

The Four Walls

27 - Ephesians: Rise Up & Walk
Church on the Park | Sunday, 10 March 2019

Text: “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).

Theme: Humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance are like the four walls of God’s house. When these walls are strong they keep God in and the enemy out.

Intro: One of America’s political archenemies has a counterintelligence strategy that they have used on the US with great effectiveness. They don’t care whose in charge or what political party has the power. Their objective is to destabilize. In other words, they do whatever they can to create internal disunity so that Americans are so busy fighting with one another that they lose the power to progress. In the past presidential election they created a barrage of false news attacking both candidates to stir unrest. Sadly, their tactics have worked hook, line and sinker. This is also one of Satan’s schemes against God’s people: to sow discord and disunity. But in our passage today Paul teaches us how to overcome. He gives us four Christ-like attributes that are like four walls to God’s house. These four walls give God’s house—you and I—strong structure. They keep God in and the enemy out.

1) Unity isn’t something we manufacture, it’s something we guard (Eph. 4:3).

- We don’t **force** unity we guard it. Forced unity is **control**.
 - Forced unity is also **not real unity**—it’s **uniformity**.
- In Ephesians 4:3, Paul says, “Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
 - Another way to translate it is: “Make every effort to **guard** (τηρέω) the Spirit’s oneness by being joined together with peace.”
 - Now to understand this verse we need to **reflect on our call**.
- We’ve been **called out** of **darkness** into Christ’s marvelous **light**. We are now his church—his **called out ones**. God has each given us **his Spirit**. The **same Spirit** of God that is in me is in you. If you and I are **in the Spirit** then we are **in unity with one another**.
 - God’s Spirit is **one**—there is **no division in God**. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in **perfect unity**.
 - **God’s call** means we are now **in his Spirit and his Spirit is in us**.
 - Consequently, we **do not need to create unity**—we are **called into unity—God’s own unity**.
- *So what do we need to do?*
 - We need to **guard** that unity.
 - **Guard** it so that the **enemy** (the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms) does not **sow thoughts and attitudes** into us **against one another**.
- *How do we guard God’s unity?*
 - Through the **bond of peace**.
 - First, you will have **peace with others** when you have **peace in your own heart**.
 - Conversely, you are not going to be at peace with others unless you have **peace in your own heart**.
 - Find your **full satisfaction and joy in Jesus himself, rather than others**. This is what it means to know **peace within**. If you are looking to **feel better** through others you will be **disappointed**.
 - **Don’t** look for **the church to be** what **only Jesus can be** to you. His peace is what you need.
 - Second, peace is like the **cartilage** in your **knees**.
 - If your **cartilage** is gone your bones will **grind together**—it’s going to make it very difficult to walk.

- **God's peace** is like the **cartilage** in your knees. It enables you to **walk together** with others without **friction**.
- So whenever a **church** is **experiencing disunity**, it should go back to **being in the Spirit**. You'll never be able to please everyone. But if you **live in the Spirit** then you will be in **unity** with those who are **in the Spirit**.
- **Reading from the Final Quest** by Rick Joyner, pp. 16-17, 21.

2) Humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance are like four walls—they keep God's Spirit within and every other spirit without (Eph. 4:2).

- **God's call** means we are **his house** and this house is **held together** by these **four attributes: humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance**.
 - These **four walls** will **give** you **God's peace within**.
 - These four attributes are a **description of Christ himself**.
 - When the **Spirit is at work in our lives** we will see these attributes as **fruit of the Spirit's residence within**.
- As we reflect on Ephesians, we see that we are **seated with Christ** and have a **high and holy calling**.
 - But, we are also in a **process of growth**, each and every one of us. Since we are all growing, let's keep a **humble spirit**.
 - I want us to look at each of these words, but today we will focus on the first two.
- **1 - Humility** - "5012. ταπεινοφροσύνη tapeinophrosúnē; gen. tapeinophrosúnēs, fem. noun from tapeinóphrōn (n.f.), lowminded, base, which is from tapeinós (5011), lowly, humble. Humility, lowliness of mind, the esteeming of ourselves small, inasmuch as we are so, the **correct estimate of ourselves** (Acts 20:19; Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3; Col. 2:18, 23; 3:12; 1 Pet. 5:5). For the sinner tapeinophrosúnē involves the confession of his sin and a deep realization of his unworthiness to receive God's marvelous grace" (CWSDNT).
 - Simply put, it means to have a **humble attitude, a humble frame of mind**. Paul also emphasizes humility with the word **'all'**—'with all humility.'
 - Wherever you have **division** you have **pride**. Someone is trying to **force things**. Their **opinion is more important**. They are **convinced** they are **right**. Rather than speak humbly, they **speak aggressively**.
- Yes, you have been **seated with Christ in heavenly places**. Yes, in Christ you are **far above** all rule, authority, power and dominion. But keep a **humble mindset**. Realise that you were **dead in trespasses and sins** before Jesus came and saved you, lifting you out of the dust and ashes, and into his power and glory.
- **Jesus** himself is **humble**. He came from heaven to earth to be a man and live with men. He humbled himself so much that he had to grow and learn. The Creator became like his creation. He could have brought judgment, but he came to bring salvation.
 - "The child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom and the grace of God was upon him...And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:40, 52).
- **2 - Gentleness** - "4240. πραΰτης praútēs; gen. praútētos, fem. noun from praús (4239), **mEEK**. **Meekness**, but not in a man's outward behavior only, nor in his relations to his fellow man or his mere natural disposition. Rather, **it is an inwrought grace of the soul, and the expressions of it are primarily toward God (James 1:21; 3:13; 1 Pet. 3:15; Sept.: Ps. 45:4). It is that attitude of spirit we accept God's dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist**. Praútēs, according to Aristotle, is the middle standing between two extremes, getting angry without reason (orgilótēs [n.f.]), and not getting angry at all (aorgēsía [n.f.]). Therefore, praútēs is getting angry at the right time, in the right measure, and for the right reason. Praútēs is not readily expressed in Eng. (since the term "meekness" suggests weakness), but **it is a condition of mind and heart which demonstrates gentleness, not in weakness, but in power**. It is a balance born in strength of character" (CWSDNT).

3) Guard your spirit and you will guard God's house (Luke 9:51-56).

- At this point, it's important for us to reflect on one of the lessons **Jesus taught his disciples** in **Luke 9:51-56**.
 - This is the passage when the disciples wanted to **call down fire on the Samaritans**.

- Their **religious zeal** was **covering up** a **spirit of offense, pride and revenge**.
- Be **careful** what **spirit you are operating in**.
 - Bad spirits come **clothed in religious zeal and righteousness**.
 - They comes as **wolves in sheep's clothing**.
- This passage teaches us the **dangers** we can fall into when **rejected**.
 - Don't let **rejection** take away your **humility and gentleness**.
- "But he turned and **rebuked** them, and said, 'You do not know **what kind of spirit** you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.'"
 - What spirit were they of?
 - It was a **spirit of pride, bitterness, offence, revenge and murder**.
 - **It was a religious spirit too, trying to imitate Elijah and Elisha**.
 - Watch your spirit. Especially be careful when you are **rejected** not to **respond** with an **angry and vengeful spirit**. If the disciples would have responded with humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance they would not have been rebuked by Jesus.
- Be careful not to fall into the **spirit of Cain** (Gen. 4:1-15)
 - In the story of **Cain and Abel** we see the **first division** among **brothers**, and the **first murder**.
 - Notice a few things about **Cain**
 - Cain was **religious** and attempting to **please God** with an offering.
 - **God himself spoke to Cain**, but he would **not listen**.
 - **Sin** is pictured like a **lion crouching** at his door.
 - He could **open up the door** or keep the door closed.
 - **Cain lacked meekness**. If he had only been meek and joyfully received God's correction, he would have **mastered** the lion crouching at his door.
 - Instead, he let the **spirit of jealousy, envy, hatred, pride, stubbornness and murder into his heart**.
 - He did **not** have these **qualities of humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance**.
 - Let us be those who **meekly receive God's Word** (*James 1:21).
 - Be **gentle** with your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - Realize **who the real enemy is**.

Conclusion: God's unity—the great treasure he has called us into—must be guarded. Humility and gentleness, along with patience and tolerance are like walls that the works of darkness cannot penetrate. Let's guard our spirit and not let the spirit of Cain into our hearts.

END NOTES

Word Studies

3) Patience/Long-suffering

3115. μακροθυμία makrothumía; gen. makrothumías, fem. noun from makrothuméō (3114), to be long-suffering. **Forbearance, long-suffering, self-restraint before proceeding to action. The quality of a person who is able to avenge himself yet refrains from doing so** (Rom. 2:4; 9:22; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:11; 3:12; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 6:12; James 5:10; 2 Pet. 3:15; Sept.: Prov. 25:15; Is. 57:15; Jer. 15:15). In Heb. 6:15, makrothuméō (3114) is used of Abraham's patient faith in God under the pressure of trying circumstances (James 5:7, 8). Makrothumía is patience in respect to persons while hupomoné (5281), endurance, is putting up with things or circumstances. Both words are often found together (2 Cor. 6:4, 6; 2 Tim. 3:10). Makrothumía is associated with mercy (éleos [1656]) and is used of God.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). The complete word study dictionary: New Testament (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Watch out for self-righteousness.

4) Tolerance/Restraint

430. ἀνέχω anéchō; fut. anéxō, from aná (303), in, and échō (2192), to have. **To hold up or back from falling, e.g., the rain (Sept.: Amos 4:7). To hold in or back, restrain, stop.** In the NT, only in the mid., anéchomai; fut. anéxomai; imperf. aneichómēn, or with double augment in ēneichómēn in TR (2 Cor. 11:1, 4); 2d aor. ēneschómēn (cf. Acts 18:14). To hold oneself upright, to bear up, hold out, endure.

(I) Spoken of things, to endure, bear patiently, with the gen. as afflictions (2 Thess. 1:4). See Sept.: Is. 42:14. Used in an absolute sense (1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 11:20).

(II) **Spoken of persons, to bear with, have patience with in regard to the errors or weaknesses of anyone** (Matt. 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41; 2 Cor. 11:1, 19; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13; Sept.: Is. 46:4; 63:15).

(III) By implication, to admit, receive, i.e., to listen to, with the gen., spoken of persons as in Acts 18:14. In 2 Cor. 11:4, of doctrine. See 2 Tim. 4:3; Heb. 13:22; Sept.: Job 6:26.

Deriv.: anektóteros (414), more tolerable; anexíkakos (420), forbearing; anoché (463), forbearance, tolerance.

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MISC PERSONAL NOTES

God's call is a call we have received together—we are the called out ones—the church. In order to live our call we must walk together. And in order to walk together, we need to possess these four Christ-like qualities.

We are called out to be in Christ and be a home for Christ's presence to dwell in. God's church is his house. And if the walls of the house are not strong, the house will not stand.

Paul teaches us that the way we walk worthy of God's call is to walk in unity with his people. Specifically, he says, "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It's not about us forcing unity—that's the work of the flesh. It's all about us preserving the unity of the Spirit. The Spirit is one and he lives in every genuine believer in Jesus. It's the Spirit of God that makes us one, binding us in his shalom.

There are four ingredients that make unity possible. When making a cake you need ingredients to bind together. If they don't bind you can't make a good cake. Sometimes ingredients don't agree with each other—they separate from one another. But the four ingredients that Paul shares cause us to live in Christ's unity.

You can also think of these four ingredients as four walls. These four walls keep unity within and division outside. Wherever you find division, disunity and demonic oppression—these walls are not present and strong.

What are the four walls? 1) Humility, 2) Gentleness, 3) Patience and 4) Tolerance.

I want to explain what these words mean. They are the fruit of Christ working powerfully within you.

Jesus says you will know them by their fruit.

The other things I want to teach you is how to discern 'wolves in sheep's clothing.'

Wolves are those who Wait On Lonely, Vulnerable and Emaciated Sheep. Most people operating in a wolf-like spirit don't even recognise what spirit they are operating in.

Matthew 7:15-20 - Beware of false prophets

Look for the fruit of humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance

The opposite of humility is pride. The opposite of gentleness is stubbornness. The opposite of patience is impatience—having a short fuse and not able to endure suffering. The opposite of tolerance is intolerance—you can't bear with the sins and weaknesses of others. You are unforgiving.

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To have a humble attitude.

Yes, you have been seated with Christ in heavenly places. Yes, in Christ you are far above all rule, authority, power and dominion. But keep a humble mindset. Realise that you were dead in trespasses and sins before Jesus came and saved you, lifting you out of the dust and ashes, and into his power and glory.

Jesus himself is humble. He came from heaven to earth to be a man and live with men. He humbled himself so much that he had to grow and learn. The Creator became like his creation. He could have brought judgment, but he came to bring salvation.

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The spirit of Cain (Genesis 4:1-15)

We are looking at the spirit of Cain because I want you to live above the prince of the power of the air. I want you to see how the enemy poisons the waters. Live in the salt of the New Covenant (Elisha & Jericho). One of the biggest schemes of Satan is causing a brother to betray another brother. Cain was religious and in a great position (in the Lord's presence), yet the enemy poisoned the waters of his heart.

Here is the first place in Scripture we see one brother against another. Often when we see a fight among brothers we think they are both in error. But that is not always the case. Abel is completely innocent. The spirit of Cain will try to get you to think Abel is the problem. Then it will focus on attacking Abel and getting Abel to repent. Abel is not at fault.

We need to recognise the spirit of Cain and not allow it to operate in our lives and churches.

Cain lacked humility and meekness. He couldn't receive God's correction.

The Lord himself spoke to Cain, but he did not listen. He actually did the exact opposite.

People with the spirit of Cain also wander from church to church. Usually they cause trouble wherever they go.

They have not mastered sin—especially the sin of their own pride.

All of these fruit can be found in Jesus suffering and cross.

Jesus could have called twelve legions of angels to save him (Matt. 26:53).