

045 - Walk Worthy of the Calling - Ephesians 4:1-3 - 2015-05-31

Call to Worship: Psalm 84:10-11

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Sermon: "Walk Worthy of the Calling" Ephesians 4:1-3

Benediction: Colossians 2:6

INTRODUCTION

God called Israel out of slavery in Egypt, taking them to be His people. God spoke to Israel through Moses saying, "You shall observe My judgements and keep My ordinances, to walk in them" (Lev 18:4)

God spoke to Israel through Joshua saying, "Love the Lord your God, walk in all His ways" (Joshua 22:5)

God said to Solomon through his father, King David, "keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways"

God said to the young, through King Solomon, "walk in the way of goodness, and keep to the paths of righteousness." (Proverbs 2:20)

God said through the psalmist, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD." Psalm 119:1

God said to Judah through Jeremiah, "ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it" (Jeremiah 6:16)

God said to Judah through Nehemiah, "walk in the fear of God" and "walk in God's law." Nehemiah 5:9, 10:29

God said to man through Micah, "what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

Yet, God said of Israel, by His prophets,

they would not walk in His ways, nor were they obedient to His law
they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes
they rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My laws

Israel themselves said, of walking in God's way,

"We will not walk in it"

And they said, “. . . we will walk according to our own plans”

But God said to Israel through Isaiah, that in the latter days (when Christ would come), “God will teach us His ways, and *we shall walk in His paths*” Isaiah 2:3

God said through Ezekiel, speaking of these days of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ, “I will put My Spirit within you and *cause you to walk in My statutes*”

God said through Hosea, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ to come, “He will roar like a lion. When He roars, then His sons shall come trembling from the west” and God said of those sons, “*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 no longer command His people to walk in His ways, but they would not walk in them. The 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, 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, because our hands fashioned idols to worship that we would walk after them.

The law of God was on His forehead, that it would always be between His eyes, but the thorns pierced His brow because our eyes would not look to the old paths, but always looked longingly at the pleasures of sin, and we walked after them.

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

And so the Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners. 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 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 aome 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

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, to people who see the commandments of God as a heavy burden they loathe 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.

One of the apostles, the apostle named Paul, was put in prison by the will of God, for God’s purposes, and kept there for years. Finally Paul was taken to Rome, and was under house arrest there, awaiting trial before Caesar. We studied that together about two years ago in the closing chapters of the book of Acts. Always concerned about the churches, Paul wrote letters from prison to some of them, including the church in the large city of Ephesus. That letter, Ephesians, preserved for us by God’s providence, we have been studying together for a year as of today.

In Ephesians, the apostle has told us 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.

Now, as we turn the page from chapter three to chapter four 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.

So, if you delight in the way of God inside yourself; but you know yourself to be a sinner in your flesh, then I invite you turn the page with me. God is the only one who knows what will happen tomorrow, but if things go along as they have been going, we'll be at this a year or more, almost every Lord's Day. And the work we do together in these sessions, I think the Holy Spirit will work out inside you with great power.

I think this is going to be somewhat difficult
I think this is going to be somewhat painful
I think this is going to be somewhat humiliating

You know what's coming, don't you?

Wives, you will be told to submit to your husbands as unto the Lord

Husbands, you will be told to die to yourself for the sake of your wife, as Christ has done for the church.

Children, you will be told to obey your parents.

But all of that isn't even until near the end of chapter 5 and the beginning of chapter 6.

There is a lot of hard, painful, humiliating work to be done before we even get there!

But, oh, I think it is going to be very, very good.

I think it is a great privilege to be in this situation.

I think this is just what I have needed, for my own sake, for my family's sake, for the good of the church.

I think this is just what is needed by the unbelieving sinners around us---to see us brought to where we walk in the way of the Lord.

Receive, then, from the Lord, this charge: walk worthy of the calling, and receive also this introduction to what that means.

May the Lord help us!

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, (2) with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, (3) endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

BODY

Receive, then, from the Lord, this charge: walk worthy of the calling, and receive also this introduction to what that means.

- I. Understand the essential concept
 - 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
- II. I, the prisoner of the Lord
 - A. We are to learn what to do from the Lord Jesus Christ by the words in this bible
 - B. Not to be overruled by anything else
 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
- III. Therefore
 - A. Our reasons for choosing what we choose to do are found in the kinds of things we have been taught in chapters 1-3
- IV. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
 - A. Our goal is to keep the unity of God's church
- V. The character traits needed are these laid out here
 - 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
- D. 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

CONCLUSION

So, we've made a start. It is a long row to hoe, and the weeds have been growing up here for a long time. But the Lord is working in and among us by His Spirit, and the good work He has begun in us, He will carry on to completion until the day He returns. Until then,

**Starting to get some idea of what this means, hear again from the Lord, this charge:
walk worthy of the calling.**

Therefore
 appealing to the matter
I, the prisoner of the Lord
 appealing to the persons
 Paul
 ultimately our Lord Jesus Christ

Colossians 1:10 that you may **walk worthy of the Lord**, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

1 Thessalonians 2:12 that you would **walk worthy of God who calls you** into His own kingdom and glory.

Bayne:

doctrine section finished

manners/moral section now

4:1-5:22 general precepts - concern every Christian

5:22-6:10 special precepts - concern Christians in this or that condition or calling

“calling”

Not so much the action of God converting, as the fruits and consequence of our calling, the state to which we are called, as 1 Thess 2:12

What must move us to all Christian duty, the state to which God hath called us. We by nature are thralls of Satan, sin, and hell; now God, calling us, doth bring us to have communion with him, with the angels, spirits of just and holy ones . . . Of sinful people, we are called to be holy, therefore we are said to be saints by calling

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

This then being the state of us, what should more prevail with us to a holy conversation than this: to think in what communion now we are, what kind of people now we should be, what great hopes now are laid up for us

1 John 3:1-3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (2) Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (3) And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

“beseech”

ministers of God must use entreaty and gentle persuasions with their people. If the highest order of apostles must entreat, much more the ordinary pastor and teacher

2 Timothy 2:24-26 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, (25) in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, (26) and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

“prisoner of the Lord”

Calvin:

His imprisonment, which might have been supposed more likely to render him despised, is appealed to, as we have already seen, for a confirmation of his authority. It was the seal of that embassy with which he had been honored.

The apostle's prison is more truly venerable than the splendid retinue or triumphal chariot of kings.

Bayne:

"I therefore a prisoner"

This is forcible to persuade [in three ways]

1. The authority of the apostle's bonds, for it is a glorious thing to suffer for Christ
2. That Paul, though in bonds, should give himself to write, it doth testify the diligent care he had towards them; and of the church in them, to the end of the world.
3. nearness of the apostle his dissolution is set before them

"walk worthy of the calling" [KJV: vocation]

NIV: "live a life worthy"

JRY:

Walk is used very often in the bible to refer to your conduct, how you act

Geneva:

precepts of the Christian life, the sum of which is this, that every man behave himself as it is fitting for so excellent a grace of God.

By this is meant the general calling of the faithful, which is this, to be holy as our God is holy.

Calvin:

they must live in obedience to God, in order that they may not be unworthy of such distinguished grace.

a general sentiment, a sort of preface, on which all the following statements are founded.

Trapp:

We must walk nobly and comfortably, as becometh the heirs of God and coheirs of Christ.

let men remember their high and heavenly calling, and do nothing unworthy of it.

Luther counsels men to answer all temptations of Satan with this only, Christianus sum, I am a Christian.

Gill:

the phrase is expressive of a fitness, suitableness, and agreeableness of a walk and conversation to such rich grace, and so high an honour conferred on saints.

Bayne:

beseeming, becoming

Poole:

proceed constantly and perseveringly in such ways as suit with and become your calling,

both your general calling, whereby ye are called to be saints,

and your particular callings, to which ye are severally called, as Eph_5:1-33 and Eph_6:1-24. [Gill says it is not this]

1 Peter 1:14-16 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; (15) but **as He who called you is holy, you also be holy** in all your conduct, (16) because it is written, "BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

When God had called Abram out of the land of Ur, from among the idolators, God appeared to Abram and said, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless." (Gen 13:17)