

"I Beseech You ..."

"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. 4:1-3).

"I, therefore the prisoner in the Lord." For the second time in this letter, Paul calls attention to his imprisonment. In the first instance he identifies himself as being a prisoner in behalf of the Gentiles (3:1). It was because of his preaching to the Gentiles and his steadfast resolve not to allow Gentiles to become "Jews" that caused his problems and led to his long imprisonment (see Acts 21:27f). Here in the fourth chapter he states himself to be a prisoner in the Lord: he was true to the revelation he received from Christ and was in fact, a prisoner in Christ: he could follow no other course of life if he lived in Christ. He mentions a third time his being a prisoner in the sixth chapter where he styles himself *"an ambassador in chains"* (vs. 20).

"Beseech you." Paul beseeches but he could command. Like all true persons in positions of authority, Paul did not "throw his weight around," although he does resort, when necessity demanded it, to command (2 Thess. 3:6); yes and even threatens (2 Cor. 13:2). He understood that "beseeching" brethren rather than "commanding" them would likely bring a better response from them. We have an adage which says the same, in essence: "You can catch more flies with honey than by vinegar."

"... to walk worthily." It has been noted before that Paul uses the word "walk" to describe the lives people live. In the second chapter he wrote of the Gentiles, *"ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world"* (2:1f). Then immediately he added of the Jews, *"among whom we also once lived in the lusts of the flesh"* (2:3). Comparing the condition of both Jew and Gentile that they were both dead in sin; he shows that Gentiles were dead in their sins because they "walked" in them: Jews were in dead in sins because they "lived" in them. "Walk" with reference to our lives is found eight times in the letter: three times to a life which was not pleasing to God (2:1; 4:17f); five times "walk" is an exhortation to right behavior (2:1; 4:1, 5:2,8, 15). In Ephesians 4:1 the appeal is to a *"worthy walk;"* a "walk" which reflects favorably and honorably upon the *"calling"* we were called with. That worthy walk is a walk in which we walk ...

"with all lowliness and meekness." These two words call to mind Jesus' description of Himself. *"I am meek and lowly in heart"* (Mt. 1:29). Lowliness

signifies humility; meekness describes gentleness. These two words, though close in meaning, show slight shades of difference in meaning. In the Beatitudes Jesus says those who are "*poor in spirit*" are blessed as are the meek (Mt. 5:3, 5). Some consider the slight difference to be the outward actions (humbleness) which is spawned by the inward spirit (meekness). A proud, arrogant disciple is no disciple at all! A worthy walk means we must be meek and lowly.

"with longsuffering." A walk worthy of our calling demands longsuffering. Being willing to suffer for Jesus' sake is an integral part of our walk. Our calling is worth our longsuffering for it! We must put on longsuffering.

"Forbearing one another in love." Brethren must learn to overlook the irritating things of others because we wish them to overlook the same things in us. Likely all of us have characteristics that grate on the nerves of others, which we are not aware of ourselves. Therefore, we must be considerate of others if we would wish them to be considerate of us. Next: "The Unity Of The Spirit."

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