

May 12th, 2024 (full sermon notes)

“Walking In Unity”

Ephesians 4:1-6

Read Ephesians 4:1-6... Paul urges us (**Ephesians 4:1**), to walk [*live our life*] in a manner worthy of the calling [*as Christians, sons and daughters of God the Father through faith in God the Son*] we have received.

When you believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, you become a Christian, a citizen of God's kingdom and a member of God's family. God expects Christians to serve Him in the Body of Christ, the Church, as we are conformed to the character of Christ.

Our spiritual birth into God's family occurs when we believe in and receive Jesus Christ as Savior, confessing Him as Lord (see **John 1:12-13; Romans 10:9-10, 13**). This birth takes place in our inner being, our eternal spiritual self where we become God's child, born again by the Spirit of God, into the Family of God.

We cannot apply to our life what we do not know; we cannot live a life pleasing to God without knowing what God wants us to do, and then trying to do it, as we are (**Romans 12:2**), “transformed by the renewing of [our] mind, so that [we] may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” **Ephesians 2:10**, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

Is serving God easy? No! But we have all that we need (**Philippians 4:12-13**), “I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” **19**, “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Paul exhorts us to live as God's children, serving God on earth while bringing glory to God in heaven. Yes, God is sovereign, but we have free will, and we can choose to obey or disobey, to honor or dishonor.

I am convinced that many Christians believe ignorance is bliss, and they would rather not know all they have been given in Christ if it means that they are expected to actually apply these things to their life.

As Christians, our calling is secure, our calling is eternal, our calling is from God; if you belong to God the Father through God the Son, made effectual through God the Holy Spirit, you have been given everything you need to know God, trust God, and serve God.

We are to walk worthy of the forgiveness and eternal life that we have received, to live in a manner that brings glory and honor to the Father and the Son, through the indwelling Spirit of God, Who serves to strengthen and grow the Body of Christ [the Church, the Fellowship of Believers] -- so that we might live as His witnesses, proclaiming through our actions and our words, the message of salvation by grace, through faith, in Christ, to everyone who will listen; and we are to do this (**Ephesians 4:2-3**), “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The phrase “with all humility” is a compound Greek word meaning, “to think or judge with lowliness,” i.e., to live in a manner that expresses complete humility.

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Humility is to be exemplified in our lives, although the world we live in exalts pride, arrogance, and boasting (**2 Timothy 3:1-4**), “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”

No one can please God without humility. We must see ourselves in relationship to and in comparison with the Holy God of Creation, for He is the standard by which everyone will be judged. **Colossians 2:8-10**, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.”

Philippians 2:3-11, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

True humility forces us to see ourselves as God sees us, as sinners in need of forgiveness through Jesus Christ, leading us to repent and be saved.

1 John 1:8-10, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

Scripture never insinuates that gentleness has anything to do with being wimpy or timid; in fact, the Greek word for gentleness was often used of a wild animal, like a powerful horse, that had been trained to be under control. The animal still had its strength and its spirit, but it yielded its will to its master.

Scripture describes gentleness as power under control, meaning that we willfully place ourselves under God’s authority, in order to live and act in a way that expresses our love for Him, i.e., we are to submit our heart, soul, mind and strength to our Master, the Lord Himself.

The repeated teaching in the Gospels that fulfills all the Law and the Prophets is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. ‘And’ to love your neighbor as yourself.”

Paul exhorts us (**Ephesians 4:2**) to be completely humble and gentle, we are commanded to “with patience, show tolerance for one another in love.” The Greek word here translated *patience* means, “long-tempered” [*long suffering*], for it is often through the endurance of trials and suffering, that our character is matured.

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True Christian character brings glory and honor to God, especially as we live out humble, gentle, and patient lives, expressing God's love to those around us, [bearing with] *one another in love* (relating to one another out of Christian love [*agapao*, this is a verb meaning *willful, sacrificial, doing the right thing at the right time for the right reason, even if it costs us, even if we have to suffer*]).

Colossians 3:12, “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” **17**, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” **23-24**, “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”

Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

See again **Ephesians 4:3**, we are to be “diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Unity is not something added to our fellowship, it is the standard by which God's presence and power is displayed in our individual lives, and in our corporate fellowship in God's Church.

True Christian unity cannot be created by an individual, or mandated by the church, it is empowered and made effectual by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Those who belong to Christ are part of *one* body of believers; we are members of the same spiritual body, the church. We are not independent of the other parts of this body, and as members we should promote and preserve unity by not allowing our own feelings and wants to be preeminent. We must allow the Word of God, by the Holy Spirit's presence, to rule our hearts and minds, our words and deeds, through the bond of peace. **Colossians 3:15-16**, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.”

Everything that relates to salvation, the church, and the kingdom of God, is based on the concept of unity.

Read Ephesians 4:4-6... There is only (**verse 4**) *one body* of believers; composed of every person who has or will ever trust in Christ as Savior and Lord (**1Corinthians 12:12-13**), “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” **27**, “Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.”

There is no disqualifying attribute among brothers and sisters in Christ, i.e., ethnicity, gender, education, occupation, no matter if you are a Gentile or a Jew, male or female, employee or employer, there is only one body of believers.

There is only (**verse 4**) *one Spirit*, the Holy Spirit who lives in every believer, He is the unifying force in the body of Christ (**Ephesians 1:13-14**), “In [Christ], you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

When believers walk in obedience to God's Word, in the power of the Holy Spirit, our beliefs and behaviors will be purified as we are unified in the *one hope* of our calling, to be like Christ.

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We have different gifts, attributes, and service (**1Corinthians 12:4-7**), “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

See again **Ephesians 4:5...** There is only *one Lord* and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:12, “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” Jesus’ name means Savior.

There is only *one faith* in true Christianity, and this faith is based upon the body of doctrine revealed in the New Testament, expressing the very character of God and the principles and precepts by which we are to live out our lives in order to bring glory to Him (**Hebrews 11:1-3**), “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” **6**, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

There is only *one baptism* among believers, spiritual baptism, placing us into the Body of Christ by God’s Spirit (**1Corinthians 12:13**), “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

It is true that Christians identify with Christ through water baptism, for this is the means by which a believer publicly confesses Jesus as Savior and Lord; but water baptism doesn’t save us, it is a testimony of identification with and unity in Jesus Christ.

See again **Ephesians 4:6**, “There is *One God and Father* of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” God’s oneness is foundational to Christianity (**Deuteronomy 6:4**), “The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” **1Corinthians 8:6**, “for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.”

Christians are one body of people, unified by one Spirit, in one hope, under one Lord, with one faith, one baptism, and One God who is over all, and through all, and in all.

If you have never asked God to save you, repenting of your sins and believing in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, why haven’t you?

You are either a saved sinner or an unsaved sinner. What reason could you possibly have to continue rejecting God’s forgiveness for your sins (past, present, and future)? And why would you not want to receive the gift of eternal life that is given to all who believe in God’s Son?

1John 5:11-13, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Benediction

2Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God [the Father], and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Pastor Mike Hale