

Life Together - Part 3
Walk Worthy – Ephesians 4:1-3
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – September 26th, 2021

Intro:

- Last week we focused on the three primary things the church does. First, collectively, we are the people who are called out and then called together to display God's grace, wisdom, and glory. This is our high calling, and this is what Christ is doing. This is the ultimate outcome of what He is building. I think all of us would like to be a part of a church that was like this. I think others in our community and our families would like to be a part of a church like this. I think a church like this could really make a difference in your life, the life of your family, those in this community, and around the world.
- But the question is, how can this be accomplished? How can this become a reality? If you were building this, what steps would you take? What elements would you use to put this together? And what would be the steps you would take?
- Paul gives us the steps after he paints the picture of what God does through the church and prays powerfully for the Ephesian church and also prays for us. So, the first thing he tells us to do is to **Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.**

Eph 4:1 ESV

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

- Paul gave his life and spent time in prison because of walking in a manner worthy of the calling. So the first thing we know, that walking in a manner worthy of the calling does not mean that you will have everything you want and everything will go your way. It means that some hardships may come to you because you are walking in a manner worthy of the calling. He was a prisoner for the Lord. So if you are going to go to prison, make sure you do so for sharing and living the gospel, not for any other reason. There are people right now around the world that are in prison for just that reason.
- A manner worthy of the calling means that our calling is to be a people that display the grace, wisdom, and glory of God, and this calling needs to match the way we live. They have to be in equal parts and balance each other out (like a balance scale). We have been called to this calling, and this is how we do it, this is how we are to love and live with one another:

Eph 4:2-3 ESV

with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Walk in humility

- This is how we are to walk, being humble people. What helps us to be humble is understanding that we are who we are because of the grace of God. Our talents, our abilities, our gifts, our bodies, this planet, our salvation, forgiveness, eternity, resurrection, all these things are gifts to us because of grace to us. Knowing these things must be converted to living as a humble person.

Humility – *not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less and thinking more of others* with the understanding of knowing that who you are and what you have is all because of grace.

- The opposite of humility is pride, and pride is problematic because it now places people in competition with each other with a false ranking system that creates divisions with a more-than / less-than mentality. And then we create this narrative that our value comes from what we can do, or what we have, or how we look, or how much money or education we have versus having our security and worth coming from the grace and goodness of God.
- True humility comes from security, knowing that your identity is centered in what God says you are and what His grace has given you, and knowing that He is greater and living for Him in thankfulness and humility. Then we interact with others out of a full place instead of using them to feel better about ourselves.
- God does oppose the proud and give grace to the humble (I Peter 5:5). God is attracted by humility and helps the humble versus the proud, thinking that they are the stuff, and they are self-sufficient – and so He just backs away and lets us do things on our own.
- I am sure you have heard the phrase, “God will not give you more than you can handle.” That statement is not true. God sometimes does give us more than we can handle. Consider this statement from Paul:

2 Cor 1:8-9 ESV

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. *But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*

- God sometimes gives us more than we can handle, but He never gives us more than He can handle – so that we can learn to not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

2 Cor 1:8-9 ESV

He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. 11 You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

- Set your hope on God, do so because of what you have seen from Him in your life, what you know about Him from scriptures, and the lives of others. Set your hope on Him, not on yourself, not from the hands of others. And then we can help each other by our prayers. One of the reasons we pray and have others pray is that the amount of thanksgiving will be increased when the burden is lifted, and the breakthrough occurs.
- We are called as a church to display God’s grace, wisdom, and glory, and we do this by living our lives in grateful humility that attracts the grace of God, displays His wisdom in our lives, and gives glory to Him for His goodness to us.

Walk in gentleness

- Gentleness is controlled strength – like when you wrestled your kids when they were young. It is like what Tom Klonicki did with me when he took me on to work with him. It is like what the

trainers do at the gym with me or Lee and others do in coaching my preaching. It is using your strength to help others and not crush them, giving gentle instruction and grace to other people. This builds them up and binds us together. It creates unity and community, and connectedness, and everyone is helped and strengthened and grows.

- Those who are strong in one area or another need your strength to help build us up, and protect us, and improve us. Those of you who are strong also need those who are weaker so that you can have the joy of helping others and multiplying your talents and abilities (Illustration with Deborah working in ministry and Anna with relationships).
- Use your strength in a controlled way so that God's grace will be seen in you, that His wisdom will be displayed, and His glory will be seen in the miracle of community with shared strengths and growth. If you know someone is good at something, ask them for help (which is a way we walk in humility). If you have a strength in something, then offer this to others.

Walk in patience

- Biblical patience is remaining tranquil while awaiting an outcome. This could be on waiting on God or on waiting on others. Patience is a reminder that we don't live in a universe that has us at the center. When I am impatient, it is usually because I have become consumed by my own life, and I desire everyone to conform to my wishes and desires.
- Relationships require patience, and unity requires patience. Teamwork requires patience. Life requires patience, and patience is one way that we can display God's grace. Patience is an expression of love. Patience is required to be in harmony and remaining tranquil while patience is an act of faith and trust – in God and in others (Noah for the flood, Daniel in the den of lions, Job in suffering, Paul in prison, you in your situation and circumstances and irritations).
- By walking in patience, we display God's grace, wisdom, and glory – God is patient as well (Rom 2:9). So then in our patience, we need to be willing to be 'longsuffering.'

Walk in longsuffering

- I choose the word "longsuffering" from the phrase "**bearing with one another in love.**" Because we love each other, we don't break off relationships over things that continually annoy us. If we are not longsuffering with others because of our love for them, our circle of friends would be very small or nonexistent, and we would have zero long-term friends. Longsuffering is *the exercise of a largeness of soul that can endure annoyances and difficulties over a period of time.* My wife displays this toward me with my continual tendency to forget things. My friends do this for me, with my continual tendency to talk too much or not being available. Your long-term friends and connected family do it with you as well with your deficiencies.
- Bearing with one another in love – does not break off a relationship over annoyances and difficulties. One of the most glorious things in all the world is long-term relationships. Those who stick with us, and those you have stuck with over the passing of time. Those who know you well, both your strengths and your weaknesses, and continue to connect. These people are precious to us, and they help to make us who we are. Longsuffering means we love people in all their strengths and weaknesses. This is a beautiful thing, which displays the grace, wisdom, and glory of God.

Walk in unity

- This is the part of the verse that says be **eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**” What are you most eager to maintain? Your opinion or unity? Your preference or unity? Your position or power, or unity? Peace sometimes is more desirable than being right.
- Our country and churches are fractioning now more than ever. Be a person who chooses to highlight and focus on what we have in common (which we will look at next week, in the next verses). Choose to emphasize these things and be eager to keep the bond of peace versus eager to prove your point. This does not mean we should not have meaningful conversations over items of disagreement. This means that we can have different opinions about things and still live in peace and relationships.
- Even when there are times in which we must go our own ways, choose to do so in grace, and in peace, not looking to destroy the other person or drop a bomb on your way out the door. Ask God for the love and grace to wish them well and hope for good things for them and to be at peace with them (example of Paul and Barnabas separating because of a ministry disagreement See Acts 15:36-41).
- Speaking well of each other and being eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace displays God’s grace, wisdom, and glory. To have people of different opinions on many things, still being together in a church body, worshipping and loving one another is a true miracle in a continually divided culture.

Conclusion

- We know what our calling is, to be a church that displays God’s grace, wisdom, and glory. This is done within our overarching statement to bring about the obedience of faith, (this is where these things are primarily lived out) for the sake of His name, (this is why we do what we do), among all the people (this is our reach – all people starting in Rockford and reaching to the rest of the world).
- Our talk displayed in our walk. Our faith evidenced in our lives. These are the things that make any church great. What we do really matters, and how we do it matters equally or even greater. Ask God for His grace to walk in this way, ask God to display His wisdom among us seen in unity of diversity. Ask God to glorify Himself in this place, through our lives, and in your life.
- Prayer