

## INTRODUCTION

The Lord God called Israel out of slavery in Egypt. He delivered them with a mighty arm, and carried them on eagle's wings. He brought them through the Red Sea. He fed them with manna in the wilderness, and brought forth water for them from the rock. Having been called to be His particular possession, God told them through Moses how people must behave who have been called with such a calling:

Leviticus 18:4 You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God.

The Lord God saved Solomon from the scandalous behavior of his parents, David and Bathsheeba, saved him from suffering the same fate that his older brother suffered, who died in infancy. God elevated Solomon above the other princes, and called Solomon to be king over His people, Israel. Having been called with such a high calling, such a lofty vocation, Solomon was told by God, through his father, David, how he must walk:

1 Kings 2:3a And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways...

The Lord God called the remnant of Judah back to Jerusalem after 70 years of exile in Babylon. He gave them the blessing and assistance of King Cyrus the Great of Persia, and helped them to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. God sent Nehemiah to them to lead them in rebuilding the walls around the city. And God commanded them through Nehemiah, telling them how God's people must live, who have been so blessed by Him, who have received such a calling. Nehemiah said:

Neh 5:9 "walk in the fear of our God" and

Neh 10:29 "walk in God's law"

Yet, despite being told by God that those called with such a calling should walk in His ways, according to His commands, God observed that Israel did not walk in His ways.

Isaiah 42:24 they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.

Ezekiel 20:16, 21 they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes . . . they rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My laws

When the Lord said to them

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls.

They said,

Jeremiah 6:16 'We will not walk in it.'

When the Lord said to them

Jeremiah 18:11 return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good

They said

Jeremiah 18:12 we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart

Yet that was not the end of the matter, for Isaiah said to Israel, that in the latter days, when Christ would come:

Is 2:3 he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths

And God said through Ezekiel, speaking of these days of the New Covenant in Christ

Ezekiel 36:27 I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes

And God said through Hosea, speaking of the Christ to come,

Hos 11:10 "He shall roar like a lion." and "*They shall walk after the LORD.*"

When, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ came. Men who were paralyzed and crippled were brought to Him. He said to those lame sinners, "Your sins are forgiven you" "Arise and walk." By His power those lame men were

healed, and they walked, as He had commanded them. This was a sign that the promised time had come, when God would forgive His people's sins, command them to walk in His ways, and work powerfully in them so that they would indeed walk in His commandments.

Then the Lord Jesus, according to God's eternal purpose, took the sins of guilty sinners upon Himself and died for them on the cross, suffering the wrath of God not for anything He had done, but as a substitute, the just for the unjust.

The commandments of God were always in His heart, that He would walk in them, but the spear was thrust through His heart; He took the spear for us, because our hearts were not full of God's commandments, but full of our own wicked schemes, that we would walk in them.

The statutes of God were bound as a sign on His hands, that He would walk in them, but the nails were driven through His hands into the cross. He took the nails through His hands because our hands fashioned idols, that we would walk after them.

His feet walked always in the ways of God, but the soldiers drove the nails through His feet. He took the nails in His feet because our feet always had chosen the paths of evil and walked in them.

And so the Lord Jesus Christ, who walked in the ways of God, died for sinners, who would not walk in God's ways. And He was buried. But on the third day God raised Him from the dead. The risen Lord Jesus showed Himself alive to His apostles, and sent them forth to preach in His name the forgiveness of sins that He had won for sinners on the cross, and to teach all of His disciples to obey everything He had commanded. He sent also His Holy Spirit, so that the outward call of the preacher preaching would be accompanied by the inward, effectual call in the hearts of sinners

When those apostles did preach, they said, "God, in bygone generations, allowed all nations to walk in their own ways" "but now commands all men everywhere to repent" and "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

When that message was preached, the Holy Spirit so worked in the hearts of sinners that they, used to walking in the ways of the world as led by the devil, turned from that

way, believed in Jesus Christ, and came to love walking in the truth, walking in loving obedience to God's commands.

To those who did believe in Jesus Christ, who did repent of sins, the apostles taught the same thing the Lord had declared through Moses, Joshua, David, and all the rest: walk in the ways of God!

walk in the light 1 John 1:7

walk just as the Lord Jesus walked 1 John 2:6

walk in truth 3 John 1:4

walk properly, as in the day 1 Thess 4:12; Rom 13:13

walk in wisdom Col 4:5

walk in Him Col 2:6

walk in the Spirit Gal 5:25

walk by faith 2 Cor 5:7

walk in newness of life Rom 6:4

for This is love, that we walk according to His commandments! 2 John 1:6

Unlike how it was in the day of old covenant Israel, now the command to walk in the ways of God goes out not to people with hearts of stone, not to people who see the commandments of God as a heavy burden loathesome to bear. Instead, the apostles' instruction to walk in the ways of God goes out to people with hearts beating with love for God in Jesus Christ. It goes out to people who love the law of God in the inner man, where the Holy Spirit has raised those, dead in trespasses, to new life with Christ, and has Himself taken up residence permanently.

The Lord's apostle Paul was taken to Rome, and was under house arrest there, awaiting trial before Caesar. Always concerned about the churches, Paul wrote letters from prison to some of them, including the church in the large city Ephesus. In that letter, the apostle has written of how God has called us who were far away to come near, reconciling us to Himself in Jesus Christ. He has written rapturous lines in praise of the glory of God's love, God's grace, God's mercy, God's power, all shown to be glorious in how He has called His church out of darkness into His marvelous light; how He has called us from being strangers, aliens, and enemies to be not only citizens in His kingdom, but beloved adopted sons in His own household through faith in His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That is the subject matter of Ephesians chapters 1 through 3. At the beginning of chapter 4 of Ephesians, of course God, by the Holy Spirit, in this scripture from Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ, is going to tell us to walk in the ways of God. As we hear this with our ears, and read it with our eyes, we know that there is also the work of the Holy Spirit inside us, causing us actually to do it, to walk in the way of the Lord.

Just as soon as Paul turned his attention, in Ephesians 4, to instructing the church how to walk, he made one thing in particular the priority. So, the doctrine we are studying today is this: **Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called in Jesus Christ, especially in this: endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

TEXT

Ephesians 4:1-6

BODY

**Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called in Jesus Christ, especially in this: endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

- I. Consider Who Is Instructing Us to Walk Worthy of the Calling
  - A. The Lord Jesus
  - B. Through His prisoner, Paul
  - C. APPLICATION: Let nothing overrule the Lord's instruction in this
    1. what we're used to doing
    2. what other people do
    3. what our parents did
    4. what it feels good to do
    5. what we imagine we should do
    6. what we think God is telling us to do
    7. what we think other people would approve of us doing
- II. Understand the Essential Concept of Walking Worthy of Our Calling
  - A. You have been called with so great a calling
  - B. You now live in such a position of privilege

1. in the household of God, who is holy
  2. among those who are called with you to be holy
- C. Walk as is seemly for one in such a position
- D. But what is seemly for one in such a position?

III. The leading item here in what it means to walk worthy of the calling is to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

A. The church is a thing essentially unified

1. as seen in things more directly pertaining to God: One God, Who Is a Trinity
  - a) Father
  - b) Word or Son or, here, "One Lord"
  - c) Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost
2. as seen in things more directly pertaining to us human beings
  - a) one body (verse 4)
  - b) one hope (verse 4)
  - c) one faith
  - d) one baptism
3. as seen in that the unity is a unity of the Spirit
  - a) the Spirit has worked regeneration in the heart of every disciple, which includes saving faith and repentance unto life
    - (1) the Spirit also remains resident in every disciple
    - (2) the unity Paul is talking about is that which comes from every believer having the same Holy Spirit inside
  - b) the Spirit also inspired the writing of the bible
    - (1) for every disciple of Jesus Christ, the gospel that we believe and the commands of Christ that we obey come entirely from the bible
    - (2) the unity Paul is talking about is the unity that comes from every disciple believing the same gospel
4. these things are built into the church by the Lord
  - a) we do not have to make it be this way
  - b) nothing we do can make it not be this way

B. We are to endeavor to keep that unity on a practical level

1. to walk in the ways of the Lord; to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, is to endeavor to keep the church's unity by exhibiting these qualities:
  - a) lowliness, humility, humbleness
    - (1) Poole: oposed to pride
    - (2) counting others more important than yourself
  - b) gentleness, meekness
    - (1) Poole: not easily provoked, or offended with the infirmities of others: this is opposed to peevishness,
    - (2) counting on God to deal with offenses; not revenging yourself
  - c) longsuffering
    - (1) Poole: accepting greater or repeated injuries
2. and by practicing this:
  - a) bearing with one another in love; forbearing one another
    - (1) Poole: accepting the continued problems of others, so as not to cease to love them and do them good

C. Our Lord Jesus Christ has established His church as a thing essentially unified. We are taught, here, to walk in such a way as to maintain a practical unity in keeping with the church's essential unity.

#### IV. APPLICATION

- A. Do not let maintaining church unity slip down your priority list
  1. see the place it has in the apostle's doctrine
  2. think how important it is practically to the other aspects of walking worthy of the calling
- B. Do not mistake other kinds of church unity for the unity of the Spirit
  1. there are other kinds
    - a) mutual performance of man-made worship activities
    - b) mutual following of man-made rules
  2. the unity of the Spirit is the unity that comes from mutual following of the Holy Spirit-inspired scriptures
- C. We take the truth of the church's essential unity, and the character traits needed, and combine them

1. the church has one Lord; I will humble myself before that Lord, not taking to myself the role of Lord, to insist on a high place for myself, or on my will being done
2. the church has one Father; as a child does in the family, in meekness I will go to Him with my troubles; I will count on Him to take care of things, rather than taking it upon myself
3. the church is one body; I, as one member of the body, am willing to suffer long with the weaknesses of the other members of my own body; I do not consider the members of my own body adversaries or enemies
4. the church has one hope; its hope is not realized as yet; there is still the sinfulness of the flesh to deal with; but I will bear with others in love, knowing that while sin remains, there is the need for such forbearance; all the while, I have a sure hope that when our hope is realized at the return of Christ, sin will be removed from me, and from my fellow church members, and there will be no more need of forbearance

D. Application for the gospel, for evangelism:

1. John 17:20-21 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; (21) that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.
2. Practical unity in the church causes the world to believe that Jesus really is sent from God.
3. So, if you care about the souls of people around you, and you ask, "What can I do for the salvation of sinners around me?" Answer yourself in part with this: Endeavor, be eager, make every effort, to keep the unity in God's church.

## CONCLUSION

**Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called in Jesus Christ, especially in this: endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

Originally preached 2015-07-19 in two sessions at Sovereign Grace Church of Muskogee, OK

Walk worthy of the calling

The leading item here in what it means to walk worthy of the calling is to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

The church is a thing essentially unified

We are to endeavor to keep that unity on a practical level

We are to keep the kind of unity that is of the Spirit

The church's unity is comprised of several things

more directly pertaining to God: One God, Who Is a Trinity

Father

Word or Son or, here, "One Lord"

Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost

more directly pertaining to us human beings

one body (verse 4)

one hope (verse 4)

one faith

one baptism

these things are built into the church by the Lord

So, we are taught here to understand the essential or organic unity of the church, and commanded to walk in such a way as to keep a practical unity in the actual operation of the church that matches the church's essential unity.

with all lowliness

with all gentleness

with all longsuffering

bearing with one another in love

CONCLUSION

The church's unity is comprised partly of the church having one baptism

- I. Immersion
- II. Ordained by Christ
- III. For His Disciples
- IV. To Represent the Gospel
- V. In the New Covenant

John Ashwood

Universal or Invisible Church

Local or Visible Church

our confession of faith, which is, according to our constitution and bylaws,  
Philadelphia confession of faith, which is the American version of the 1689  
second London confession

sources:

Philadelphia confession (1689 confession)

John Gill *Body of Divinity*

John L. Dagg *Manual of Theology* “solid southern Baptist”

J.R. Graves and his followers

the Landmark doctrine of the church is heresy

No harm in referring to the whole election of grace, or the spiritual aspect of Christ's kingdom, as the universal church.

The Lord God called Abraham out of the land beyond the river, where his fathers served false gods, and brought him to the land of Canaan, and promised Him that in His Seed all the nations of the world would be blessed. Having called Abraham with such a vocation, such a calling, God told Abraham how someone with such a vocation must conduct himself:

Genesis 17:1b I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Call to Worship: Psalm 106:1

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 37:15-28

Sermon: “Keep the Unity of the Spirit” Ephesians 4:1-6

Benediction: Psalm 133:1

Trinity 89 “Come, Thou Almighty King”

Trinity 772 “Deliver Me from Evil”

Grace 43 “Face to Face”

Grace 138 “Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It”