



## Love in Action

Eph. 4:1 *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 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. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

### 1. The calling to which you have been called (v1)

“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 has spent the first half of this letter outlining our calling;

1v 3 'In Christ' – if you have given your life to Christ then when God sees you he no longer sees sin stained human he sees his own spotless, blameless son.

1v7 In Christ you have redemption (bought back) from moral bondage, inability to fulfil God's law, empty life handed down from our forefathers, from all wickedness

1v9 'In the fullness of time to unite all things in heaven and earth' – EVERYTHING will be redeemed from the curse of sin

1v17 'wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him' – In Christ we have access now to the wisdom of God and revelation which leads to encounter with the living God!

1v19 immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe ('whenever there is an increase of power you will always see beforehand an increase of revelation and faith')

1v19b same power that rose Christ from the dead is at work in us ('the defeat of my ultimate enemy makes all my other enemies seem 6 inches shorter')

2v1 'you were dead in your sin....he made you alive!'

2v7 'he will show the incomparable riches of his grace (undeserved favour) and kindness ('for all eternity you will be a visible demonstration of the undeserved goodness of God')

2v22 'you are being made into a dwelling place for God'

3v18 'strength to know the love of Christ' (Paul prays for the ability to receive it)

3v19 'that you might be filled with all the fullness of God' (the fullness of God in us is directly linked to our ability to receive his love')

Notice Paul says 'walk in a manner worthy' – **YOU CAN'T EARN THE GRACE OF GOD BUT YOU CAN LIVE A LIFE IN RESPONSE TO IT**

## 2. The community of that we are called to become

2 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.

**Paul says because of this great calling, because of this immense work that God in Christ has done to reconcile us to himself and to each other, because of that THIS IS HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND.**

## **BE EAGER TO MAINTAIN UNITY (v2)**

*“Eager means ‘spare no effort’ – the tense of this verb excludes passivity’it means ‘Yours is the initiative’, ‘You are to do it’. ‘Do it now and mean it.’” Markus Barth*

**How do we do it?**

**i) humility and gentleness (or lowliness and meekness)**

**humility lit. ‘lowliness of mind’**

Phil 2:3 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility (lowliness of mind) count others more significant than yourselves.

It is a word that was despised in the ancient world & never used in praise (most often used of slaves ‘a lowly slave’)

Lowliness **is not** false humility. It is not self hatred or self despising. It is not condemning oneself or holding back on skills and abilities.

Lowliness **is** understanding my sin stained self is valued and redeemed by Christ and the effect of this understanding on the value of others.

Meekness (gentleness) – word used of domesticated animals. It's not **weakness** – it's **strength under control**. Aristotle said ‘it's the golden line between being too angry and never being angry at all’

**ii) with patience, bearing with one another in love**

other translations : 'long-suffering' and 'enduring'

The more I understand my own sinfulness, pride, rebellion and shame, the more I will understand the patience and long suffering nature of God towards me and the more I will weep and be broken over my impatience and frustration with others. Their repeated failures will seem insignificant compared to my failures, their foolishness nothing compared to mine. Because I have been forgiven, I will forgive, because I have been shown patience I will be patient, because I have received mercy I will give mercy, because I have grace from God I will give grace (undeserved favour) to others. Because Christ suffered for me, I will pick up my own cross and be long-suffering with others

**Qu: Is there still room to challenge others?**

**Yes: You can speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15). You can challenge others as long as you're sure...**

**i) it's true**

**ii) you love them and you do it lovingly**

**iii) you've dealt with your own junk first (and are willing to deal with more if necessary!) (Matt 7:3)**

**Qu: How do I change?**

**1. REPENT (change your thinking) where you have not been loving, kind, patient chose TODAY that you will change.**

**2 RECEIVE - Gods love. Meditate on Jesus & His patience, His forgiveness, his kindness, his meekness.**

**3. BELIEVE - Holy Spirit just changed job. The one who was just convicting you now is your helper. (as opposed to the enemy who just keeps condemning and telling you that you can't change).**

**All change that does not come from faith in what God can do results in failure or self righteousness**

**4. CONFESS to those you have not been loving & maybe others who can keep you accountable.**

### **3. The destination**

*4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

**We speak of ONE God in a world that believes in many.**

**To a world that has lost hope we say that there is still ONE hope.**

**We preach that there is ONE way to this ONE God – Jesus Christ.**

**And we do it as ONE body by ONE Spirit.**

**This is our calling.**