To Live Worthy of Our Calling
Ephesians 4:1-6

Objective: Teach folks HOW to go about a life that is worthy of our calling.

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6.

Memory: Ephesians 4:2, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”

Introduction:
1. I remember waiting for my name to be “called” to play on the softball team. When you are “called”, you don’t leave, you play by the rules and as hard as you can for the team! You want to be worthy.
2. If your name were “called” to represent the United States as ambassador to China, it would presume that you would live and behave by certain standards that would honor the country you represent.
3. If your name were “called” to represent someone in a court of law, it would presume and understand that you would perform certain duties and hold to certain standards.
4. If you are a Christian, you have been “called” by Jesus Christ. “Called” to come out of this worldly way of life, called to imitate and represent Him, to walk with Him and to enter heaven with Him. It is a very special thing to be called to live in the name of Christ.

We need to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. (HOW?)

The Apostle Paul, wants Christians to realize that the essential nature and purpose of the One who called us, should govern the conduct of our own lives.

To live “worthy” of the calling we have received, means, in a very essential way, that we live …

I. Completely Humble And Gentle.

A. Personal pride is generally counterproductive to our calling.
   1. Some have pride in their Jewish ness, others in their Gentile ness, = divisions barriers within the congregation at Ephesus.
   2. How dare they! What about me? They should think more highly of me. Where is their consideration of who I am and my needs. Such thoughts are contrary to “completely humble”.
   3. Humility is literally “lowness of mind” = opposite of haughty or arrogant.
   4. Arrogance results in harsh words, belittling, and irritability.
   5. Pride prevents me from admitting some things. My own faults? Maybe their way is better? Maybe I need to change something? Maybe you really are doing the best you can?
   6. May prevent me from comprehending some things. Maybe I could learn from you?
   7. Proverb 6:16, “There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him…”
      Then it starts the list with … “…haughty eyes…” Looking down at someone, despising them.
   8. Humility results in us seeking the good of others, regardless of our personal rights or comfort.
      a. If I don’t want to take the time to talk with you gently about your problem, I am not being completely humble. Therefore NOT walking in manner worthy of my calling.
      b. If I act irritated. If you’re a bother to me, I may NOT be walking in manner worthy of my calling.
      c. To be completely humble and gentle, it might help to…

B. Remember your own dependency on God’s grace.
   1. “I” am totally dependant on God’s grace.
      a. For my salvation. For my spirituality. For my spiritual health and my ability to resist sin.
      b. For my strength and talents and abilities, my wealth.
      c. Who am I after all? Just a servant of the Lord. This means that…
   2. “You” are extremely important. The Lord and Master Whom I serve and who is the reason I live, died to save you, so I am here to serve you no matter what it is you struggle with. This let’s me be completely humble and gentle with you.
   3. Remember the nature of our Lord and master; Matthew 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.”
   4. Such complete humility and gentleness enable you to…

C. Make your life a blessing even to those who persecute you.
   1. I have to be completely humble to take on this kind of an attitude and behavior, but this is the nature of our Lord. It is what we are “called” to do and be like.
   2. I could get irritated and a little nasty when neighbor piles brush or throws beer cans on my yard
But that is NOT an imitation of Christ that the Apostle in requiring here.

3. If they have obnoxious, ungodly behavior, then it is important that they be rescued! It is important that they see the love of God in ME! Or YOU! Walk in a manner worthy of the calling!

If I am to walk as Christ walked, to be of His nature, to respond appropriately to the gift that He has given me. If I am to legitimately serve my Lord and Master, I need to be …

II. Patient, Bearing With One Another In Love.

A. We need to control our tempers.
   1. Patience is literally "long tempered". Opposite of short tempered. If you want to be like Jesus, get a handle on your temper!
   2. James 1:19-20, “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”
      a. There is a time and place for godly anger and a righteous anger, but such does not sin.
      b. If you are responding with ordinary human anger, you are probably being counterproductive to Christ's purposes. Hence contrary to what you were “called” for. We need to

B. Determine to put up with people out of love.
   1. Because folks do have shortcomings. Faults and weaknesses. They do goof up and sometimes exhibit exasperating behavior. BUT they are important. Don't loose patience in working with them! They have different circumstances than you do. Their struggle is different. Bi-polar? Addictive personalities? How would you really do if you had their history, their spouse, their circumstance, their intellect?
   2. They are what your life and my life are now all about IF we are IN Christ and walking in a manner worthy of the calling we have received.
   3. You can't get an alcoholic to recognize their alcoholism by losing patience with them. Have to nurture a relationship so you can let the light in at right opportunity. Same with most sins.
   4. 1 Peter 4:8, “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”

Determine to work with one another in spite of faults and frustrations. Our “calling” anticipates that we…

III. Make Every Effort To Keep The Unity Of The Spirit.

A. Such unity is a matter of utmost urgency.
   1. “Make every effort” denotes the importance of it. How can we split and divide and separate when this is such a big part of our calling. Yet, how quickly we abandon the fight to stay united.
   2. It shouldn’t surprise us that this unity is a difficult thing at times – It was for them! And they had an Apostle readily available!
   3. What if the disunity problem is a personality thing? We simply can’t seem to get along? They want to do things differently than I do? Procedures, likes and dislikes?
      a. Then we are to act like Christ toward them. Act like the One who called you! Christ died for that person. He died to establish peace and reconciliation. We should live for peace and reconciliation.
      b. Philippians 2:2-5, “…make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:…” It will be the same as His, but only IF we are walking in a manner worthy of the calling.
   4. What if the problem really is a doctrinal issue?
      a. A primary purpose of our calling is still unity! Don’t give up on one another easily.
      b. 2 Timothy 4:2, “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage— with great patience and careful instruction.”
      c. Is this going to be difficult? Require patience? Require me dying to self?

B. If we really lived this way, imagine what UNITY we would have.
   1. This UNITY is what Ephesians 4:4-6 are about; “There is one body and one Spirit—just as
you were called to one hope when you were called—5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

a. How can Christians separate from other Christians if there is only one body?
b. How can we rationalize that it’s okay to behave differently if there is only one spirit? If we are separating, one of us does not have that spirit! (or maybe neither of us does).c. If there is only one Lord, aren’t we all trying to follow the same instructions?

2. John 13:34-35: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

3. We also all need to be matured and brought to completion. This is also part of our calling. And why we are different from each other, with different gifts; Ephesians 4:7. “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it…” Ephesians 4:12-13, “…so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

4. So there has got to be growing pains within a congregation! We should expect them and work with them. There has got to be struggles so we can all be matured and become more Christ like! We need to be brought to completion. Individually and corporately. This will involve struggle and growing pains!

5. Many of our struggles are intended to come from our immaturities. “Immature” is not intended to be offensive, it is simply an acknowledgement that we are not yet all that we can be, we have not yet attained the full stature of Christ.

So What?

For the church of our Lord Jesus Christ to become what it is supposed to be (“church “ means the people), necessitates growth; your personal spiritual growth and the spiritual growth of those around you. Such growth involves and necessitates some effort and some struggle and possibly some pain and discomfort. It involves individual Christ-like-ness. For the church to grow and mature in the image of Christ necessitates that each of us does their part by living a life worthy of the calling we have received; being completely humble and gentle; being patient, bearing with one another in love, and making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Closing Prayer:
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Memory: Ephesians 4:2
“B_ c_ h_ a_ g_; b_ p_, b_ w_ o_ a_ i_ l_.”

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B. Remember your own dependency on God’s grace. Matthew 11:29

C. Make your life a blessing even to those who persecute you.

II. Patient, Bearing With One Another In Love.
A. We need to control our tempers. James 1:19-20

B. Determine to put up with people out of love. 1 Peter 4:8

III. Make Every Effort To Keep The Unity Of The Spirit.
A. Such unity is a matter of utmost urgency. Philippians 2:2-5 2 Timothy 4:2

B. If we really lived this way, imagine what UNITY we would have. Ephesians 4:4-6 John 13:34-35 Ephesians 4:7 Ephesians 4:12-13

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