



HOW TO WALK WORTHY OF OUR CALLING EPHESIANS 4:1-6

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Are you aware of the fact that in our state's illustrious history only two governors have been impeached and removed from office? The first was John C. "Jack" Walton who was impeached in 1923 after only ten months in office. He was relieved of his duties on grounds of general incompetence. The seventh governor of Oklahoma and the second one to be impeached was Henry S. Johnston. He was actually impeached twice and was finally removed from office on March 20, 1929. Much like Governor Walton, Johnston was accused of "generalized incompetence and neglect of duties," with allegations of his secretary having too much influence. I can't help but laugh at that. "Why were you impeached, Governor Johnston?" "Oh, well, I listened too often to my secretary and took her advice in policy decisions."

I mention this embarrassing slice of Oklahoma political history to illustrate what the apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:1. Obviously I need to explain that.

The President of the Oklahoma Senate that presided over the impeachment trial of Governor Johnston in 1929 was a man named Charles Samuel Storms, my grandfather, after whom I am named. He served two terms as state representative from Jefferson County and was elected to the State Senate from Jefferson and Stephens counties. After Johnston was impeached, Lt. Governor William J. Holloway became the acting Governor, and my grandfather functioned in the capacity as Lt. Governor for the remainder of Holloway's term.

Now, what I want to illustrate from this is the meaning of the word "worthy" in Ephesians 4:1. I believe we are justified in saying that neither Governor Walton nor Governor Johnston walked "in a manner worthy" of their high office. They brought disgrace on the dignity and power of the office of Governor. My grandfather, on the other hand, demonstrated how to "walk worthy" of his office and the privilege of serving our state.

My point is that the office of Governor, as well as that of President of the State Senate, deserve a high level of integrity. Those positions are worthy of great moral vigilance and impeccable character. The Governor's office is deserving of a higher standard of living than what either Walton or Johnston provided. I hope you can see from this that the apostle Paul isn't talking about the worth of a Christian but rather the worth of "the calling to which" we all have been called.

There is a real sense, spiritually speaking, that we have been "elected", not to political office but to be God's chosen children. When Paul speaks of our "calling" he has in mind everything that he wrote about in chapters one through three of Ephesians. He's talking about how God elected us or chose us before the foundation of the world. Our calling is everything God did to graciously deliver us from a well-deserved condemnation. Our calling includes being adopted as God's children and having our sins forgiven, all those incredibly glorious privileges and blessings that are now ours because of God's amazing grace.

There is something about God having called us into this incredible place of forgiveness and joy and privilege that deserves our very best in terms of how we live. Bring honor and praise to your high calling, not reproach. So, when Paul talks about walking in a manner "worthy of the calling" to which we have been called he's not talking about our worth, but ***the worth of the call!*** The incredibly high value of being elevated to the position of governor of our state should have kept Walton and Johnston from desecrating and tarnishing their high office. And you and I must be diligent to live in such a way that the joy and honor and glory of our high calling is made known.

So, I want to be crystal clear about what Paul is and is not saying. He is not saying that we must work hard to be worthy of being called by God, as if that were even possible. Sadly, many Christians beat themselves up because they don't feel "worthy" of being called by God to live as his adopted children whose lives should honor and glorify Jesus. But listen carefully. ***Paul isn't talking about our worth. He's talking about the worth of our calling!*** In other words, the honor and value of the position of governor of the state should have been worth so much to those two men that they would not dare bring it into disrepute. The greatness of their calling to that high office should have constrained them to lead a life worthy of being called Governor. But it didn't, and now we are forever reminded that they disgraced their calling to that office.

Our lives, says Paul, which is what he means by the word "walk" in v. 1, should be of such a nature that people will marvel, not at us, but at the calling that God placed on our lives. You and I have been graciously elected or chosen

not to a political office but to the glorious privilege of being adopted into God's family. So, be certain that your life, says Paul, is a reflection of the high value of what God has so graciously done for you.

Paul the Prisoner

Before we look at what Paul means by a life that is worthy of our calling, we must take note of how he describes himself here in v. 1. "I therefore, a prisoner of the Lord"! What? "Sam, I thought you just said that the calling of the Christian is an incomparable privilege that is filled to overflowing with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. Isn't that what Paul wrote in chapter one? How is it that he now describes himself as in chains in a Roman prison?"

That's a great question. And don't think for a moment that Paul was unaware of what must have sounded like a contradiction to the Ephesian believers and to us as well.

This is actually the third time Paul has mentioned his imprisonment. He opened chapter three with these words: "For this reason I, Paul, *a prisoner of Christ Jesus* on behalf of you Gentiles" (3:1). He mentions it again in 3:12. There he says, "So I ask you not to lose heart over *what I am suffering* for you, which is your glory." His "suffering" here is obviously a reference to the pain and discomfort and mistreatment he endured while in prison. Now, again in 4:1, he identifies himself as "*a prisoner for the Lord*." As best we can determine, Paul was imprisoned in Rome for no less than two years, from 60-62 a.d.

Did you notice that Paul says he is a prisoner "of Christ Jesus" and "for the Lord." Paul doesn't think of his imprisonment as something the Roman government had imposed. His suffering in jail was because of his devotion to Jesus and for the glory of Jesus. He deliberately avoids blaming Rome for his suffering and his incarceration. He's there in that damp, dark, dismal belly of a Roman dungeon because he was faithful to Jesus in proclaiming him and making him known.

But even more than that, back in Ephesians 3:13 *Paul was more concerned about the Ephesians' concern for him than he was for himself*. "Don't lose heart over what I am suffering," he wrote. Paul doesn't complain about his condition. He's hurting. He's been deprived of his freedom. He barely has enough to eat. His only companions in prison are rats and the anguished cries of others in prison with him. And yet his primary concern is for the Ephesians. He doesn't want them to give up on their faith in Jesus simply because he has landed in prison. He is concerned that they might "lose heart" or become discouraged and even perhaps walk away from Jesus because of what he is enduring. What I am suffering, he says in 3:13, is "for you." I am happy to be locked away if only that I might have opportunity to write this letter and serve as an example to you of how a Christian is supposed to suffer without complaining. No self-pity here.

Let me take a moment and drive home this point a little deeper into each of our hearts. Many of you are suffering right now. It is painful for you to sit in a chair while I preach. The physical anguish you endure often makes it impossible for you even to show up here on a Sunday morning. Or your suffering may be financial in nature. Perhaps a business failure, or the betrayal of an employee has put you in a bind financially speaking. Or it could be the waywardness of your children, or the disdain you experience from your parents. Or maybe lifelong friends have walked away and don't want anything to do with you. How do you respond to such suffering, in whatever form it might take?

I really want us to think about this today. You may recall that back in Ephesians 1:11 Paul described God as the one who "*works all things according to the counsel of his will*." I can almost hear the Ephesian Christians, and perhaps some of us as well, crying out in protest: "Hold on a minute, Paul. Stop right there. If what you said back in 1:11 is true, what are you doing in chains, locked away in prison, deprived of your freedom?" You might even be tempted to say to Paul, "Yeah, if my God works all things according to his will, why am I still sick and hurting? Why is my bank account depleted? Why are my kids doing drugs? Why does my car continue to break down? Why is my spouse such a selfish jerk? Why did my spouse die so early on in our marriage?"

Why does Paul describe himself this way? Is he just looking for pity? Is he wanting people to feel sorry for him? Is it a veiled appeal for someone to go to the authorities and pay a fine so that he can be released?

After all, let's not forget who this man is. This is the man who met the risen Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. This is the man who healed the sick and cast out demons and was taken into the third heaven to see and hear things so glorious that he was forbidden from telling anyone about them. What was he, of all people, doing in prison? Does

Paul actually want us to believe that a Christian, whom God loves passionately, can walk worthy of his calling even if imprisoned?

Yes. You and I can live in the way vv. 2-6 describes even in the dark, damp, dismal belly of a Roman prison. And we can suffer as Paul did, or in some other way, without becoming embittered toward God or losing our confidence in his goodness and his sovereignty.

I hope you know that I don't say this flippantly, as if I'm minimizing the anguish of your circumstances, as if your suffering isn't really all that bad. Neither am I wanting to say that it is bad for you to feel bad, as if God is simply saying, "Come on, kid, your life isn't nearly as bad as others or as bad as it could be." Our God is far more understanding and compassionate than that.

But how am I supposed to respond to my current situation the same way Paul responded to his? The answer is right there in Ephesians 4:1. It is bound up with that one word, "**therefore**." Those of you who have been sitting under my preaching for the past 17 years should know by now how important that word is. It is Paul's way of answering the question we all are inclined to ask: "How in the world, Paul, have you been able to endure without bitterness, without loss of your faith in God's goodness and his sovereignty. And how do you expect me to remain faithful to Jesus in the midst of my suffering?"

Paul's answer is bound up in that one word: "therefore." It is his way of saying, *"It is in light of all that I've written in chapters one, two, and three, that I find the strength and the motivation and energy to walk worthy of the calling to which I've been called, even if that has to happen while I'm in chains."*

In other words, Paul is directing their attention and our attention to the great and glorious things that God has done for us in Jesus as the basis or the grounds or the reasons why he is devoted to living a godly life in spite of his circumstances. It's as if Paul says to them and to us:

"You ask me why am I still a devoted follower of Jesus after he has orchestrated my life such that I'm now suffering in prison. I'll tell you. It is because he chose me before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in his presence. I, a hell-deserving sinner, am instead called into the family of God and promised an eternal life of unending joy and bliss and satisfaction. That is why and how I can endure this incarceration or any other suffering to which he might call me. It is because I was predestined to be adopted. It is because God graciously redeemed me and forgave all my sin. It is because I have been sealed with the precious Holy Spirit and assured of a wonderful eternity in the new heavens and new earth . . . it is for all those reasons and so many more that I can endure my current situation."

Can you see now why that one word, "therefore," is so important to every one of us? Our perseverance in suffering and our commitment to live the kind of life that Paul is now going to unpack for us is all ***because of everything he said in chapters one through three!*** Think of all the many blessings that you have as a Christian, none of which you deserved, . . . ***therefore***, walk in a manner worthy of your calling as a child of God.

One more important point before we move on. ***Don't ever think that if you are hurting and grieving and suffering deeply that it means you are a bad Christian.*** Paul wasn't reluctant to tell them he was "suffering" in 3:13. He didn't pretend that all was well. He didn't try to deny the symptoms of his pain. Being imprisoned was horrific. So, if you are hurting deeply right now, regardless of the nature or cause of your pain, it doesn't mean you are a bad Christian. It simply means you are human. So, too, was Paul.

Before we look at the kind of "walk" or Christian life that we are called to pursue, several things should be noted.

First, notice that Paul "urges" (ESV) "implores" (NASB) us, also translated beseech, exhort, or entreat. He does not command us. Although Paul could have appealed to his authority to insist on such behavior, he rather chooses to appeal so that whatever response is forthcoming might be from our hearts and not in fearful subservience to his apostolic command.

Second, as we've already noticed, he identifies himself as "the prisoner *in the Lord*." Since "for Paul the whole sphere of Christian living was 'in the Lord,' his imprisonment was to be seen as no exception" (Lincoln, 234). Being incarcerated and deprived of worldly comforts and experiencing the loss of freedom and movement in no way alters or interrupts his fundamental identity or the security of his spiritual relationship. That is why he is always and everywhere and under any circumstances . . . *in the Lord*, and so too are you.

Third, we are called "to walk" worthy of our calling. For the imagery of "walking" as a way of living, of conducting oneself ethically, see 2:2,10; see also 1 Thess. 2:12; 4:1,12; Gal. 5:16; Rom. 6:4; 8:4; 13:13 and countless other texts.

Fourth, just as a reminder, we are to walk "worthy" of our calling, a word that points to the standard or measure or criterion to which our lives are expected to conform (see Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12). He is *not* saying that we *become* worthy of being called but that, having been called, we are to live in a way that reflects the glory, beauty, holiness, and great privilege of being a child of God.

Fifth, the standard or determining criterion for our lives is the "call to which you have been called" (v. 1b). The "call" is that saving activity of God by which he brings us into the experiential reality of his electing purpose. See esp. Romans 8:30. It is that activity of the Spirit by which we are brought into fellowship with Jesus (see 1 Cor. 1:9).

Paul then proceeds (vv. 2-3) to enumerate five things by which this walk is to be characterized (see Col. 3:12-15).

Humility

"Dog gone it, Paul. Why did you have to start with humility? Nothing is so contrary to my natural instincts as humility. I think I could handle almost any other virtue, but humility just isn't in my spiritual toolbox."

He starts with humility for the simple reason that its antithesis, pride, is a constant threat to what it means to be a Christian. Both humility and pride are difficult to define. But define them we must, as nothing is more deadly to Christian spirituality than pride and nothing more needed than humility. We know this from numerous biblical texts, one of which is James 4:6-7. There we are told that God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble and for that reason we should "submit" to him. We are told, similarly, to "humble" ourselves "before the Lord, and he will exalt" us (James 4:10).

Perhaps the best way to get hold of what Paul means by telling us to be "humble" is by thinking about the nature of pride. I'll be brief. Simply put: ***pride is when all of life is all about self!*** Here are a few ways in which this sin is expressed.

The proud person is ***self-satisfied, self-sufficient, and self-congratulatory***. Pride takes credit for what only God can do. The proud person is ***self-referential***. That is to say, the proud person loves being praised, loves it when the attention is pointed in his/her direction, loves to be the topic of everyone's conversation. Be very careful and cautious around people who make much of their humility! Such folk loudly proclaim their lowliness and then expect others to praise them for it! They are quick to make known their failures and their humility but react with strong protest if someone in private should suggest that their claims to humility are feigned and superficial.

The proud person is ***self-reliant***. Pride cannot trust God. Trust feels too weak. It feels too dependent. It redirects too much attention away from oneself and to the strength and wisdom of another. Trusting God is the heartbeat of humility, the opposite of pride. The proud person is ***self-defensive***, especially when it is suggested he might be proud! When persecuted or crossed or slandered or attacked, the proud person is angrily defensive of his actions and largely oblivious to all personal failures. The proud person is ***self-righteous***.

So when we ask, "What does Paul mean by humility", the easy answer would be to embrace the opposite of each of these characteristics of pride. Yes, by all means do that! But let me put a bit more substance into the concept of humility. Let me mention 7 features of true humility.

(1) An essential element in humility is the willingness to allow others to say about me in public the very things I readily acknowledge before God in private.

(2) The key to humility is a sincere and passionate acknowledgement of and submission to the sovereign grace of God. In 1 Corinthians 4:7, Paul writes: "For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" ***Humility should always be in direct proportion to one's grasp of the sovereignty of God's grace***. Pride is the fruit of the lie that what I have I didn't receive. Humility is the fruit of the truth that everything is of God (see also John 3:22-30, esp. vv. 27 and 30).

(3) Perhaps most of all, humility is being like Jesus: "I am gentle and lowly [or humble] in heart" (Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:5-11). The measure of Christ's humility was his "compassion" (Col. 3:12a). ***Proud people don't love the unlovely***

very well. The measure of your humility is the degree to which you happily embrace the unembraceable, touch the untouchable, and love the unlovable. Humility is measured by how you treat those who can do nothing to advance your cause.

(4) The truly humble person is devastated by the smallest expression of sinfulness but nearly oblivious to great progress in goodness and obedience. The truly humble person is always looking not at what he/she has attained, even if it be by divine grace, but at the goal for which his/her soul is striving. The truly humble person does not evaluate himself by what he has already achieved, but by what he is still aiming for. Therefore, his holiness and maturity will always appear small because it is compared with where he's going, not where he's been.

(5) The truly humble person does indeed make great progress in the knowledge of God, but with that spiritual growth comes an increase in our knowledge of our sin and how vast is the discrepancy between what we know and what we ought to know, between what we love and ought to love. The point is that as we grow in grace and knowledge and the love of God it simply serves to shine an even brighter light on our corruption and failure to properly honor God. When the humble person does recognize progress and purity in his life, he's truly stunned by it.

(6) The truly humble person will never consider any act to be beneath his dignity. Even if the act brings him lower than he has ever experienced before, he will always regard it as higher than he deserves.

(7) True humility is never noisy, especially about itself. If you are inclined to say, "No one is as sinful and depraved as I am," be careful that you don't think yourself better than others on this very account. Be careful lest you develop a high opinion of your humility. In essence, if you find yourself thinking often of your humility, it is likely that you have little of it.

But why should we care? We should care because as James said 4:6, "***God opposes the proud.***" We should care because he also said that God "***gives grace to the humble.***" We should care because he tells us in James 4:10 that if we do turn away from pride and humble ourselves before the Lord, "***he will exalt us.***" James is talking about what will happen on the day of final judgment when the humble will be rewarded and the proud will be put down. The truly humble will receive praise and honor from the only One who matters!

Humility can be very costly in the present day. Humility requires that you openly and honestly acknowledge your mistakes, your shortcomings, and your sins. It means being willing to do tasks that others regard as beneath them. It means serving without expectation of acknowledgment or praise or reward or even being noticed. It means living in such a way that you are always exposed to the possibility of being looked down upon. As someone has said, "***the truly humble person always runs the risk of losing face.***"

Did you notice that word "all"? He doesn't call on us to cultivate humility, but "all" humility, everything that is entailed, assumed, or included in humility. Nothing half-hearted or part way here. Complete, unqualified humility is called for.

Gentleness

Gentleness could also be translated "meekness." Although meekness is not weakness, let us not lose sight of an essential element: ***tenderness and sensitivity***, a capacity to deal gently and compassionately with others. It is the absolute opposite of bullying. Only this week I read of two more megachurch pastors being accused of creating a spiritually abusive and manipulative culture, the absolute opposite of gentleness. One of them was disciplined by his denomination "for being harsh, unkind, domineering, slanderous, demeaning and quarrelsome/pugnacious." At least this pastor acknowledged that he has been overly aggressive. He said: "That's my character. That's who I am. ... I am not naturally gentle." Well, none of us are, but we are called to cultivate gentleness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gentleness does not mean that you are a wimp, with no backbone or courage of your convictions. It simply means that when you do take a stand on some issue you did so in such a tone and temper that people are highly likely to follow your lead. They can tell from your approach to the issue that you aren't doing it for personal gain or popularity.

The meek person is not easily provoked: Said David: "Those who seek my life lay their snares; and those who seek my hurt speak of ruin and meditate treachery all day long. But I am like a deaf man; I do not hear, like a mute man who does not open his mouth" (Ps. 38:12-13). Gentleness is the antithesis of hastiness, malice, and revenge.

"Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished" (Prov. 16:5).

"Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Prov. 26:12).

"For an overseer [i.e., an elder], as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered . . ." (Titus 1:7).

Meekness is living in accordance with the abilities God has given us, neither as if we had more nor less; neither pressing ourselves into situations we are not equipped to handle (for fear that if we don't people will lose respect for us), nor shying away from those we can.

It is extremely important to be aware of the fact that the two words used here in Ephesians 4:2, translated as "humility" and "gentleness" are directly related to the two words that Jesus used to describe himself: "I am gentle and humble in heart" (Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:5-11).

Patience

Patience or *longsuffering*, literally means "long temper," the opposite of having a short fuse! It is the ability to make allowances for the shortcomings and often exasperating behavior of others. It means enduring wrongs "rather than flying into a rage or desiring vengeance" (O'Brien, 278).

Our world has been infected in recent days with one pastoral implosion after another. I've come to expect almost on a daily basis news of yet another scandal. It's not that hard to figure out why. There may well be exceptions to what I believe is the core problem, but here is my analysis of the spiritual disease running rampant through our local churches. Senior pastors are selected and promoted and praised for their preaching skills, their clever use of modern culture to captivate an audience, their ever-increasing stature in the wider community, their ability to draw people and their money into the church. ***It is their charisma rather than their character*** that accounts for what we are seeing today. Men and women with powerful personalities but incredibly weak moral character are often on a fast track to personal implosion.

Bearing with one another in love

This is an elaboration of what patience entails. It is one thing to bear with or endure another person; it is another thing entirely to do it in a loving way, to do so in a way that they feel valued and cared for by you. Paul isn't saying we should overlook a person's sinful conduct. But even when we are compelled to confront someone for their misbehavior, we should do it in a way that they know it is because you truly care for them.

Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace

Although we are already a unified body, one new man (Eph. 2:14-18), this unity must be preserved and promoted *visibly and publicly*. What is already true in principle must be transparently evident in *experience*.

One difference between Ephesians 4:3 and 4:13 is that in verse 3 we are told to ***maintain*** unity but in verse 13 we are told to ***attain*** unity. In verse 3 it is something that we must hold to and protect, while in v. 13 it is a goal to which we aspire. In one sense, we already are unified because of our common faith in Jesus. But in another sense, there is a form of unity for which we must strive.

The word "Spirit" is not our human "spirit" but refers to the Holy Spirit. The peace that binds us together as the people of God comes from the Spirit and what he has done in bringing us together. There is an urgency in Paul's exhortation: "Eager" or "being diligent" means that you spare no effort, make it a priority, be urgent about it, make haste! "The bond of peace" is the means by which we demonstrate to the world that unity which the Spirit has created among us. Thus, this unity already exists by virtue of what the Spirit has done, but we must be diligently committed to preserving it.

Unity in Every Respect

Unity, however, as precious as it is, ***does not come at any price*** (contrary to much thought in the body of Christ). Unity is crucially important, but not at the expense of the fundamental truths of the gospel. We should never prioritize

unity over such matters as the authority of the Bible, the person and work of Jesus, his resurrection from the dead, or his second coming. Salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone are of the utmost importance to the believer and the local church.,

What are those elements of Christianity on which our unity is based? Paul proceeds in vv. 4-6 to list seven of them. Observe the Trinitarian structure of Paul's argument. He directs our attention in v. 4 to the Holy Spirit, in v. 5 to Jesus, the Son of God, and in v. 6 to God the Father.

The Holy Spirit (v. 4)

"One body" – This is a reference to the church, the one "body" of Christ (see Col. 3:15 and 1 Cor. 12:13). Although there are countless local churches, there is one unified, universal church or body of Christ.

"One Spirit" – An obvious reference to the Holy Spirit.

"One hope" – Paul's point is that we have been called by God unto one hope; we all share one common expectation of what being called by God will bring us in the future consummation.

The Lord Jesus Christ (v. 5)

"One Lord" – It is a stunning theological reality that the title used exclusively in the OT of Yahweh ("Lord") is now so freely applied by Paul and other NT writers to Jesus! What are the doctrinal, and particularly Christological, implications of this?

"One faith" – This refers not to our subjective experience of faith or believing but to the *objective content* of what is believed. See 4:13 (also Col. 1:23; 2:7; Jude 3). There is not one "faith" for Jewish believers and another for Gentile believers; there is not one faith for white people and another for black people: we are all bound by one body of revealed truth. Paul has in mind those essential truths revealed in the gospel to which we are all called and the essence of which we should all believe and defend and enjoy. Of course, this raises the question of how much doctrinal diversity should be permitted in any local congregation (or within a larger denomination) and what particular doctrines are "essential" or non-negotiable.

"One baptism" – The reference is most likely to water baptism, the public rite by which we make open confession of the one faith and the one Lord. This baptism is one, not because it has a single form or is administered on only one occasion, but because it is the initiation into Christ, into the one body, which all have undergone and as such is a unifying factor.

God the Father (4:6)

This echoes 1 Cor. 8:6 ("Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we exist"). It is an exalted affirmation both of God's transcendence (he is "over all") and his pervasive immanence (he is "through all" and "in all"). Who or what is the "all"? Some say it is masculine in gender, hence = believers in the church. More likely, though, in view of 1:10,22,23; 3:9; 4:10, Paul has in mind the whole of the cosmos, everything that is that has been created by this one God.

Conclusion

How can you maintain unity with that person who always irritates you, who disagrees with you on the type of music you sing on a Sunday morning? How can you maintain unity with that person who doesn't think a Christian should attend movies or ever drink alcohol, even in moderation, while you feel freedom to do so? How can you maintain unity with that person who condemns you for watching football on a Sunday afternoon while you truly enjoy it? How can you maintain unity with that person who dogmatically insists on using only the King James Version of the Bible, while you love reading from the ESV or the NIV or the NASB? How can you keep on caring about a person who doesn't like you?

The only answer is once again bound up with that word in Ephesians 4:1 – "therefore." It is because we all have been chosen by God while deserving of eternal death. It is because we have all been graciously adopted into God's family and received the forgiveness of our sins and now have the Holy Spirit living within us as God's guarantee that one

day we will inherit the fullness of all that Jesus died to secure for us. The person who truly grasps these incredible spiritual blessings will not find it difficult to maintain unity with those who disagree with them on secondary and ultimately trivial matters.