

## Walk Worthy of Your Calling

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AM Service

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### Text:

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation where-with ye are called, 2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3: Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

### Introduction

Last year, for 29 Sundays, we have studied the first three chapters of the book of Ephesians. As we have learned, the apostle Paul has spent the first three chapters of this letter to the Ephesians describing **the unsearchable riches of Christ** and **the spiritual blessings that believers have in Christ**. The focus in [Ephesians 1](#), [2](#), and [3](#) has been on what God has done in Christ for believers. And what has God accomplished in Christ for believers? Let's look back and review what God has done for us.

**In chapter one**, Paul begins his letter to the believers in Ephesus by reminding them that they are blessed beyond measure; that God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has blessed them in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. Saved by the pure grace of God, a salvation planned from before the foundation of the world, adopted as children through Jesus Christ, redeemed through His blood, and sealed and secured by the Holy Spirit.

**Then in chapter two**, the apostle focuses on the mercy and grace of God in saving them, made them alive in Christ, granted access unto the Father by the one Spirit. He reminds them how the Lord Jesus Christ by His sacrificial work has reconciled Jew and Gentile. By His atoning work the middle wall of partition brought about by the ceremonial laws has been broken down. By His blood shed on the cross of Calvary, He has brought the Jew and Gentile to Himself and to one another. The result is that Jew and Gentile together have access unto the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit.

**Then in chapter three**, Paul continues to drive home what he has been saying in the earlier chapters—he reminds the Gentile believers in Ephesus **what they were and what they have now become in Christ**. It's all because of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The sacrificial death of Jesus Christ resulted in two wonderful effects. First, through His blood Jesus Christ destroyed the hostility and enmity between Jew and Gentile. Secondly, through His blood, Jesus Christ created a “new man,” a new kind of people, called the church. The apostle Paul wants the Ephesian believers to see what their privilege and their standing are as the church of the Lord

Jesus Christ. He does that by using several images to describe the church that they are now a part of and to help them understand what the Church is.

That's a brief review of what we have studied over those 29 Sundays. And now, we come from the first half of Ephesians to the second half of Ephesians. As we progress in this study you will notice a change of emphasis. **The emphasis in Ephesians 1, 2, and 3 is doctrine**, while **the emphasis in Ephesians 4, 5 and 6 is duty**. The apostle moves on from the first half of Ephesians to the second half of Ephesians; from **doctrinal to practical**; from the **believer's wealth to the believer's walk**; from **our great privilege to our solemn responsibility**; from **Christian blessings to Christian behaviour**; from 'who we are in Christ' to 'whose we are in Christ'; from the **work of Christ in us** to the **work of Christ through us**; from our **identity to our responsibility**.

The apostle Paul begins this section with the word 'therefore' which is a **word of transition**. He transitions from doctrinal to practical. I believe this is the way that God intends to communicate to His people—**theology then responsibility**. This is a typical pattern in Paul's letter. This is the way he writes, and this is the way he teaches. Just like in the book of **Romans**, Paul spends the first 11 chapters going through the doctrine of justification, and then when he gets to chapter 12, he writes, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." After declaring the great doctrine of salvation, he then moves to exhorting them to work out their salvation to their lives. This is the same pattern that he uses in the book of **Galatians**. He spends 4 chapters in Galatians explaining the doctrine of justification by faith and then in chapter 5, verse 1, he writes, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." In **Colossians**, a book that is parallel to the book of Ephesians, in the first 2 chapters he lays out doctrine and in chapter 3, verse 1, he writes, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Here in Ephesians, Paul dedicates the first three chapters of this letter in **exposition** then in the next three, in **exhortation**. In the first 3 chapters, the apostle focuses on **doctrinal exposition**, then in the last three chapters, he shifted his focus on the **practical application** of the doctrine to our daily life. By the way, in this book you will find **some 41 imperative commands**, and **in the first three chapters there is only one imperative command**, the other 40 are found in the second three chapters. Why? Because the focus in Ephesians 1, 2, and 3 has been on what God has done; the focus has been what God has accomplished in Christ for us. Paul understood that **Christian doctrine is the foundation to Christian living**. In order to live right, you must **first believe right**.

Paul goes on to say in **Ephesians 4:1**, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation where-with ye are called." From doctrine, he transitions to an appeal. And that is what I invite you to consider with me. Paul is essentially saying, **in light of**

**what of what God has done for us in Christ, I now appeal to you.** Let's look at this passage in three headings, namely, the **Personal Appeal**, the **Pastoral Appeal**, and the **Practical Appeal**.

### **I – Personal Appeal**

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation where-with ye are called,

In this heading we ask two questions: who is appealing and who is he appealing to?

#### **Who is appealing?**

The one appealing is **the apostle Paul who identifies as the prisoner of the Lord**. Paul already said this in [Ephesians 3:1](#), where he writes, “I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” Paul was literally imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this letter, but he describes himself **not as a prisoner of Rome or of Nero but of Jesus Christ**. He writes in [Philippians 1:12-14](#), “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather **unto the furtherance of the gospel**; So that **my bonds in Christ** are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, **waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak** the word without fear.”

Paul understood his imprisonment was God's will and plan so that the gospel message may be proclaimed. **Paul looks at his imprisonment as the will of God and for the furtherance of the gospel and for the glory of God**. Now, although he already told them of his imprisonment in chapter 3, he brought it up again here in chapter 4. Why? Not to gain sympathy. **He reminds** them of his imprisonment **because he is about to make a very serious and important appeal**.

Pastor Brian Borgman puts it this way, “*Paul reminds the Ephesians that he was a prisoner because he wants to remind them of the seriousness what he is about to teach them. The fact that he reminds them that he is a prisoner is simply Paul's way of sealing his own commitment, demonstrating to the Ephesians the price that he was willing to pay for the gospel for their sake and he holds that forth as a motivation for them to take the 'therefore' (appeal) seriously.*”

#### **Who is Paul appealing to?**

To answer this, we have to go all the way back to the opening words of Paul in this letter.

[Ephesians 1:1](#) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful** in Christ Jesus:

The appeal that Paul will be making, in context, is directed to the Ephesian believers, whom he addresses as saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. He calls them saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. In other words, **he is writing to believers in Ephesus**. Whatever appeal Paul is about to make it is directed **to believers and believers only**.

But understand, while this letter was addressed to the believers in Ephesians, they were not written just to saints and faithful in Christ living 2000 years ago. No, they are written to us. They are written to us to challenge us to reach our fullest potential in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever appeal Paul is about to make, **it is directed to all believers in this church age**. So, keep in mind

that all the things we will study today, and all the way to the end of the book is **for you if you are a believer and a follower of Jesus Christ.**

## **II – Pastoral Appeal**

Before we look at Paul's appeal, I want to point out the humility of the apostle Paul. He begins his appeal with these words, "I beseech." Paul is fond of this word. He used it in many of his letters.

Romans 12:1 **I beseech** you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 15:30 Now **I beseech** you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

Romans 16:17 Now **I beseech** you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now **I beseech** you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 Corinthians 4:16 Wherefore **I beseech** you, be ye followers of me.

2 Corinthians 2:8 Wherefore **I beseech** you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

2 Corinthians 10:1 Now **I Paul myself beseech** you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:

Philippians 4:2 **I beseech** Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

Philemon 1:9 Yet for love's sake **I rather beseech** thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Philemon 1:10 **I beseech** thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

Hebrews 13:19 But **I beseech** you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, **I beseech** you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

The word "beseech" in Greek is "*parakaleo*" and is sometimes translated "I pray."

Acts 24:4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, **I pray thee** that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

Acts 27:34 Wherefore **I pray you** to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

Other times, the word “*parakaleo*” is translated “I exhort.”

1 Timothy 2:1 **I exhort** therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

1 Peter 5:1 The elders which are among you **I exhort**, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

The word “beseech” is filled with meaning. It means, “to exhort, to plead, to entreat, to beg.” But there is another dimension to this word “beseech.” The Greek word for ‘beseech’ is “*parakaleo*.” It is from the same word that is translated “Comforter” in the book of John. John 14:16-18 says, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

So, when Paul writes, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you...”, not only is he exhorting them, urging them, pleading with them, and begging them but also he is saying, “*I come alongside you to encourage, to comfort you, to lead you, to be your helper and friend.*”

What can we learn from this? Paul even though he carries apostolic authority, **he does not lord it over those whom he ministers to.** He does not come to his fellow believers domineering and bossing them around. He could command them but **instead he appeals to them.** The apostle Paul implores rather than commands. One writer says and I quote, “*You do not find the apostle lording it over the faith of the people of God but graciously, tenderly pleading with them rather than sternly ordering their behavior.*”

Pastors, church leaders, parents, older siblings, God has given us position of leadership and He expects us to exercise that leadership with the spirit that is demonstrated by the Lord Jesus Christ and by the apostle Paul. Not lording it over. Not being abusive and demanding but **exercise authority and leadership with humility and great care.** May we learn from the apostle Paul’s example how to live and lead with the authority and leadership that God gives us.

### **III – The Practical Appeal**

Now, it’s time to look at the apostle Paul’s appeal. What is Paul’s appeal? Is it to be set free? No! He did not say, “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you pray that I would be set free.*” Instead, he says, “**I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation where-with ye are called.**” Though I am sure Paul does not enjoy being incarcerated, but what is foremost in his mind is not to be released but **foremost in his mind** is that **his fellow**

**believers would walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.** Paul may be in chains and incarcerated because of the gospel, but that did not stop him from preaching the gospel. From prison he issued this practical and passionate appeal. Not to be set free, but for us believers to walk worthy—to walk in a manner worthy of our vocation, to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

The word “**vocation**” in our text refers to “a calling.” In context it refers to the calling we received from God. The apostle Paul already talked about this calling in the early chapter of this book. It involves everything that God has done, everything that God is doing, and everything that God wants to do one day for you as a believer in Christ. It starts with a call to **salvation**. Peter describes this calling of God in [1 Peter 2:9](#), where he writes, “**But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.**”

Followed by this calling to salvation is the calling to **sanctification**.

[2 Timothy 1:8](#) Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; [9:](#) Who hath saved us, and **called us with an holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

[1 Thessalonians 4:7](#) For God hath **not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness**.

God’s calling does not only involve **a call to salvation** and **a call to sanctification**, but also **a call to glorification**. The ultimate glorification of believer is when we become fully conformed to the image of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. We see the complete fulfillment of this in [1 John 3:2-3](#), where it says, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, **when he shall appear, we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

This is our vocation. This is our calling. And so, the apostle Paul implores us to walk in the manner worthy of our calling. ‘To walk’ here doesn’t mean the literal walk. Paul uses the word “walk” only in the figurative sense, just like how David used it in [Psalm 1:1](#) where we read, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” In the Bible the word “**walk**” is frequently use as **a metaphor for practical daily living**. It is a metaphor for one’s **conduct**, or one’s **behaviour**, or one’s **manner of life**.

God has done so much for believers in His grace mercy, and love, Paul now encourages and implores us believers to walk worthy of our calling. **This is not an exhortation to live in a way that earns or merits salvation**. Nor is this about paying God back for all that He has done and given us. How can anyone ever pay God back for His gifts? Isaac Watts composed expresses this in the hymn he wrote:

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small,  
Love so amazing so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!*

Even if you have all the world and all its riches, you could never ever pay God back for what He has done and given you.

So, what does it mean to walk worthy of our vocation? What does walking worthy of our calling look like? The word ‘worthy’ carries the idea of “matching up.” **Our walk should match our calling.** We have been called “with a holy calling” (2 Tim 1:9); we have been called out of darkness into light (Acts 26:18); we have been called out of slavery to sin into freedom (Rom 6:16-18); we have been called into the fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9); we have been called out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God (1 Cor 1:9; Col 1:13). What a great and glorious calling! Now walk worthy of your calling. **Live a life that matches; that reflects the greatness and the value of that call.** Live in such a way that you show you appreciate Him and what He has done and given you. God has done so much for us, but doesn’t want, doesn’t need payment, **all God wants is that you value it.** And your manner of life will reflect how much you value and appreciate God’s calling upon your life.

### **Closing Exhortations**

In the beginning of this book the apostle Paul prayed that we would know and understand the hope of our calling, now, he exhorts us to walk worthy of that calling. But still the question is how? Paul will help us answer that question in the next three chapters of this book. In chapters 4 through 6, Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit will tell us how. This will be the bulk of our study in the coming Sundays.

But in closing, let me ask you, “*How is your walk?*” Does your walk reflect that you value God’s calling upon your life? God does not ask you to pay Him back for what He has done for you. **What God asks you is to value it.** Walk in a manner that shows you are grateful and that you value all that God has done for you in Jesus Christ.

To the unsaved among us, let me say, this is not the appeal to you, at least not yet. The appeal to walk worthy of your calling is for believers only and not for the unbelievers. **You cannot walk worthy of the Lord if you are still dead in trespasses and sins.** You need to be made alive first before you can walk. If you want life, you need to **go to the source of life**, which is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Life. Go to the One who says, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**” Go to the One who invites you to come that you might have life in Him. Come humbling yourself before Him. Come believing Him as your only Saviour. Come and don’t delay.

**AMEN!**