

## Thursday, July 16, 2020 ▫ Read Ephesians 4:1–7

*Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle call himself in v1? What does he beseech them to do? According to what? By what three characteristics is such walking marked (v2a)? What does such walking do (v2b)? What does such walking endeavor to keep (v3a)? By what have they been bound (v3b)? What six things do v4–5 tell us all believers have in common? Upon what final commonality does v6 focus, and what does it say about Him? What was given to each believer (v7a)? Who measured out gifts to each (v7b)?*

The apostle who is the prisoner of the Lord has been given a remarkable grace in his office and calling (v1, 7; cf. 3:1–2, 7–8). But he is not the only one with such an office and calling. To *each* of us grace is given, as Christ Himself—the chief cornerstone—has measured gifts out from Himself unto the rest of the building, the rest of the body, the rest of the nation, the rest of the family (v7, cf. 2:19–22). Whatever else a Christian does from 9–5 M–F (or whatever your ‘vocation’ is), there is the glorious calling of church member.

There are various duties of church members that we hear about in several places in the next three chapters. But, whatever the matter or substance of our role in the body, we are all called to the same *manner* or character of walking: lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.

We notice that the sevenfold list of things in which we are “one” in vv4–6 are all realities that exist already, realities to which the apostle has already largely testified in this letter. This helps us to notice that v3 isn’t telling us to make peace, but rather to keep it. God Himself has already made the peace. God has created the church as Christ’s body. God has given to each member His same Holy Spirit. God has given each member the same hope—adoption and inheritance as His eternally blessed sons. God is the same Lord over all. God has given the same faith in the same gospel. God has placed the same sign upon all.

The unity of the church, then, is not something that we produce, but that exists in God Himself. The list crescendos until it climaxes on the “One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all” (v6, MT).

So this unity exists, but it demands a response. It demands the response of each of us functioning as church members, which we will see later. But even before we see *what* we are to do as church members, the apostle presents us with *the manner in which* we are to do it.

Lowliness, considering others better than ourselves and generosity of spirit toward them. Gentleness, strength under control, not a flimsy tolerance of wrong ideas and practices, but yet a kindly and compassionate manner of interaction even when loving the Lord and the brethren in a holy intolerance of all that is against Him and them. Longsuffering/bearing with one another, having a long endurance and high “pain tolerance” in relationship with one another.

As we will see later in this book, a genuinely biblical “spiritual gift inventory” would look like: submitting to the teaching of the elders, shoring up our doctrine unto stability, expressing real love by building one another up in Bible truth, living for eternity, being a Christ-transformed wife / husband / parent / employee / boss whose conduct is heavenly light over against the satanic darkness of this age.

Oh that even above any spiritual gift inventory—this calling with which we were called—we would each devote ourselves unto the “still more excellent way” of walking *in the manner* described here in vv2–3. When we don’t, we treat as worthless the glorious realities of v4–5—and God Himself, v6. God forbid!

With whom in the congregation do you need to most work on “keeping the unity of the Spirit”?

Suggested songs: ARP197 “Christian Unity” or TPH409 “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”