

United in His Church: What Should We Do? Ephesians 4:1-3

Theme: Principle, particulars, and pursuit of Christian living

Outline:

Title: United in His Church: What Should We Do?

- **Principle of Christian Living (4:1)**
- **Particulars of Christian Living (4:2-3a)**
- **Pursuit of Christian Living (4:3b)**

Principle of Christian living (4:1)

Eph. 4:1 “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.”

“**I... implore you:**” Paul “exhorted or urged” the Christians in Ephesian; The word “exhort” also expresses urgency, indicating what Paul was going to say is an urgent matter. It also conveys authority.

“**I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you:**” See Eph. 3:1. In the name of the Lord, emphasizing Paul’s identity as the prisoner of Christ Jesus.

“**To walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.**” The principle of a Christian’s life. In NIV, “to walk” is translated as “live a life.” The way we live needs to be totally different, showing that you have been saved and have a new life.

“**The calling with which you have been called:**” “Have been” expresses the passive voice in Greek. We have been called. 1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 1:18, 4:4; Romans 8:29-30.

“**Have been called:**” After being called, a Christian must have a different life than before being called. Your life must be changed fundamentally. Ephesians 4:17-24

“**Being called**” means not only being chosen by God, but also that a Christian’s personal life has been changed, and that he’s been given salvation and become the son of God. More importantly, after being called, Christians are connected to one another as one body, the church; “Being called” applies not only to the individual Christian, but also to the church as a unified body of Christians. The word “church” in Greek means “the called-out ones.”

“**Worthy of:**” the doctrine of faith and the life of faith should be consistent with each other. Hebrews 6:9-11

Particulars of Christian Living (4:2-3a)

Eph 4:2-3a: “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, in the bond of peace.”

1. The Change of Internal Character - Humility, Gentleness (Eph. 4:2a)

What is humility? In Paul’s time, the Romans and Greeks did not use the word “humble.” It was the Christians who started to use this word. It was very likely that Paul created it. 1 Peter 5:5 says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” “Proud” is the antonym of “humble.”

Examples of “humility”: Acts 20:19; Matthew 3:11; John 3:30; Philippians 2:7-8.

Consequence of not being “humble”: Pride results in division while humility brings unity. Moreover, pride is the source of all sins.

How can we become humble?

- *First of all, humility comes from the knowledge of God.*
Proverbs 15:33; 22:4
- Secondly, humility must conform to Christ’s standard.
1 John 2:6
- Lastly, humility needs a deep knowledge of ourselves
1 John 1:8-9

What is “gentleness”? It first refers to the state of a wild animal being tamed. Aristotle: Gentleness is the halfway between excessive anger to anything or anyone and indifference/being unable to get angry at anything or anyone.

Right “gentleness”: Being gentle doesn’t mean being timid or having no courage. Being “gentle” is being angry at the right moment while never being angry at the wrong time.

Examples of “gentleness”: When Lord Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane, Peter drew out his sword trying to save Jesus. But the Lord said, “do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

Moses probably is the most humble person. But even people who are as gentle as Moses...

The object we’re “gentle” to: 1 Peter 3:15-16

Places where we need to be “humble and gentle”: “With all” means anytime, anywhere, and in any situation.

2. The Change of External Acts - (Eph. 4:2b-3a)

“Patience” is the natural expression of humility and gentleness: Patience is your reaction toward the things, circumstances, and people around you. The humility and gentleness mentioned above refer to the internal character. Patience is the external expression out of such internal character. Proverbs 25:15; Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12.

Teaching and Examples of “Patience”: James 5:17; 1 Peter 3:20; Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:15

“Showing tolerance for one another in love”: Tolerance is the ability to find all kinds of excuses for other people.

Teachings of “Tolerance”: Colossians 3:13

Being “tolerant” doesn’t mean not solving problems: Matthew 18:15

The means of being tolerant: Only if there’s love can there be tolerance; tolerance without love cannot last.

“In the bond of peace”: we are bound together with one another.

“Peace” corresponds to “Shalom” in the Old Testament; In the New Testament, the meaning of “peace” shall be deduced from the context, and normally it refers to peace from God (Eph 2:15, 17) and peace among Christians (Eph. 2:13; 4:3).

Pursuit of Christian Living (4:3b)

Eph. 4:3 “being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit.”

- **The Fundamental Origin of Unity - Given by Holy Spirit**
- **The Internal Feature of Unity - One Organic Body**
- **The External Performance of Unity - Eph. 4:11-13**
- **The Ultimate Goal of Unity - Show the World the Mighty Deeds and Glory of God**