22; 3:7, 16; 4:4
 - 1. The first word deals with the posture of our heart.
 - a. The word lowliness “tapeinophrosune”, means having a humble opinion about oneself.
 - 1) This comes from proper vertical perspective about self before God by the Holy Spirit.
 - a) This comes from recognition of our inability to please God.
 - b) This comes from our awareness that we owe our existence to God.
 - 2) This vertical perspective will be the result of having a proper and healthy

- sense about our self among and before others by the Holy Spirit.
- a) The idea being of having the sense of one's littleness and unimportance, not exalting oneself over others.
 - b) Modest humility would be a good word, an admirable Christian virtue, in contrast to pride.
 - * The word all "pas" means all possible, not the sum total and is towards God and man.
- b. Humility was not considered a virtue by the Greeks, but was despised.
- 1) Paul considered himself as the chief of sinners and least of the apostles and saints. 1Tim. 1:15; Eph. 3:8
 - 2) Paul always had his Master and Lord in mind as the epitome of the example.
 - 3) Jesus is the source, "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take **My yoke** upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For **My yoke** is easy and **My** burden is light." Matt. 11:28-30
2. The second word also deals with the posture of our heart.
- a. The word gentleness "praotes", means mildness or meekness.

- 1) The idea of meekness does not indicate weakness.
 - 2) The word is used of an animal that has been domesticated to submission, communicating the idea of power under control.
- b. The word also deals with our attitude.
- 1) But where humility deals without perspective before God and man.
 - 2) Gentleness deals with personal care and dealings with people.
 - 3) Gentleness is an unresisting, uncomplaining disposition of mind.
 - 4) Moses was more meek or gentle than all men, even when Aaron and Miriam spoke against him. Num. 12:3
 - 5) David eulogized Saul. 2Sam. 1:17-27
3. The third word longsuffering deals with the perseverance of our mind.
- a. The word longsuffering "makrothumia", means patient endurance or steadfastness without retaliation towards people, distinct from patience "hupomone" endurance with situations and circumstances.
 - 1) The word is used of God. Rom. 2:14; 9:22; 1Tim. 1:16; 2Pet. 3:15
 - 2) The word is used of man. 1Cor.3:4; Gal. 5-22; Col. 3-12; 2Tim. 4:2; 1Pet. 3:2

- b. This is a man or woman who receives injury and provocation and doesn't strike back, having the power.
- 1) We are to be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and **longsuffering** with joy." Col. 1:11
 - 2) We are to preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all **longsuffering** and teaching. 2Tim. 4:2
 - 3) This divine attribute that is communicable and we are able to exercise, as well as the other two virtues are a manifestations of the "Fruit of the Spirit." Gal. 5:22-23
4. The fourth is the phrase "bearing with", deals with the outcome and efficiency of the work of the Holy Spirit in and through us towards people.
- a. The word bearing with "anechomai", means to hold one's self erect and firm sustaining and enduring "with one another".
- 1) This is a participle present with the middle voice, indicating the person as the participant with the Holy Spirit continuously.
 - 2) As we stated earlier, the three virtues are the source or essentials for the

- ultimate goal "bearing with one another in love".
- 3) The bearing with one another is the climax of the process with all lowliness and gentleness with longsuffering.
- b. The word love "agape" reinforces the divine enabling available to the believer yielding to God.
- 1) This love is distinct from the word "phileo", the emotional and compatible love, due to common likes and personalities.
 - 2) This is distinct from the word "eros", the sexual love that is based on the physical.
 - 3) This is distinct from the word "storge", family love and affection.
 - 4) This is the love of God through us to others.
 - 5) This is exactly what Paul prayed for them, to be rooted and grounded in "agape" love of God, living out its full potential by being filled with the fullness of God, for it never fails. Eph. 3:17-19; 1Cor. 13:4-8a

Illustration

As the branches cannot bear fruit without the vine, so we apart from Jesus Christ can do nothing. Jn. 15:5

Application

1. The attitude of the believer is to be that of Christ, a servant, the ultimate example of all humility and gentleness, with longsuffering with us in love.

* “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Phil. 2:5-11

2. The example of the believer is not the Pastor, our husband, wife, children or any other person, but Jesus.

* “For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example**, that you should follow His **steps**.” 2Pet. 2:20-21

3. The command to obey is accompanied with the ability to obey.

- a. We have been forgiven for all our sins and been made a new creature. 2Cor. 5:17
- b. We have been given a new divine nature to be able to escape the corruption of the world. 2Pet. 1:3-4
- c. We have the word of God, the Spirit of God and the mind of Christ. 1Cor. 2:9-16
- d. We all know how longsuffering God was as sinners and is with us as saints.
 - * “However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all **longsuffering**, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” 1Tim. 1:16

The process of yielding to our new nature is the second basis for the believer’s unity in the Spirit!

III. The product of striving to live in the Spirit. vs. 3

- A. The apostle Paul has for all practical purposes has described the formula of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in verse two.
 - 1. The virtues of lowliness, gentleness and longsuffering are all the work of the Spirit brought about in and through the believer.
 - a. The believer is a mere vessel, but he or she must yield.
 - b. The believer can refuse to yield to the Spirit.

2. The love is the Fruit of the Spirit.
 - a. The believer is not the source of this love.
 - b. The believer is only the recipient and channel of this love.
- B.** The apostle Paul therefore admonished them that there was a constant need to make sure the believer does not hinder the unity that the Spirit brings about in the body of believers, this is the why of unity.
- * “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit.” in the bond of peace.”
1. The responsibility of every believer towards the unity of the Spirit deals again first with our attitude.
 - a. The word endeavoring deals with our attitude towards the work of God in our midst.
 - 1) The word endeavoring “spoudazo”, means to give diligence, strive earnestly or make haste.
 - 2) The word is a participle present active, a durative denoting constant action and emphatic.
 - 3) Literally, “being diligent”
 - 4) We understand we are to make a purposeful pursuit towards unity, the context is Jew and Gentile one in Christ.

- 5) Notice that the believer is never called to create unity, but rather to not hinder it.
 - * Unity is the process and product by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. The responsibility of every believer towards the unity of the Spirit then deals our actions.
 - a. Our diligence is towards keeping the unity of the Spirit.
 - 1) The word keep “tereo”, means to keep by guarding by watchful care, not obstructing or hindering.
 - 2) The believer is to do all he or she can to not disrupt or destroy the unity the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer or the church body.
 - b. The only thing that hinders the Spirit is the flesh of man.
 - 1) The flesh is the believer’s sinful nature.
 - 2) The flesh is trusting in the abilities of man, rather than the Spirit.
 - 3) The flesh is motivated by pride, contrary to humility and gentleness, long-suffering and love of the Spirit.
 - 4) The flesh listening to Satan and the world, rather than the Spirit.
3. The unity of the Spirit always brings about the bond of peace.
 - a. The word bond “sundesmos”, means that which binds together

- 1) The word is used for the binding of ligaments figurative in the body of the church. Col. 2:19
 - 2) The binding work of the Spirit had done was Jew and Gentile one in Christ.
- b.** The word peace “eirene” means that which was previously broken, but now joined together again.
- 1) The bond of peace parallel “bearing one another in love”.
 - 2) The hostility between Jew and Gentile had been removed. Eph. 2:5

Illustration

James declares one may say he has faith, but void of works while one’s works will reveal one’s faith.

Application

1. Let me give you some of the due diligence every believer must do to not disrupt or hinder the unity of the Spirit.

- a.** Stay in the word, prayer and being part of a church to grow spiritually, as some. Heb. 10:25
- b.** **Walk** in the **Spirit**, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Gal. 5:16
- c.** Remember the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God, casting down every imagination and thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. 2Cor. 10:3-5

- d.** Putting on the whole armor of God. Eph. 6:10-18
- 2.** Bearing with one another is difficult at times because it calls us to crucify the flesh, but it is a necessary practice and right thing to do, humbling ourselves, to not disrupt the unity of the Spirit.
- a.** Some people are really irritating, even in the Lord or personality clashes.
 - b.** But there should never be any disunity due to national, race or former life-style for we are all one in Christ.
 - 1) “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.” Gal. 3:28
 - 2) “But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.” Col. 3:14-15

The product of striving to live in the Spirit is the third basis for the believer’s unity in the Spirit!

Conclusion

We have looked at the call of the believer to unity that consists of three things.

- I.** The practice of being one with their new birth is the first basis of the believer’s unity in the Spirit!

- II.** The process of yielding to our new nature is the second basis for the believer's unity in the Spirit!
- III.** The product of striving to live in the Spirit is the third basis for the believer's unity in the Spirit!