

## Living a Worthy Life

### A Connected Life Ephesians' 4 Verses 1-6

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Introduction: Let's play a little game- Stand up if the following describes you. . . Republican-Democrat- White-not white-A Coloradoan-a non-native-woman-man Blonde-and those not blonde who like to tell blonde jokes.

Let's look at the church life now: Pre-millennial-A Millennial-Post Millennial (If you have no idea what I have just said-that's ok I do not either. Hymns –Contemporary music-Christian Church Background-some other denomination-Grew up in church –Grew up outside of church-Believe the apostolic gifts of speaking in tongues, miraculous gifts-prophecy exist today-Believe the Apostolic gifts left church at the death of last apostle, but God continues to heal, deliver and walk with us through prayer and many other means!

Satan, wants us to believe these things separates us. Lucifer dances a little jig of victory every time a Christians says or acts like I cannot possibly love someone because-you fill in the blank! Even more tragic is that we grieve the Holy Spirit, every time we place our self on the judgment seat of

Christ of who is worthy and not worthy!

But this is not anything new-most of the new testament epistles were written to correct divisiveness in the church. In New Testament Church there was Gentile and Jewish believers; There were those who ate meat sacrificed to idles and non-meat eaters; There was slaves and slave masters in the same pew; in short there has always been plenty to divide over. The essence of Paul's writing on how connected all Christians must be is found in Galatians 3:27.28 *For as many of you as<sup>(AW)</sup> were baptized<sup>(AX)</sup> into Christ have<sup>(AY)</sup> put on Christ. <sup>28(AZ)</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave<sup>[g]</sup> nor free,<sup>(BA)</sup> there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

As a Christian it is our duty to correctly handle the word of truth-It is the duty of God and his word who are not handling the word of truth correctly! As a Christian it is our job to confront the Christian in a lifestyle of Sin-but it is the Holy Spirit job to convict and restore. In short it is never our job to fix, control or manipulate other children of God into becoming what we think they should be. There is only one creator and judge-and in our mind sadly-we are not it!

The Christian Church has a saying: In essential unity, in Non-essentials Liberty and in all things love. I used to love this saying; but I am

beginning to see this saying still puts man in the judgment seat of Christ as to what is essential. Instead what Paul try's to teach us is our faith expressed in baptism into Christ, death, burial and resurrection unites all Christians weather we agree or not. Whether we like or don't like them. In Christ we are all family-we are stuck with one another-even if we do not attend the same church! Ephesians 4 is a dividing point in the book-the prior chapters Paul seeks to define our calling in Christ-now he is going to paint a picture as to what it is suppose to look like!

Let's first read Ephesians 4:1-6 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup>Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup>Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* What we will first unpack in this verse is. . .

### *What Connects Christians*

For us to connect we must begin to see unity is a reality of God. And as we grow closer to God, a fruit of that relationship is healthier relationships. Paul gives us four truths that unites us as Christians let's look at the first

one. . .

### *Prisoner of the Lord*

Paul starts out this section by reminding his readers that his calling as an apostle of Christ is also the reason he finds himself in a Roman prison. The Greek preposition en also points to the boundaries of his prison. . .In the Lord. We do not like to accept the truth, our faith in Christ locks us into Certain limitations. But it's true if we love Jesus-we are limited to doing only what pleases him!

But he was also telling the Ephesians-their prison, was Ephesus and specifically the Christian who worshipped in the Church at Ephesus. Just like a biological family, we do not get to choose our family.

Our faith in Christ's is a commitment to connect with those God surrounds us with whether we like them or not!

### *Provided Calling in Christ*

Another highlight in this periscope by Paul is his use of the word call. He is reminding Christ's Call to His family by his death on the Cross is what unites all Christians. In fact call is the Greek noun Klasis reminding us of God's call to us to enjoy the blessings of redemption through the death of Jesus. But those blessing are not just for the here and now they continue on into eternity.

So let's call out ten benefits of Christ's death on the Cross-Forgiveness-heaven-Redemption-peace-love

*Etc.*

May I suggest that what Paul is saying to the Ephesians and us as well is. .

.If God's salvation is so good, so live like it! The Problem with so much faith only emphasis is we have a million dollar salvation and think we need to give only a five cent response! Is it not just a minimum for God to say to us now you have all the treasure in heaven, that you love fellow believer on earth as if they were Jesus.

*Peace*

The bond of Peace spoken of here is **sundesmos in the original language.**

What it means is the bond that causes peace. According to verse three the source of the bond of peace is the Spirit or Holy Spirit!

Why is that? The Holy Spirit works in all Christians, baptizes them into the same Christ, equips all Christians with special gifts and nurtures and leads them to heaven.

Duke University did a study on "**peace** of mind." Factors found to contribute greatly to emotional and mental stability are: The absence of suspicion and resentment. Nursing a grudge was a major factor in unhappiness. Not living in the past. An unwholesome preoccupation with old mistakes and failures leads to depression. Not wasting time and energy

fighting conditions you cannot change. Cooperate with life, instead of trying to run away from it. Force yourself to stay involved with the living world. Resist the temptation to withdraw and become reclusive during periods of emotional stress. Refuse to indulge in self-pity when life hands you a raw deal.

Accept the fact that nobody gets through life without some sorrow and misfortune. Cultivate the old-fashioned virtues--love, humor, compassion and loyalty. Do not expect too much of yourself. When there is too wide a gap between self-expectation and your ability to meet the goals you have set, feelings of inadequacy are inevitable. Duke Univ conclusion is we need to find something bigger than yourself to believe in. Self-centered egotistical people score lowest in any test for measuring happiness.

This is exactly Paul's point-if you desire a peace that holds together-a bond live life centered on pleasing the Holy Spirit! Taking the hurts others have inflicted on you, to the Holy Spirit to convict and repent and restore from. Giving him our past mistakes to grow out of!

When a goal or expectation you have for self or others is beyond their ability-you trust the Holy Spirit to keep that bond of peace!

### *Perfect oneness of God*

Paul in the first six verse of Ephesians 4-uses the word one depending on your translation 7 or 8 times-do you think he is trying to make an important point? I think he trying to say to us: we are united to one

another because God is one, and we are to be a picture of that oneness!

Another way to say God is one-is the doctrine of the Trinity! Why is the Trinity so important? It's not important for us to have head knowledge. We are not learning about the Trinity for us to have information, but to bring about transformation of our lives. God wants to be who he is through you and me. What God demonstrates through the Trinity is unity. He demonstrates that he is a God of unity, even though there are three distinct persons. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit and the Spirit is not the Father. There is only one God.

God wants to be who he is through you and me. Our understanding of who God is affects our attitudes, relationships and actions toward other people. When you have a wrong understanding of God, then you will have wrong attitudes and actions toward other people. In fact that is why in this list stating God's unity one Spirit, One Lord and One God he sprinkles the salt of every believers experience; one body (the church), One Hope (heaven), one faith and One baptism.

What Paul is teaching us is that the unity of the Godhead: three in one is the foundation of unity in the church. That the Millions who belong in the body, who thirst for heaven, who hold to Christian Faith once delivered and baptized into Christ-now make up one church! So the secret of

connecting with those we wish and pray we were not connected with in the church: and go back in our mind the unity of God-and meditate on what we all share as followers of Christ-that when we do that Paul is saying it will enable us to live in a worthy manner the calling we have received in Christ!

### *What Divides Christians*

Like all great literature, there is implied meaning in the first six verses of Ephesians four. When Paul makes the Point we have one Lord-the implication is if we elevate certain fetishes into Christ's position there will be savage division. Let me Give you two implied issues that cause ugliness in the church.

### *Many Paths*

Going back to verse one: where he says all believers are prisoners of the Lord. In fact the concept of Jesus Lordship is so important Paul uses the word 26 times in the book of Ephesians. And twenty times in chapters four through six. Christian in Paul's day knew the term Lord quite well. It meant they were not even to given the Roman Emperor the title Lord he quested-because there is only one Lord Jesus! What that means is those in the world might have many lords-but those who have faith in Jesus there is one Lord. And the One Lord would not command us to disobey either His

faith or word. Jesus would not command us to act in a way that would harm his one church.

So what is implied, when anything besides Jesus becomes our focus-we will have many different paths!

Let me use an contemporary example: The last 30 or 40 years their has been much harm done in the church because of the many paths worship music has taken us down! There are some so dedicated to contemporary worship music, they claim traditional or poor quality worship music distracts them from worshipping God. May I be blunt-I will: If Jesus was their master-their focus-their concern they could worship without distraction in a foreign culture, with horrible music-because the motivation is correct to please their Lord.

Let's flip it around I know those who say I don't like contemporary music-it's too loud-it repeats too often and it is not traditional enough. I can almost see Paul asking us; if it helps our brother or sister focus on Jesus as their Lord-what does it matter? When Jesus is Lord we will not have many paths, but one path that loves god and man.

### *Many passions (Calling)*

When Paul says live a life worthy of your calling-he is saying there is only one Calling! What often divides the church is we forget our one calling

and pursue our many passions. While I was still in Bible college and in my first weekend ministry in Kentucky. I was invited to an area preachers meeting and revival.

Afterward during our fellowship time a middle aged man came up to me, interrupted and held out his three piece suit lapel and said this is a Sunday School Pin for Twenty Five years of perfect attendance!

Then he went on to make clear one of the problems of the current church was they did not put enough importance on Sunday School attendance.

That mans' passion for a good thing; Sunday School-he would disunite with other Christians if they did not value Sunday School like he does!

And it's not just this issue we have all sorts of passions that cause us to forget our one calling in Jesus. Let's finish up by asking the question. . . .

### *What Connects Christians*

How much effort should be going into walking in worthy manner? How much effort on our part should go into connecting with other Christians?

Verse one NLT says I Beg you to lead -Urge NIV-Beseech you

ASV: Which is it and why three different word in three translation? In my mind beseech is almost a command where as beg is I Paul want you to do it but it is not that important! The metaphor Live in the NIV and Walk in the KJV suggests something requiring controlled, enduring and focused acts.

It is the opposite of short outburst of aimless, frantic activity. I like the Metaphor walk better because it reminds us we can do nothing on our own power, but walking hand in hand with Jesus all things are possible including unity. It is a word picture of our determined act of humility and patience with the help of God's mighty Spirit, our lives will grow into our calling in Christ! Here is three action steps Paul says connects us to others Christians and keeps the bond of Peace.

### *Be Humble*

Humility in antiquity was seen more of a vice than a virtue. I am certain you will not see too much humility during the whole super bowl production. But to win the Super Bowl you have to have several humble players, who see other players and their roles on the team. There are super stars like Terrel Owens or Ocho Cinco who are focused on self, then there are those like Reggie Wayne or Darren Sproles or Drew Brees who do their Job and bring out the best in others-the second group win championships.

Humility is the choice to see other people and their needs. When Paul met the Ephesians Elders in acts 20:19 that they were to serve their flock with humility. Meaning they were to see their needs and work to meet them. Humility is especially important in the church where relationships are so

important. So when you have a disagreement with a fellow believer, decide to understand their point of view, seek to pray for them, share to meet their need –if done you will have acted with humility, you will have connected with a child of God and lived your calling in Christ in a worthy way.

### ***Be Gentle***

Gentle or meekness does not mean we are to be a push over. It does not mean we are to be weak-kneed yes person! What it means is to control your emotions and strength in concern for the well being of other Christians. A gentle person will not insist upon his or her personal rights, at the expense of others!

To be gentle, is to chose to restrain oneself when saying what you want to say would damage and bring no healing. But a gentle person is also very blunt when the wound he will leave, will bring healing in another! To be gentle is choose to put the need of others above your own! If you are facing an issue, where you insist on your rights it will destroy a child of God. Paul is saying don't be gentle and you will live up to your calling.

### ***Be Patient***

All of us have an internal Play Clock, when that timer goes off, we expect the play to be run. What's crazy is no one has the same play clock-it is just

one reason for the chaos in the world. Our society has taught us well to want it now and expect to get it! The idea that we should not have to wait on anything or anyone is just another form of self-centeredness. A lack of patience shows a narrow point in the soul.

When you choose to be patient you are saying to another person I value you enough to give you the room and time to fail, learn and grow into Christ likeness! While patience in our daily schedules, it is even more important in expressing love and unity to others! When we choose patience we will give people space to mature at their own rate, rather than expecting them to do everything right and right now! Patience is an act that recognizes all of us at time are a pain in the royal backside! And at that very moment we are bound to them, in Christ! So patience say's Christ I cannot change them-so I put them in your hands and let them go!

**Conclusion:** The church of my dreams accepts me as I am, but challenges me to be more.

I think the thing that excites me most about this church is that people are finding here the power for life changes. I could tell you story after story after story of persons whose lives are as different as night and day --as day and night -- they would tell you they came here in darkness, but now they

walk in light.

And that's what Jesus wanted the church to be all about. We are not to be a holy huddle in which Christian huddle in order to run plays against the world, and never allow the world to break in upon us.

No-we are a hospital for sinners -- for broken people. We are a kind of oasis to which people come for refreshment, for teaching, for renewal, for that power which enables them to go out and live in their day to day world with more hope and more direction and with a greater sense of well-being and identity. But that connection will never happen until we accept people as they are-not as we wish they were!

But being a hospital for sinners is very messy, there will be much carnage, it will be humbling, it will take gentle restraint on our part from lashing out, it will take untold patience. In short it will take nothing less than a miracle of God! Remember verse three: *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Praise band come up front!*

If you have accepted Christ as your savior and have been immersed into his death and resurrected into a new life and want a church home to help you grow more like Jesus come up front as we stand to sing. If you wish to accept Jesus and express your faith in one Lord, One Faith, One

Hope by being baptized in one baptism come up front as we sing.