

You Sure Do Walk Like Your Dad!

Intro

Let's look in the mirror of God's living Word to see if we show the characteristic "family gait."

From glorious heights to....prison: **Eph 4:1** *I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord*

Where is the power that got him out of prison in Philippi? Why doesn't Paul beg the church to help him get out of jail?

From Power to Prison

Reasons Paul may emphasize prison (3:1; 4:1):

1. If I'm in prison for you (3:1), you can help me by loving one another!
2. God's power is made known in the weakness. Humbling circumstances still he church's mission: "make known the manifold wisdom of God to the wicked powers in the heavenlies" (Eph 3:10).
3. Christ still loves you even if you are suffering.
4. By the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:22), we are "in Christ" wherever we are!
5. Prison is not my disgrace but my diploma and it may eventually be your diploma!

The apostle's prison is more to be revered than all the pomp and triumphs of kings. (Calvin, 171)

What Is the Calling?

Ephesians 4:1 [I] urge you to walk in a manner worthy of **the calling** to which you have been called

No one uses "calling" anymore. We create our own identity; pick a job. The Christian calling is not a job, but a relationship:

there is but one relation that can give identity to man, the relation to his Creator and Savior. God's call gives a task that is more than a role, for it engages a man's whole person in the service of his Lord. That call is to being as well as doing, to status as well as service. (Clowney, 10)

The original call was to Abraham and his offspring

Is 41:8–10 ⁸ But you, Israel, the offspring of Abraham my friend, whom I ... called from the earth's farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off"; ¹⁰ fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

The expanded call includes the Gentiles

^{ESV} **Eph 2:13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

A “calling” means *someone* has to “call” you. The richness of God’s covenant call is for both Jew and Gentile,¹ but Paul here emphasizes the call to unity in the body of Christ: a life-consuming relationship of love.

How Do We Walk? (The Family Gait) – vv 2-3

Only positives!

Humbly and Gently

Humility= voluntary submission and unselfishness

When [Paul] descends to particulars, he puts humility first. The reason is, that he was about to speak of unity; and humility is the first step to reach it. (Calvin, 171)

Gentleness= strength that accommodates to another's weakness, consideration

Not wimpy. It takes more strength to be humble than to be arrogant; more spiritual power to be gentle in the face of injustice and hatred than to get angry. True “meekness” will stun unbelievers and may draw them to Christ.

^{ESV} **Gal 6:1** *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of **gentleness**. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.*

^{ESV} **Tit 3:2** *remind them...to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be **gentle**, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.*

^{ESV} **1 Pet 3:15** *but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;¹⁶ yet do it with **gentleness** and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.*

Patiently bearing (putting up) with one another in love

- **Patiently** = a state of emotional quietness in the face of unfavorable circumstances, steadfastness under trial. We can’t “put up” with one another without patience!
- **Bearing with one another** = self-restraint, tolerance; “putting up with” something unfair or disagreeable, including persecution or the folly of other Christians.

^{ESV} **Col 3:13** *bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

¹ The verb “call” is used in Scripture to mean an invitation to a feast or a wedding, or to “call” someone by a name: “He shall be called Jesus” or “John.” We are called to the wedding feast and we are called by the name of God, as well as God taking our names for his own. In Eph 3:14, we see that we are in the family of a Father who claims us and gives us fatherdom. “[Y]our calling to sonship, to bear God’s name, to be a holy one, is your calling in Christ.” (Clowney, 7)

“not a lifetime, not even an eternal-lifetime, can measure the span of God’s calling. Like a rainbow, it arches from horizon to horizon. God’s life-giving call of grace is the source of our salvation; God’s life-shaping call to glory is the goal of our salvation. Indeed, the bow of our own [individual] calling reflects the uncreated light of God’s grace shining from the dawn before all mornings. (Clowney, 5)

Not reluctant behavior; comes from a heart of love. Obedience is active (later in Eph 4).

Keeping the Unity of the Spirit through the ligaments of peace

We can't and don't create the unity; it is **maintained** in the bond of peace created by Christ. We can't break that unity but we sure can make the union unhappy! You will live with that difficult sister or brother in Christ's presence forever! Enjoy them now. Seek out those you have offended. Eagerly build union and peace. Don't leave the "shadow on your soul." Be honest, yet humble. God will surprise you with new love for other Christians.

The Basis of Unity

One Body, One Spirit, One Hope –v 4

The Christian faith is unique. No other Body, no other Spirit, no other Hope. The world offers bogus sources for hope and spirituality. Beware of alternate sources of unity, spirit or hope.

- **One Body**

Only in Christ can humans find a truly unified "body" (family). Not the UN or environmentalism.

^{ESV} Col 2:18-19 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments,[bands, bonds] grows with a growth that is from God.

- **One Spirit**

Spiritual growth happens within this "body of Christ." It's more than an individual thing; it's a family thing! We have to learn the family gait! We cannot learn without the Spirit to teach us.

*^{ESV} John 4:23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will **worship the Father in spirit and truth**, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.*

- **One Hope**

There is NO HOPE apart from Christ

*^{ESV} Eph 2:12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having **no hope** and without God in the world.*

*^{ESV} Eph 1:18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the **hope** to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,*

All worldly attempts to created unity, spirituality and hope end up in dictatorial, cruel political and religious structures.

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism – v 5

- **One Lord**

"Lord" = Christ. He is the unifying PERSON. It is not faith itself that unifies, but the person in which we put our faith. The "spiritual but not religious" think that you only need faith in *something*! How wrong they are! We must try to warn them, gently, humbly.

- **One Baptism**

Is Paul referring to controversies about baptism?

1 Cor 1:13: Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Probably, he is emphasizing that both Jews and Gentiles are baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Both receive instruction and discipleship. Being baptized by a “special” person or in a “special” place adds no power to baptism. The water is not holy. As our pastors point out, baptism doesn’t save. Union with Christ by faith saves us.

One God and Father of All: Over All, Through All, In All

The Old Testament monotheistic declaration of “one god” (Deut 6:4) is now continued into the New Testament era (1 Tim 2:5) with the awareness that God is now rightly called “father” through the blood of our “one Lord” Jesus (Eph 4:5; cf. 1 Cor. 8:6). Note here the mention of all three persons of the Trinity in verses 4–6: one Spirit, one Lord (Jesus), and one Father God. (Chapell, 185, n.4)

“Father of all” not used elsewhere in Scripture; “Father” seldom used in the OT, but Jesus says “your Father” to the Jews.

Eph 2:22 “the Father, from whom his whole family (every fatherdom) in heaven and on earth derives its name”

God is Father to all as Creator; also author of all “fatherdoms.” The first human father and mother were to fill the earth. Ephesians hints at a grander plan. As Christians are unified in Christ the Head and exercise the gifts Christ gives them (next lesson!) there is an amazing, sense that the whole universe will be filled (Eph 4:10) in Christ by that mysterious marriage between him and his bride. *In and through the church* God’s fullness will be shown.

Over All

God is the Father “in heaven.” He is “above the circle of the earth” (Isa 40:22). He is not Father the way people think of the earth as our “mother,” from whose womb we emerge. The Father has all authority and is particularly “over all” his children. The true, Trinitarian God is known intimately through his Son, who is also said to be over all:

^{ESV} Matt 11:27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

^{ESV} Rom 9:5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Through All

Most scholars feel that this phrase is speaking of God whose presence is spread through all his children in the church. Yet there is also the sense we just spoke of, in which God fills all things.

^{ESV} **Col 1:16** *For by him [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him.*

In All

This phrase surely does not mean that God is a rock or a tree or that his spirit inhabits such things. However, it is through and in God (and Christ) that all things hold together. And, specifically, God dwells in his children who are united to him by faith.

^{ESV} **1 Cor 15:28** *When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.*

^{ESV} **Col 1:17** *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

Conclusion: The Effects of our Unity

We show the world what true unity is like, while they look for it in all the wrong places. If the family of God is held together in peace and unity, we are bound to love one another! This love convicts and convinces the world.

Do you have a shadow on your soul about anyone in this room? Have you harmed or gossiped about anyone in this church? Have you failed to tell the truth to someone? In the bonds of peace, repent, seek them out, apologize, ask forgiveness, extend to them gentle, caring patience. Women have amazing power for peace or for division. We can, by the power of the Spirit, do immense things to maintain the peace of New Life Presbyterian Church and the body of Christ.

(Optional Questions for Reflection)

1. Suppose you were to make a little catechism of Ephesians 4:1–6. How would you briefly answer these questions?

Q1: Who Calls?

A:

Q2: Whom does xxx call?

A:

Q3: Is this an Individual Calling?

A:

Q4: To what are all family members called?

A:

Q5: What is that “xxxx”?

A:

Q6: On the basis of that “xxxx”, how are we to live?

A:

2. In what ways does Christian unity differ from the unity the world tries to create? Try to think of four or five differences.

Resources

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