

Walking in a Manner Worthy of Your Calling

Ephesians 4:1-3

Jeremy Cagle, May 31, 2020

Good morning everyone and welcome to another Sunday morning sermon here at our Grace Fellowship YouTube channel. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jeremy Cagle and I'm the teaching pastor at Grace Fellowship Chilliwack. We're a Bible teaching church located in Chilliwack, British Columbia. Before I get started in our sermon this morning, I just want to say that we actually have some people here in the building with me during this message, and that's a privilege because I haven't preached to a live audience in a while. I haven't preached to anything but one of our deacons and a camera since March 8. So it has been two and a half months of isolation for us. It's been two and a half months of quarantine in a sense, and it's just a blessing to have other people here with us. We have really missed our church. We've missed our brothers and sisters in Christ. We were going to have more here tonight; we were going to have a full service but with the weather and the rain we had to go indoors and weren't able to do that. But it is a blessing to see those who are here.

It's been a while since we've met in person due to the request of the government, but recently that's changed. Just a few weeks ago the government has said that it's safe to meet in larger groups. It's safe to meet in groups of 50 people, and so to take advantage of that, we're going to start meeting on Saturday nights so we can have the sermon ready on Sunday. Since everyone can't be here to listen to the message, it's important for us to have this ready online. So we're going to continue recording our messages Saturday night, have a service, and then have them ready on YouTube on Sunday morning; but all this is to say it's good to see things getting back to normal again. Amen? It's good to see things getting back to the way they once were. If I understand it correctly, this won't all happen at once. It's going to happen over time in phases, as far as things getting back to normal, but this is a good place to start. Because Christians are social creatures; we are created to be with others. I've talked to so many people during this time that just say they miss church. They miss being with their brothers and sisters in Christ and with their Christian family, and that's a good thing. You need to miss that. The last thing you want to say in a time like this is "I'm so glad I don't have to be with those people again." I mean, that's not the attitude you want to have. You want to miss being with the church.

Speaking of that, this morning I want to invite you to open your Bibles to a book that talks about that. I want to invite you to open into a book that talks about fellowship and church and being with others; and that's the book of Ephesians. So if you have your Bibles with you, that's the book we're in this morning. We are in the book of Ephesians, and we're in chapter 4, so if you would turn there with me. While you're doing that, I want to read this passage to you. It's in Ephesians 4:1-6, and there Paul writes this he says,

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 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. *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also

you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Just to explain this passage to you and walk you through it. If you notice, chapter 4 starts off with a transitional word because it begins with the word “therefore,” which points you back to what was said before. It points you back to chapter 3:20 where it says,

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

And then Paul writes in 4:1, “therefore.” In other words, since God is able to do all of this, since God is able to do abundantly beyond all that we ask or think Paul says, “therefore, this is how you should respond. Therefore, this is what you should do as a believer.” He says, “You should walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called. Since God has done this for you, you need to walk like this,” Paul says.

We'll talk about this verse in a minute, but let me just say here, this is an important part of the letter. This is an important part of the book of Ephesians because it marks a transition in it. It marks a break from what was said before, because Ephesians could be divided into two parts. It could be divided into two sections: the Christians position and the Christian's practice. The book can be divided up into who we are now that we're saved and what we're to do in response. And the break happens here, that transition happens in chapter 4. The first half of the book, chapters 1-3, gives us our position. It says that we're blessed, and because God has adopted us and redeemed us and sealed us with the Spirit, that is our position. That's who we are now in Christ. The second half of the letter, chapters 4-6 tells us how to practice that. It tells us how we should respond in our marriage, in our family, in our jobs, and those types of things, that we should put on the armor of God. But it's all summed up in this verse, the transition, the shift happens right here.

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

To explain the verse, the word “worthy,” it's the key word of the passage because it's the Greek word *axios*, which means fitting or suitable to something. It referred to an object that was balanced on both sides of a scale. You guys have probably seen those ancient scales that had a weight on one side and a weight on the other and you would put things on both sides and try to get it to balance; you would try to get both sides of the scale to be stable, and that's what this is referring to. This is what Paul is talking about. If you're saved, you need to live a balanced life. If you're saved, you need to be stable with your position in Christ and your practice in Christ. With your life and your doctrine, they need to go together. They don't need to be all out of whack. And you do it by applying the Word of God to your life. You do it by applying all the things we've talked about in chapters 1-3.

One commentator said, “You know, we've been called to be Christians, so we need to answer the call and live like it now.” That's what this is talking about. If you think about it, this is quite a

statement because it's so different from what we've talked about earlier in the book. This is so different from what we've read in the other chapters because so far Ephesians has been pretty theoretical in what it says. It's been a pretty doctrinal pie in the sky type of book. Paul has given you a lot of information, a lot of ideas, but that's it. He hasn't asked you to do a lot with them, but now he starts asking you to do something. Now he gets personal. As a friend of mine used to say, he goes from preaching to meddling, because the Bible always does this. God always does this. God always goes from preaching to meddling. God always interferes with our lives. That's what he does. You're going *this* way, God stops you and sends you *that* way because God doesn't want you to be smarter, He wants you to be godlier. He wants you to be holier. He doesn't want you to just know more doctrine, doctrine, doctrine all the time or knowledge, knowledge, knowledge. He wants your life to change as a result of this. He wants to make you different.

It's been said that a sheep has to exercise or else it'll get bloated and it'll get sick; and a Christian is the same way. It's the same way with a believer; we have to exercise or else will get sick. You can't just sit around reading your Bible all the time, as much as you need to read your Bible. You can't just sit around reading books, you need to live it out. Another way to say this is you, you can't just talk the talk, you have to walk the walk. You can't just say you're a Christian, say you believe, you've got to step up and prove it with your life, which is what this verse says. If you look back in verse one, it tells us to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. Paul says don't just talk about it but walk about it. Don't just think about it and read about it. Get out of your chair and live it out. The word "walk" refers to action done. It refers to actually going somewhere. You can't walk and stay put; you can't walk and stay in your chair. That's what you have to do in the Christian life, you need to be making progress. I think if we're honest about it, this is convicting, because if we fail anywhere, it's right here, isn't it? I mean, if we fall short in any department, it is this department. We simply don't walk the way we should. We simply don't live the way we should. I mean, if you've been in church for a number of years, you know what you're supposed to do, but we don't do it. We know what the Bible says, but we don't follow it. Instead, we often live like the world around us. We often do what they do, but what the passage is saying here is that we're supposed to differently from the world. We need to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. In other words, we don't walk like we used to walk. We don't walk like the lost. If the lost goes this way, we go that way. If the world goes that way, we go this way.

I mean nothing is more important than understanding this. Nothing is more important than getting it, and I mentioned this because this can be a particular danger for a church like ours. This can be a particular challenge for us as believers because we're very doctrinal as a church. We love to study the Bible, and that's a good thing. That's a great thing. We should love to study the Bible and read it all day long. But that doesn't help you if the reading doesn't go any farther than that. It doesn't help you if you don't remember why the Bible was given to you in the first place. It was given to you to change and to make you different.

It's useless if you don't do this with it. James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves, but do what it says," which means you need to apply it. If you're not applying the Bible, then you're deceiving yourself. You're living a lie. James 2 also says, "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works, is dead."

It's very important that we get this. This is a very serious thing. You know, in one of his books on the subject, John Stott said it this way, he said, "Every Christian should be both a conservative and a radical. He should be conservative in defending the faith and upholding it, and he should be radical in living it out." And friends, that's what I want to talk to you about this morning. That's what I want us to look at. I want us to talk about how to be radical in living out the Bible, so if you're taking notes today in Ephesians 4, we're going to talk about five ways to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. That's our outline for today. That's what this is about. If you're taking notes, we're going to talk about five ways to walk in a manner worthy of your calling because as Paul goes on in the book of Ephesians, as he continues to write this letter, he does make a transition. He makes a break in his flow of thought. And now he says, "You need to practice all this." Now, he says, "I've given you some wonderful stuff in here, but now you need to do something with it. You need to walk it out." One author said that this way, "Paul has seated you in the heavenlies, he has seated you up in heaven with Christ, and now you need to get down on the ground and walk and move." So you're not a bloated sheep. Paul says, "I'm doing this so you don't get sick."

It's an unhealthy thing to fill your mind with knowledge, and never do anything with it. So let's talk about what we're to do with it this morning, with five ways to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. The first one's probably the most convicting one, it is with humility. The first way to walk in a manner worthy of your calling, is to do it with humility, which means to do it with a low view of yourself, to do it with a low view of your own importance. As a Christian, you should have a high view of God and a low view of yourself. If you read in verse one, this is what it says. Paul writes, he says,

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility.

Just to say a few words about this, as Paul begins to apply what we've talked about, as he begins to apply everything that he's written in chapters 1-3, he starts with something that can relate to all of us. He starts with something we all need to do, and that is to be humble. Later on in the book, he's going to talk about specific areas like marriage and the family. He's going to give you specific instructions as to how to live the Christian life if you have kids or a spouse or a job, but here he says something that's beyond all of that. And he says, "Here's what you need to do whether you have kids or not, you need to be humble." Single people can be humble, married people can be humble, old people can be humble, young people can be humble, we can all do this. In fact, he even says in this verse that this is our calling. Many people want to know what is their calling in life? Well, I'll tell you right here, it says, "I implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." This is your calling, Paul says.

That word is an interesting word in Greek; it's the word *kleseos*, from which we get the word "ecclesia" or "church." Literally translated, it's the word "church." It's this word that means the "called out ones," or the "summoned ones" because this is what happens when God saves you. This is what happens when you become a Christian, you are called out of something. You're called out of darkness and into light. You're called out of death and into life. And you're called out of pride and into humility. This is where you break from the world. This is where you change from your former way of life. Now you need to be humble. The world doesn't prize humility,

does it? The world values pride; it's consumed with thoughts of self, it's consumed with arrogance. Paul says as Christians we live a life that's different from that, we're called to be humble. In fact, the King James Version has a good translation of this, it gives the word "lowliness" for this word, because that's what you need to have. You need to see yourself as nothing, you need to see yourself as low.

And there's a reason Paul starts out with this. There's a reason why I put this at the top of the list. And that's because everything else springs from this. Everything else you're going to write about in the rest of this book is going to spring from this one thing, because you can't change in your marriage until you're humble, can you? You just can't do it. It's not possible. And you can't change in your family or in your job until you're humble; you can't change in your relationship with others, you can't change in your personal walk with the Lord. It all starts right here. It all starts with a lowliness of heart.

You know, it's been said that the first sin ever committed was pride. The first sin ever committed was arrogance because the serpent told Eve in the Garden of Eden that "On the day you eat of this fruit, you will be like God." That was an arrogant thought. That was pride. And the whole human race fell over this one sin. It's also been said that pride was this the first sin committed by the devil. Pride was the sin that ruined him because it was pride that cast him out of heaven. Because he wanted to be like God too. He wanted to praise that God receives. So if you don't want to be like the devil, you need to learn a lesson from this. If you don't want to repeat his mistake, you need to be humble.

To show you the extent of this, if you look back in verse two, Paul says, we need to do this with all humility. That means with humility everywhere, or with humility in every part of life. In other words, you need to be humble when you come to church and humble when you're at home. You need to be humble on Sunday and you need to be humble the rest of the week. You need to be humble in your marriage. You need to be humble in your family. You need to be humble in your single life. There just needs to be humility everywhere for you. You know, some of us are really humble until we get home, right? We kick off our shoes, prop our feet up on the couch, and now here comes the pride. Paul says you can't do that. It's not an option. Or some of us are humble everywhere, but at work. We get to our job and all of a sudden that chest puffs out and the ego gets this big. Can't do that either. There should be no part of your life, Paul says, that should not be touched by humility. You know, some of you have seen that game at the fair with the little clown heads that pop up and you hit them with a hammer. And then another one pops up and you hit that one with a hammer and then another one pops up and you hit that one with a hammer, and you just keep hitting and hitting and hitting it and swinging away. Paul says sin is like that, pride is like that. You kill it in one place and it pops up in another; and you kill it in that place and then it pops up over here. And what he says in this verse is you just have to keep killing it. It's never over. Wake up in the morning, you kill it. Go to bed at night, you kill it. You're constantly putting this particular sin to death. John Owen, the Puritan, used to call it the mortification of sin. And that means the ongoing killing of sin. Some things you kill once, but this is not one of those things. You have to kill it over and over again.

An arrogant businessman once told Mark Twain, "Before I die, I want to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and climb Mount Sinai and read the 10 Commandments from the top." To which

Mark Twain replied, "I think you would do better to stay in Boston and keep them because maybe then you'd be humble for a change." He said, "Maybe then you wouldn't be so proud." And he was right. I mean, this is a humbling thing to keep the 10 Commandments or to try to. It's a humbling thing to try to apply the Bible to your lives, but that's what we have to do. That's what this text says.

Since this was written in relation to the church, it would be good to talk about that for a moment. It'd be good to talk about what this looks like in the church. So maybe I could ask this question, you know, how many times has your pride gotten you in trouble at church? How many times, let's get personal here for a second, Paul's being personal, let's meddle a little bit. How many times has your pride gotten you in a pickle at church? Not in the world, but in church. I'll give you an example of this. Let's say Sunday morning comes you go to the morning service, you're blessed, you have a great time, and then you get into an argument with someone before you leave. What do you do? You argue about something, doesn't matter what it is, you have a fight. What do you do? You wait for them to apologize, right? You wait for them to say they're sorry. Why do you do that? Because you're proud. Why do you do that? Because this is a struggle for you. And as you wait, the relationship sours; as you wait, the relationship gets worse, because you're not being humble. Another way this plays out, someone confronts you after church. Someone points out a sin in your life that needs to be pointed out, you need to hear this; and what do you do with that? You get angry, you blow up, your flesh reacts, and you just lash out at them. Why do you do that? Because you're proud. Because you're not being humble; you have a high view of yourself, and they don't have that, so you get mad. You see yourself up here seated on the throne. They don't see you up there; they think you're on the earth with everybody else; and therefore, you get upset with them.

What this text is saying is we can't do that. What Paul is saying as he starts off this list is that that sort of thing needs to die because you need to walk in a different way. You need to live in a different way; you don't live on the throne; you live down on the earth. J. C. Ryle once said, "Let us watch against pride in every shape. Pride of intellect, pride of wealth, pride in our own personal goodness, because nothing is so likely to keep a man out of heaven as pride. So long as we think we're something, we will never be saved. But if we think we're nothing, God will help us." That's what we have to do.

It leads to another point here, another point to consider another way to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. The first one is with humility, which means you need to have a low view of yourself. You need to see yourself as God sees you – down here, beneath Him; He's on the throne, we're not. A second way to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, a second and third way is to do it with gentleness and patience. A second and a third way to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, is to do it with gentleness and patience, which means you need to have a soft approach with people. You need to have a tender approach with them because that is how God has been with you. That's how God has treated you. He's been tender with you. God was not hard and crusty with you when He saved you, and you don't want to be that way with others. If you read on in verse one. The text says this says

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience.

As Paul goes down the list here, as he starts checking these virtues off one after the other. He goes from the big picture to the small picture. He goes from the general to the specific because he starts off with humility. He starts off with something we all can do, and then he starts fleshing this out in different areas of our lives. He starts telling you what humility looks like. And he says, "This is what humility looks like. It looks like gentleness and patience." Those are really two sides of the same coin. They're two ways of saying the same thing because the word "gentleness" here is a word that means to hold your emotions in check. It means to keep control of your temper and your anger and your passions. One Bible translation gives this word as meek here, and that doesn't mean pathetic or weak. It means that you're able to be gentle no matter what someone does to you. You're able to be this way, tender toward people, no matter what they say, which is a sign of great strength, isn't it? It's a sign of great power to do that. It's one thing to be nice when everybody's nice to you, but it's a totally different thing to be nice when they're not; and that's what this is referring to. Patience refers to the same thing because it's the Greek word *makrothymias*, which means long suffering or forbearing with people. It refers to the ability to love them and keep loving them over a long period of time, which again is a sign of strength and power. It takes great strength to wake up every day and be patient with people, doesn't it? It takes great strength to choose every day to be gentle in a world that's not very gentle.

Especially in the church because you can meet some pretty difficult people in church, can't you? I mean present company excluded, there's some brothers and sisters here. I'm not talking about you guys. I'm talking about these guys here on the camera. Cut that out, we're going to cut that part out. Let me let me see. Okay.

All right. Let's be honest, there can be some challenging people in church, right? Just think about all the different scenarios you face in church. Just think about all the different situations that come up with people. You know, here's one, you're tired from watching the kids all week. You're worn out from changing diapers, feeding them, hearing them cry, you need a break from it all, you need to get away for a moment; so you come to church. You're so happy to be there, and another mom comes up and asks you to serve in the nursery. That's the last place you want to be for the next month. She asks you to serve in it for the next month. What do you do? Well, I'll tell you what you need to do. You need to be patient with her. You need to be gentle in your response. She doesn't know what your week was like, she doesn't know what you went through. You need to be like this toward her. Or another scenario. You had a long week at work, a long week in the office. Just a nightmare, a disaster. You had deadlines to meet. You had problem after problem, just one long headache, and soon you're about to go to bed. You're about to call it a night and someone from church calls you and says, "Can you help me? I'm having trouble with my marriage." Just as you're going to bed, they say, "Can you come over? I don't know if we're gonna make it." What do you do? Paul says you need to be gentle with people. You need to be patient with them. You don't need to lose your temper. You don't need to get angry. You don't need to hang up the phone and say, "Go deal with your own problems. Leave me alone." Why? Because that's not what God did with you. Why should you not do that? Because that's not how

God treated you. God didn't tell you to leave him alone. God didn't hang up the phone on you. He was patient with you. You need to be patient with him.

Ephesians 4:32, later on in this chapter tells us this It says, "Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Which means you need to do all of these things. You need to be kind and tender hearted and forgiving because God did that for you. Colossians 3:12-13 says "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other; just as the Lord forgave you."

Which brings us to another part of this verse, it brings us to another way to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, and that is to show tolerance for one another. Just going down the list here in the passage, but a fourth way to walk in a manner worthy of our calling is to show tolerance for one another, which means you need to accept people's differences. It just builds off of these other points here, but you need to accept people for who they are. And if you read on in verse two, it says,

...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.

As you read this list, you can tell these things are meant to be taken together. They're meant to be taken as a whole. In other words, you can't pick and choose which ones you want to do. You can't say, "I like this one. I like being humble, but I don't like being patient and gentle and tolerant." Paul says you have to do all of these things. And that's especially important when you come to the word tolerance. That's especially important when you get to this one because this is something we're not very good at.

Typically, as Christians, this is something that's a struggle for us. This word means bear with one another. Some translations say that it means to bear up under the weight of someone else, to carry their burdens on your shoulders. And those burdens could be anything. It could be a rude personality, bear up under that. It could be immaturity, bear up under that. It could be some sin that they're wrestling with. Even if though they upset you, even though they get on your nerves, you need to bear up under it. Which is hard for us to do. I mean, as doctrinal Christians, as those who love the Bible, we're usually not very good at tolerating things. Because as soon as somebody does something wrong, boom, we let them have it. And then as soon as they step out of line, wham, we drop the hammer on them.

Matter of fact, you guys are familiar with Paul's ministry. You read a word like tolerance, and you think Paul would say that? Paul would tell you to be tolerant? You see a lot of this going on in Facebook right now, social media. Christians are attacking each other all over the place. It's like World War Three; bombs are going off, body parts are flying everywhere. And Paul says we're not supposed to do that. As Christians, we're not supposed to walk that way. We're supposed to walk another way, you need to be tolerant of one another.

Now there's some misconception about this word. There's a big misunderstanding, and the misunderstanding is that some people take this word to mean compromise. They take this word

to mean that you're supposed to tolerate everything. Everything, no matter what it is. Tolerate sin, tolerate doctrinal heresy, tolerate outright division in the church, things like that. That's not what this means. It doesn't mean we tolerate people's sin; we still confront it; we still confront their heresy. We confront the things they do wrong, but we do it in love. That's what this word means. It's not so much what you say. It's how you say it. We do it with a spirit of gentleness and patience and humility. You actually see the word love used here in this verse because it means we need to do this to build people up instead of tearing them down. We need to use it to help people instead of hurt them. There is way too much tearing down going on in the church today. There's far too much hatred going on where people say the meanest things, no matter no matter what it is. Paul says it needs to stop. Paul says that there's no place for that in the church. We need to treat people differently.

It's been said that blowing out someone's candle doesn't make your shine any brighter, and that's what this says. This is what Paul tells us. We need to stop blowing people's candles out all the time. Again, I'm not saying there's not a time to confront, there absolutely is a time to confront. But it's not all the time on every issue with the same mean angry tone.

According to a traditional Jewish story, Abraham was once sitting alone in his tent when an old man came by, tired from his travels, weary from the journey, so Abraham offered him shelter. He offered him a place to stay. And he asked him, "Do you worship the Lord?" You know, "Do you follow the one true God," and the old man said, "No, I worship all the gods. I don't accept one over another," and Abraham threw him out. He said, "Away with you, you infidel," and he kicked him out of his tent. Later that night, the Lord appeared to Abraham and he said, "Abraham, where did that man go? Where did that stranger go?" And Abraham said, "I threw him out, Lord, because he did not worship you." To which the Lord replied Abraham. "I've been putting up with that man for 80 years. Couldn't you do it for one night?"

And friends, I think the Lord would say that to some of us. I think He would tell us the same thing today. We're far too quick to throw people out of the tent. We're far too quick to say, "Get away from me, you infidel." We don't need to be that way because God was not that way toward us. He was tolerant, and we need to be tolerant. I read somewhere this week that it's amazing that God didn't obliterate the universe a few days after creating it. Adam and Eve fell, that should have been the end of the world; and it wasn't because God was tolerant. And we need to be as well.

Which leads us to one more point to consider for this morning. One more way to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. Just to review these other ones, the first way to do it is with humility. which means that we need to have a low view of ourselves. First way to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, we need to have a high view of God, high view of Him and there should be no room for us. We should have a low view of ourselves. Second and third way to walk in a manner worthy is to do it with gentleness and patience, which means you should have a soft approach towards people. You should be tender toward them because that's what God did with you. And fourth, you should be tolerant as well, which means you should accept people's differences. Accept them for who they are, and work with them to change. Don't have the same mean angry tone toward everyone. And it brings us to a final point to consider here. A fifth and final way to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. And I won't say much about this one, but

we'll talk about it next week. We're going to do an entire sermon on this next point, but a fifth one to kind of round this off is that you should be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit.

A fifth and a final way to walk in a manner worthy of your calling, is that you should be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit, which means you should be diligent to preserve the unity that you already have. You should be diligent to preserve the peace that God has given to the church. When God saves us, He gives us peace. When God saves us, He gives us something in common with one another – the bond of Christ. And we need to preserve that. And if you look in verses one to six, just to read the whole passage to you again, so this is fresh in your mind. Paul says,

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 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. *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Again, we're going to talk about this next week. We're going to spend a whole sermon on this, but you can tell as you read that, that the word “one” is repeated several times in this passage for emphasis. It's repeated seven times in verses four to six, to remind you that this is what you are. This is what God has made you in the church; He has made you one. He's united you to one another, so that you don't have to create the unity. The unity is already there. You don't have to trump it up in some way, manufacture it. Some just try to manufacture unity by making everybody dress the same and look the same and talk the same. You don't have to do that. The unity is already there, but you have to preserve it. You have to protect it.

You see the same idea repeated twice here. The phrase, “unity of the Spirit,” it means the unity that the Spirit has given you, the unity that He has created. And then the “bond of peace,” which means the bond He created as well, the connection you have with other people in the church. We've had people from outside of our church come in and say, “Man, you people really love each other. You really enjoy being together.” Well, that's because of this. It's because of what God has done. They'll say, “You really care for one another, you really look out for each other.” Well, that's because God has made that happen in the church, and it's our job to work hard to preserve it. So we're diligent here, it means to sweat over it to pour over it, lose sleep over it. Pick up the phone when someone calls you right before going to bed. Some Christians think the most important thing we can do is fight other people. Some think the most important thing we can do is confront them and say, “You're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong,” all the time; and blow their candle out. Paul says we need to be diligent over something else, and that is peace.

That is what Christ did for us on the cross. That is what Jesus did for us at Calvary when He was broken and beaten and crucified it was to bring peace between us and God, to bring peace with us and one another. To bring Jew and Gentile together as Ephesians talks about. And we need to preserve it

Another way to say this is that when you sin in each of these areas that are mentioned here, when you mess up in the area of humility or patience or gentleness or tolerance, you need to see it's a

serious thing. You can see it's a big deal because it threatens our peace and threatens the unity that we have. So if you're sinning in one of these areas, you need to repent this morning and make it right. I can't tell you how many times I've talked to someone who has said that when they sin, they weren't hurting anybody; when they sin, they were only hurting themselves. That's not true. That's not what this says. This says when you send it affects everybody. When you send it impacts every other person in the church because we're all connected in unity. I've also talked to people who see it and they say, "Who cares? What's the big deal?" Well, this is the big deal. The big deal is that we're a family. And when one part suffers, we all suffer. When one part goes down, we all go down. You need to remember that and take it to heart.

Your actions can serve to either unify or divide the church. You can build it up or tear it down by what you do on a daily basis. Which leads me to ask friends, do you believe that today? I mean, do you get that? Do you see the seriousness of your actions? Do you see that you can either unify or divide the church? And with that in mind, how are you doing in these areas? I mean, as you read through this passage, how are you doing at being humble? Do the people that know you the best, your wife or your husband, your kids, your friends, would they say that you're low in your eyes? Would they say you're humble? How is your gentleness? How's your patience and tolerance? These are the things we have to grow into. I ask you that because our church will never succeed if we're not good at these things. Our church will never grow if we're not doing well, in these areas. To ask this another way, how are you doing at living a balanced life? How are you doing with practicing your position in Christ? Is it all doctrine, doctrine, doctrine with you? Is it all knowledge, knowledge, knowledge, and that's all you care about? Nothing else matters? Because if it is, listen to this, this is a chilling thing about this. If it is, then you disagree with the Apostle Paul. He said that's not all there is to the Christian life. You need to live this out. You need to apply it. That's what God wants for you as a believer. That's what He wants for us as a church. He wants us to walk the walk and grow in this.

In the 1700s, the pastor of a poor church in England named James Fawcett was called to serve in a rich church with a big budget and a big building and just everything was big, big city. And as he packed his bags and loaded his wife and kids on the wagon to take the job, his wife looked at the people from their poor little church who came to say goodbye. And she said, "I can't leave them." She said, "I can't do this." And he looked at them and he said, "I can't either." And so they stayed. They unloaded the wagons, they got the kids down, and they never left. And in response to that he wrote the hymn, "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds." Some of you might have sung that hymn growing up, you might have heard that hymn. But the first verses this,

*Blessed be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like that to that above.*

In other words, John Fawcett said, "I can't leave these people because I found a taste of heaven here." He said, "I can't leave them there because our fellowship is like that of above." Friends, do you believe we have that here this morning? Do you believe God has given that to us in our church here in Chilliwack at Grace Fellowship? Because if you do, you need to work hard to maintain it. If you do, you need to work hard to preserve the bond of peace.

And we're going to say more about that next week, so please come back for that. You can find us on our YouTube channel at Grace Fellowship Chilliwack. You can also see us online at our website at gracefellowshipchilliwack.com, but for this morning, let me close us in a word of prayer and ask the Lord to help us in all of these areas.

Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we do tremble at a passage like this one. We have to put our hands over our mouth and say that we have failed You, all of us. Nobody can read a text like this and say that we're keeping these things perfectly. This is a humble thing, Lord. It truly is a convicting passage. At the same time, Lord, we rejoice in seeing what all You've done for the church. How You have unified it and poured out Your Spirit in that way.

Lord, I do pray for our church family here at Grace Fellowship, those who are able to listen to this message. Lord, I pray that You would help them to be humble, gentle, patient, and tolerant people. I pray You would help them to be unified together. I pray for others who might be listening here this morning, whatever church they go to, whatever local church they're a part of that you would help them in these areas as well. And most importantly, Lord just help us to feel the seriousness of these things. Sometimes I think we're so pointed in the other direction, that a passage like this one just goes right past us. We pray that it would not do that today.

Thank You for Christ, Lord. Thank You for a Saviour who perfectly exemplified all of this and we can look to Him and find hope to grow in this as well. Lord, may you be glorified as we do seek to go out and apply these things. May Your name be praised as we seek to walk the walk that we talked about today. We pray for Your help in this and we pray this in Christ's name and for His glory. Amen.

May you have a wonderful week and God bless you.