

Live A Life Worthy of The Calling You've Received**Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-6****Facilitator: Alfreda Chandler****I. Historical and Biblical Context**

This book was written while Paul was in a Roman prison, to encourage believers in Ephesus, which was a part of the Roman Empire. There were many, who were being persecuted because of their faith in Jesus. The city was famous for the Temple of Artemis and widespread occult practices, which led many new believers to struggle with old superstitions and fear of dark spiritual powers. There was also friction between ethnic Jews and Gentiles, and there was a social divide between the rich and the poor, the masters and the servants and within family structures.

This letter is split into two parts. Chapters 1-3 focused on the doctrinal foundation: God's eternal plan to reconcile all and unify diverse ethnic groups (Jews and Gentiles) into one new humanity "in Christ" by grace through faith. The first three chapters of Ephesians encourages the believers with the glorious truth of God's grace in choosing them out of the world so they would "be holy and blameless in his sight (1:4). Paul reminded them (us) that God has blessed them (us) with every blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ (1:3)

Chapters 4-6 focus on practical living. It explains how this divine unity must transform daily life, which affects the church, marriages, parenting and spiritual resilience using the Armor of God. When Jesus saved us, he didn't just save us for heaven. He saved us to live for him, to do works in his name, to rule with him and many other things.

II. The Lesson: Live a Life Worthy of the Calling You've Received**1. v.1. Live a Life Worthy of the Call You've Received!**

Depending on which translation you are using, Paul starts off this chapter with "I therefore a prisoner for the Lord then... and there are other translations, all indicating in light of what he had written in the previous chapters to remind them what Christ has done for them, it is imperative that they live a life that measures up to the standard God set when he called you. It's a call to live or walk in alignment with the high purpose and identity which God has given each believer in Christ. On the bases of the foundation of chapters 1-3,

therefore live a life that shows you are grateful for what Christ has done. Paul also let them know he was in prison because he was follower of Jesus and they too may be persecuted for their belief, as some already were. It will not be easy but it's worth it. The calling, which Paul is referring to, is the call for all believers to salvation and holiness through Jesus. It means being chosen, redeemed and adopted as sons and daughters of God, with a purpose that transcend earthly life- to be holy and blameless in His presence. This calling is not earned but received by "grace", yet it demands a life that reflect that truth of the Gospel. Living worthy means your daily life corresponds to your position in Christ and the character of God. It means your actions should match your words and your conduct should match your inward convictions. The act of being called made us alive because before, we were dead in our transgressions (Eph.2:1-10). Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb (John 11:43-44) and he heard him. Dead people can't be raised or hear unless they hear the voice or command of Jesus. What was dead is now alive and that is what God did for us when he saved us. The act of disobedience should have changed to obedient, and we no longer live among the dead. Rom.8:28-30. The Christian life is a "walk" and not a "race". Every day we are to take inventory of our relationship with our Lord. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Eph.2:10). Walking requires us to be consistent. When we were born, walking was not an immediate skill we performed. It was something we had to learn and the same holds true in the spiritual realm. Walking with God is a practical skill that takes time to learn, and you have a lifetime to put into practice.

2. v. 2. Godly Characteristics

Paul gives them and us the Godly characteristics that a believer should be cultivating in their daily life. "Always be completely humble, gentle and patient, accepting or bearing with each other in love". Paul is warning that there will be conflict and friction in the body of Christ. We remember that in Eph.1:18 Paul prayed "that the eyes of their hearts be enlightened so they may know the hope to which God has called them and to know the glorious riches of the inheritance and great power". Jesus also prayed for the disciples and future believers before he went to the cross in John 17:26, that "the love showed to them from Christ will continue to be shown to each other (unity)". Our unity in Him will let the world know that God sent Jesus and we belong to Him because of our love for each other. Jesus, like Paul knew this world would be full of anger, strife and conflict, this is more reason it should be a priority to love others with the same love God gave us (1Jn.4:20).

Lowliness – a genuine humility that comes from being in Christ. It makes us conscious of our own nothingness and not esteeming yourself higher than others. It is the opposite of conceit and arrogance. This develops when a believer is in the constant presence of God and compares himself to God. “But we are all as unclean thing and all our righteousness are as filthy rags” (Is.64:9). Jesus himself described his own character as “gentle and lowly in heart” in Matt.11:29. Is.64:6. His own lowliness is demonstrated in Php. 2:8, where He emptied himself, and took on human form and became obedient to death on the cross. The prideful person refuses to live in the presence of God. Rather he compares himself to others and cultivates pride that is in his heart. God opposes the proud (Jas.4:6).

Gentleness-the attitude that submits to God’s dealings without rebellion, and to man’s unkindness without retaliation. Christ used this word when speaking of himself in Matt.11:29: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ‘Our Savior is gentle. The gentle person keeps his power under control. Instead of blowing up at the smallest problem, he is gentle and forgiving.

Patience- this also can be translated as longsuffering (KJV). It means to suffer long under difficult circumstances or relationship. Scripture says that Christ was a “man of sorrows” (Is.53:3). He bore great suffering and those who follow him must be prepared to do the same. Trials are one of the ways that God matures us (Jas.1:2-4). It is there where we learn to trust in him. An implication that one has patience is that complaining, bitterness, anger, and self-pity aren’t a part of their character. Philippians 2:14-15: “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so you may be blameless and pure, children of God without fault..... Paul is not saying that this saves us, but he is saying that displaying Godly characteristics show our identity to others. The more we trust God the more patient we will become. The reason we complain and get upset is because we don’t trust God as we should.

Forbearance in love- That is making allowance for the faults of others, or those with differing personalities, and temperaments. And it is not about putting up a façade while inwardly seething in resentment. It means positive love to those who irritate, disturb or embarrass you. 1 Pt.4:8: “above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins”.

Again, humility, gentleness, patient, and forbearance in love, mark a walk that is worthy of the Lord, but pride arrogance, impatience, and acting out of selfish anger are unworthy of Christ’s calling.

3. vv.3-6. Make Every Effort to Keep the Unity of the Spirit.

Paul tells them to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace". The fact that he calls the Ephesians "to keep the unity" implies that the Spirit had already been given unity to them- they just need to maintain it. This unity is not something man-made; it is a gift given by God. Christ prayed for unity before the cross in John 17:20-21. 1Cor.12:13: For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free- we were all given the one Spirit to drink". This make all Christians members of one body in Christ. Believing Jews and Gentiles are no longer separate, but one in Christ (2:11-15;3:6). Many seek to create a superficial unity by imposing uniformity. They require all to worship, pray, dress or give in a certain way. However, unity and uniformity are not necessarily the same. In fact, the metaphor of the body tells us there will be great diversity in the church. (1Cor.12:18-26). We should make every effort to keep peace by seeking to resolve conflicts (Rom.12:18); to persevering and not giving up. In deep seated conflicts, we must pray without ceasing, seek reconciliation and forgive. Usually when conflicts arise, it is partially because people are so focused on their differences instead of their commonalities. In verses 4-6, Paul notes seven traits that all believers share: There is one body, and one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. It is God's Spirit who indwells all believers (1Cor.6:19) and unifies them (1Cor 12:13) and empowers them to perform Christ's ministry (Acts1:8). The **"hope"**

Refers to Christ's second coming and all that awaits the believers at His coming- the bodily resurrection, freedom from sin, ruling with Christ and much more 1 John3:2-3. We will be like Him..... all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.

III. Conclusion: How can we live a life worthy of our calling in Christ?

- We must continually seek to understand our calling.
- We must use the power of God to joyfully endure and patiently persevere.
- We must practice godly character. True believers will display the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23)
- We must labor for the unity of the Church.
- Increase in the knowledge of God
- Give thanks to the Father for what He has done.