

Walking as one in Christ

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Preacher: Brian King

[0:00] Let me just say a short prayer before we begin. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are a God who is not silent. And we just pray, Lord, that as you speak to us, that we would have hearts to hear and be ready to live your way.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Now someone wants to ask a pastor if he had an active congregation. ■■■■■■■■■■,■■■■■■■■■?

Yes, they are very active, he answered. ■■■■■■,■■,■■■■■■■ Half of them are actively working with me, and the other half are actively working against me.

[illegible]

Because unfortunately, this is true in far too many cases around the world.

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ A story once told about a church in Scotland about 80 years ago.

[1:12] ██████████ They were trying to decide whether a clock
should be placed in the sanctuary. ██████████ One group
wanted it to be placed on the back wall, while another group insisted it should be placed at
the front for everyone to see.

[illegible]

■■■■■■■,■■■■■■■■■, ■■■,■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ They split over a clock.

■■■■■■■■■■ Tragic, isn't it?

■■■■■ And division is tragic because of at least three reasons.

■■■■■■■■■■ Firstly, it's tragic because it means that the church is spending all of its time trying to sort out internal matters rather than focus on its mission to the world.

 A lot of energy has to be used to fight.

[2 : 34] The congregation can become split into different factions. And there just isn't any motivation to reach out to unbelievers. ■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■ Secondly, it undermines the credibility of the gospel.

■■■■,■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ The gospel claims that peace and reconciliation with God is possible, ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■?

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■? More positively speaking, How can we instead be a church that is in line with God's will? ■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■?

- [4 : 00] Well, today Ephesians 4 verse 1 to 6 will help us. Verses 2 to 6 in particular will give us three practical steps we should take.
- But before we get into the specifics, I need to show you the big picture first. Otherwise we might misunderstand these verses.
- So look first of all with me at verse 1. As a prisoner for the Lord, then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.
- Now at first glance, it sounds like Paul is saying, make sure you are a good Christian boy or girl.
- Proof you are deserving of the name Christian. Show that you are worthy.
- [5 : 16] And if we think that's what Paul is saying, we will read the instructions of verses 2 to 6 as if that is how we are to get into God's good books.
- But is that what he's really saying?
- ? No, it cannot be once we read the verse in the context of the whole book. Look back with me to Ephesians chapter 1 verse 18, where Paul first mentions calling in this letter.
- So it's on the screen, let me read it.
- I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you. And notice, what is Paul praying for?
- [6 : 35] He's praying that we will understand the confident hope God has given to us. And that is the calling Paul is referring to, what God has already done for us.
- That's what the first three chapters of Ephesians are actually all about.
- It's about what God has done for us. It's about who we now are in Christ. You see, if you read those chapters, what do you discover?
- ? We discover we have every spiritual blessing in Christ. We discover that we are loved with the very same love God the Father has for Jesus.
- We discover we were completely dead in our sin, completely deserving of God's anger, but now God has made us alive with Christ and made us his beloved children.
- [7 : 55] We discover we were completely unholy, but now we have been made holy, so much so that God says we are nothing less than the temple of God.
- You can pick off the slide.
- Now here's the big point. It is all a gift from God. That's why Ephesians 4 verse 1 says, This is a calling we have received.
- It's not a calling we have earned.
- These blessings came to us not by our own merit, but by God's mercy.

■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ But what happened when we trusted Christ and received the Spirit?

**██████████, ██████? We have peace with God, yes.
██████, ████ Ephesians 2 tells you that.**

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ But did you know we also have peace with our fellow Christians? ■■■■■■? ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ Ephesians 2 also tells us that.

[14 : 32] ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ Because those sitting next to you, in front of you, or behind you, are united to you if they are Christians.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■, ■■■■■■ That is the unity of the Spirit. ■■■■■■■■■■ It describes the bond that already exists between us, not a bond that is hypothetical.

[REDACTED]

[illegible]

■■ And that is why verse 3 again, God says we are to maintain this spirit unity.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ So our job is not to produce this unity like how our government often tries to make us united.

[17 : 21] ██████████,██████████ Our job is simply to
keep this unity.

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ In fact, did you notice how much stress Hope puts on this?
■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■?

At the beginning of verse 3, he says, make every effort. ■■■■■■■■,■■■,■■■ In other words, it's not something we do occasionally whenever we feel like it.

■■■■■,■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ This is high on Jesus' agenda. ■■■■■■■■■■■ He died for it. ■■■■■■■ So every Christian is responsible to maintain this spirit given unity.

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ So tell me how are you doing on this front?

■■■■,■■■■■■■■■■? Are you eager to speak words to build up others?

[18 : 24] ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■? Are you eager to be slow to take offense? ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■? Are you eager to give others the benefit of the doubt?

■■■■■,■■■■■? Are you eager to keep this unity? ■■■■■?

The fact that Paul has to tell us to maintain this unity means he sees it as a work in progress. ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ He knows that this unity can still be disrupted as long as we live in this fallen world.

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ But if we do keep this unity, we are walking worthy of our calling.

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ We are giving what the gospel deserves. ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ But that is not all Paul has to say.

[19:32] ██████████ Secondly, hold on to the core of our unity. ████,████████████████ When we look at the world, there are many examples of superficial unity, aren't there?

■■■■■,■■■■■■■■■■,■■■? Just think of the kind of unity where two very different political parties come together simply to keep power.

