

# The Unity Of The Spirit

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-4).

In the first three chapters of this book Paul has spoken of the church being the manifold wisdom of God. He concluded his discussion about the church with a prayer that believers would perceive the greatness of the church and the greatness of Christ's love which made the church possible. He then concluded, "unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations" (Eph. 3:21).

In view of the grandeur of the church and the glory due to God to be extended to him through the church, Paul appeals to Ephesian brethren to live in such a way that God might be glorified. He calls himself the "prisoner of the Lord" and "the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles" (Eph. 3:1). These statements were designed to remind the Ephesians that although Paul was a prisoner of Rome, he was such because of the message he preached from Christ; which message emphasized there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; which message greatly antagonized Jews who were responsible for him being in Roman custody, thus it was on the behalf of the Gentiles that he was where he was.

Paul, as was his manner, "beseeches" these brethren to proper behavior. He was an apostle and could command but it was better he "beg" them to do as he urged. What he urged was that they walk worthily of the calling they had been called with. How could God be glorified in the church if those in the church did not behave themselves properly?

The word "walk" is found seven times in this letter (2:2; 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15). It is used to describe one's manner of life. They were besought to walk a worthy walk and five things are cited which would constitute such a walk: lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance and diligence. Let us take a brief look at each of these qualities.

**LOWLINESS.** When Jesus said "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest", he said "I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Mt. 11:28f). Philippians 2:3 urges lowliness of mind. The word is kindred to humbleness or humility:

one who counts others better than himself.

MEEKNESS is viewed as patience in suffering and in dealing with others. Some describe it as being the result of humility: that humility is the attitude of the heart which results in meekness. Gentleness is another word for meekness (Gal. 6:1f).

LONGSUFFERING. This word indicates a bearing up in trials-that one remains steadfast, not complaining or murmuring, but accepting patiently the sufferings which life bestows on man.

FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER in love means the way we handle those grievances and trials which come to us through the hand of others. Paul told the Thessalonians he was gentle with them as when a nurse cheriseth her own children; he said he had dealt with these as a father with his children (1 Thess. 2:7, 11).

Giving DILIGENCE, exerting energy and effort is the thought. And this diligence is in an effort to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. These five qualities Paul emphasized as things which characterized the "worthy walk" he urged upon the Ephesians: a walk whose aim was to glorify God in the church. This worthy walk was designed to glorify God: it had also its aim to keep the unity of the Spirit in the body of peace.

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