



11 Ephesians 4:1-5 – Blest Be the Tie That Binds

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. (Ephesians 4:1-5 ESV)

On Wednesday night we looked at verses 1-3 and I'd like to go over that again this morning. These are some amazing verses that address how we are to treat each other as believers.

Remember before Paul wrote that he was writing from prison. Remember he said that he was a prisoner of Jesus. Never did he consider himself a prisoner of Rome because he always realized that God was sovereign in his life. He then tells us to walk worthy of our calling. We each have a calling. That is our purpose for living. Humans get into all kinds of trouble when they have no purpose. We have to have. Purpose. The world teaches that we are just random cells that just happen into being. We have no purpose maybe other than just being as happy as we can be.

But the fact of the matter is that we each do have a reason to get up in the morning so to speak. We are each called in scripture to be conformed to the image of Christ. That means we are called to reflect or be formed with Jesus. Teacher Larry Lengyel describes it by saying that if we were jello we need to be formed in a container that is shaped like Jesus. I suppose that is a pretty good explanation.

Paul explains this calling and purpose to the church in Rome (Romans 8:29) *²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

So how do we become conformed to Jesus. Paul tells us right here in this passage. So, if this is our calling, what does it mean to “walk worthy” of that calling? That means that your walk matches up with your talk, and you are what you seem to be. Your outsides reflect what your insides are. That means to walk in a way that is in agreement with that calling. The way we live needs to line up with being like Christ. And Paul says we do that when we exercise humility, gentleness, patience, and eagerness to maintain unity.

Key Attitudes and Behaviors Tie us Together

Humility - Remember what I’ve said, “Humility is not humiliation.” It is how we see ourselves in light of God and His word. Humility is power under restraint. It is letting God show me who I really am instead of boasting in myself. He is God and I am me. He is perfect and I am not. It is freeing and wonderful when we realize that we don’t need to “toot our own horn” to be something and to bring attention to ourselves. You can’t do this in your own strength. Your flesh longs to be loved and accepted and to have value and worth. And your flesh longs to fit in. The fleshly default is to make everything ALL ABOUT YOU. That is the opposite of humility. When a married couple or two friends and fellow church members have the right understanding of who they are there is a tie between them that is blessed.

Gentleness – Paul then lists gentleness. What is gentleness? Gentleness, also translated “meekness”, does not mean weakness. It means being able to suffer hurt by others without getting angry. It is not responding tit for tat. Gentleness in a relationship is being able to be hurt and through the Holy Spirit power of God being willing and able to forgive. The opposites of gentleness would include anger, self-aggrandizing behavior or conversation, and the desire to get pay-back when someone has done you wrong.

Patience – Paul then says that we walk worthy of our calling when we are patient. What does it mean exactly to be patient? It means you have a LONG FUSE. You are not short tempered. You don’t blow up easily. It is how we respond when we see other people fail or when they get under our skin. It is being able to endure with your temper intact. One of the words used in Greek for patience is *Makrothumia*. That is a combination of two words *Makros* (long) and *thumos* (passion or temper). That’s that idea of a long fuse. Your passion/temper is long in being triggered. When a married couple, friends, or church members exercise patience with one another there is a tie that binds.

Keeping the Unity of the Spirit in a Bond of Peace – Paul then talks about unity of the Spirit. What we’re talking about is that there is a work that the Holy Spirit has done to

join us to one another. We may be different from each other. We may be serving in different places, but if we have trusted in Christ we are ONE CHURCH. Unity is very important in any kind of relationship when two or more people are knitted together with God's love. On Wednesday we looked at Psalm 133 that talks about how beautiful unity is to God. When a married couple, or friends, or fellow church members remember that they have one Holy Spirit in them, the same Holy Spirit, there is a tie that binds hearts together in Christian love.

Key Truths that Bind us Together

Verses 4-5 Paul then lists key truths that we should remember unify us as believers. I think Paul is telling us to focus on what we agree on. One thing I love in Baptist heritage is there is an underlying culture that says, "Let us agree on the important things but let us agree to disagree on the minor things." We are right to do that in our church body and we're right to do that in our relationships with others. After Sandy and I had been married for a few years we stopped trying to change all the little things about each other that might have bothered us. Not only was that a better way to live, but we are commanded as fellow church members (and I would say as friends of one another) to remember the key things that unify us. Paul lists seven of these things: He says as believers we are unified in these:

- 1 One Body
- 2 One Spirit
- 3 One Hope
- 4 One Lord
- 5 One Faith
- 6 One Baptism
- 7 One God & Father

One Body of Christ – There is one Church

This doesn't mean that everyone in our church building is in the Church. The Body of Christ is in fact the Church. So don't be confused thinking that everyone coming into the church building is part of THE CHURCH or the Body of Christ.

What I am saying is that there are some Baptists, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and non-denominational people who might be in this assembly who have professed faith in Christ and they are all one Body. They are in reality one Church. They are the Body of Christ. By the same token, there are Baptists, Roman Catholics, Methodist, Presbyterians, etc who don't know the Lord and they are

just attending a church. They are not THE CHURCH. They are still to be treated in all of these ways we've studied in this passage.

Denominational differences have not encouraged us to be one Body. When Jesus returns all of the man-made distinctions that we have made will melt away. They will disappear. Jesus is coming back not just for Union Grove Baptist Church, but He is coming for those who believe He is Savior; that He is Lord and King. It helps a married couple, friends, and fellow church members that we ARE THE CHURCH. If my wife is part of that body with me, we are the Church. That should affect how we treat one another. That key point again is one of the ties that binds us together.

One Spirit

There is one Holy Spirit. When a person calls on the Lord, they receive the Holy Spirit immediately. That same Spirit comes into each of us as we come to know Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Because there is one Spirit there is only one truth. The disagreements we have are our problem in understanding what God has really said in His word. We become divided in areas of key truth.

When you meet other believers, don't look for things that divide you. Look for things that unify you. That is the key. That is what Paul is talking about here. Another person who has professed faith in Jesus has the Holy Spirit in them. Forget about the things about their denomination with which you disagree. If one group baptizes by immersion and another by sprinkling, don't make it a big deal. The saddest pages I have ever read were in seminary when I was reading church history. There was a time in Germany when hundreds of thousands of Christians killed hundreds of thousands of other Christians because they disagreed exactly on what the bread and wine of communion represented. I am sure these were some of the greatest days in the life of Satan and his minions.

One Hope

Where is your hope? Many believers have their hope in the things of this life. We hope for a more secure relationship. We hope we'll get our health back. We hope we'll get a pleasing job. We hope in this. We hope in that. Paul addresses this. He says if our hope is grounded on something that is only in this life, we are to be pitied. (1 Cor 15:19). When our common hope with our spouse or our friends or fellow church members is our hope in Jesus, we have a tie that binds us together.

Paul goes on to say we have:

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism. We have One God.

Paul tells us that for us there is one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things exist.(1 Corinthians 8:5-6). There are many imposters to Jesus. There is one Jesus. If you don't know Him you can know Him today as you read this. He says, *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."* (Revelation 3:20 NIV)

Some come along and say Jesus was a really good teacher. Or, Jesus was a great philosopher. Well, that's really not true. If He wasn't Messiah, and if He wasn't God in the flesh. Then He was a big phoney. Only a Savior or a total nut would say,

"6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." (John 14:6-7 NASB)

When we trust in Him, we have the one faith that Paul talks about. Some errantly say that all religions are the same. They are not. Jude tells us that there is only one faith and it is "once for all delivered to the saints". (Jude 1:13) It was delivered by the Holy Spirit. We declare that faith and we affirm that faith. This statement of faith is followed by baptism. We are baptised because we are saved, not to get saved. One thing we practice as Baptists is baptism by immersion. We do this because when I lower someone into the water it is a picture that they have died with Christ. It doesn't matter who baptizes you (1 Corinthians 12), it is just a beautiful picture of what has happened to you in your spirit.

One God and Father of All Who is Over all and Through All and In All

God is over the Church. He is not through and in all. Paul is saying that He is over all of our lives. He is through all, working through all believers, and in all believers. He is talking about the Church, the Body of Christ. This is something that unifies us all.

There is one God. There are no other Gods. The Bible says there is ONE GOD.

"You are My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. (Isaiah 43:10 NKJV)

The God of the Universe says that before Him there were no other gods. This is where we diverge from other groups that believe in a multiplicity of gods. Some who claim to

be Christians believe that people will become gods of their own new worlds. That is not what the Bible says. There were none before YHWH and there will be one after Him. Although we can love people that don't hold to these same seven truths, we cannot be spiritually unified with them. That is because I have to say there is ONE GOD. And there is ONLY ONE GOD ever.

¹¹ I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. (Isaiah 43:11 NKJV)

Therefore brothers and sisters, let's walk in the manner that is worthy of our calling. Let's recognize 4 heart attitudes that preserve that unity. Let's recognize those 7 key truths that knit us together. These are the tie that binds.

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship our spirit finds
Is like to that above. ¹

Let us pray.

¹ Blest Be The Tie That Binds by John Fawcett (1782)