

“Worthy of Our Calling”  
Ephesians 4:1  
(Preached at Trinity, October 26, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul begins this chapter with the familiar “therefore.” This marks a turning point in the **Book of Ephesians**. **Chapters 1-3** were doctrinal in nature. Paul has spoken of predestination and election, of adoption and redemption, the work of the Holy Spirit and regeneration, the union of Jews and Gentiles into one body. He ended **Chapter 3** with a grand doxology and the word “amen.” But this is not the end of the Book.
  - A. These final chapters will be of a more practical nature. Paul passes from what we must *believe* to what we must *do*. This was often Paul's style.  
In **Galatians**, Chapters 1-4 are doctrinal and Chapters 5-6 are practical.  
In **Romans**, Chapters 1-11 are doctrinal and Chapters 12-15 are practical.  
He begins **Chapter 12** - "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.*"
  - B. Doctrine is never just a set of abstract ideas. Doctrine must always be understood as Divine truths to live by. Doctrine defines how we live.
2. As we come to **Ephesians 4** Paul maintains continuity with the previous section. He opens in a similar manner with **Chapter 3**. In **Chapter 3** he referred to himself as the “prisoner of Christ” and now he calls himself “the prisoner of the Lord.” There is no difference in these two titles. He uses the emphatic ἐγὼ. For Paul this was no mere formality. Here, however, the text actually says “prisoner **IN** the Lord.”
  - A. As I pointed out in **Chapter 3** Paul was no stranger to being imprisoned for the sake of the Gospel. His imprisonments in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome were the direct result of his ministry to the Gentiles.
  - B. The Book of Ephesians is one of the prison epistles. In **Chapter 6** Paul refers to himself as an “ambassador in chains.” Paul is most likely making reference to his first Roman imprisonment.  
Ephesians was probably written between AD 61-63, the same period that Paul wrote Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.
  - C. For Paul his imprisonment was simply the result of His commitment to Christ.
3. Using the word “therefore” in **Verse 1** Paul is taking us back to the beginning of the previous chapter. Paul had received a stewardship, a high calling to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.  
**Ephesians 3:7-8 NAU** - " I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ"
  - A. Paul was living out his calling. Christ had captivated his life. He was at the center of all things. Paul was walking worthy of his calling.

- B. Paul is now turning to the church – the word “you” is in the plural. “I implore you . . .” Give particular attention to your own calling. Two words are used here which have the same basic meaning:  
 κλῆσις – a noun which refers to a calling or vocation  
 καλέω – a verb which means to call.
4. He is now talking to both Jew and Gentile as one body, the church. The great theme of **Chapter 4** is the unity of the Body of Christ. Paul is admonishing them to walk worthy of their calling.  
He is also talking to us.  
 Walking implies steady progress. Christians are called to a particular kind of life. We have been brought from death to life, from darkness to light. In **Verses 1-16** Paul describes what he means by walking worthy of our calling. Then he works it out practically.  
**Ephesians 4:17 NAU** - "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk"
5. The Christian life is a transformed life. Paul wrote to the Philippians:  
**Philippians 1:27 NAU** - "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"
6. Paul never got over his glorious calling from darkness to light. He never got over God’s grace in saving him from his sin. He always had a keen sense of his unworthiness. Paul is reminding us of our own calling and the high charge to walk according to this call.
- I. As we consider our calling we have to travel back into eternity
- A. God’s call upon us began in eternity  
**2 Thessalonians 2:13 NAU** - "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."  
 1. Paul wrote about it in Chapter 1  
**Ephesians 1:4-6 NAU** - "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love <sup>5</sup> He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."  
 2. Perhaps the clearest statement is in the Book of Romans  
**Romans 8:29-30 NAU** - "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; <sup>30</sup> and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."
- B. Our calling was completely unconditional  
 1. There was nothing we could do that would merit such mercy. God had mercy upon us simply because it pleased Him to do so.

2. Referring to the distinction between Jacob and Esau Paul wrote:  
**Romans 9:11 NAU** - "for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls"  
**Romans 9:16 NAU** - "So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."
3. God has called us for His own possession. He has adopted us as His dear children. He is working His redemptive purpose in us. This has been the heart of everything Paul has written thus far in this epistle.
4. Have you considered the amazing truth that God called you? Does it amaze you? Does it affect your life?

II. Not only is there an eternal aspect of the Christian's calling. There is also a temporal aspect—the aspect in time.

Those that God chose in eternity He calls through the Gospel

- A. There is a general call of the Gospel wherein Christ is offered to all men.
  1. We often refer to this as God's free offer of grace
  2. It is a genuine offer  
**Romans 10:13** – "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
  3. No one who genuinely comes to Christ has ever been turned away
  4. Jesus describes the general call to salvation in a parable that describes the call as an invitation to a feast - **Matthew 22:1-14**
  5. The parable closes with the danger of seeking salvation apart from Christ.  
**Matthew 22:11-14 NAU** - "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, <sup>12</sup> and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. <sup>13</sup> "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' <sup>14</sup> "For many are called, but few are chosen."
  6. There is no weakness in the message of the Gospel.
    - a. It is powerful. Paul said:  
**Romans 1:16 NAU** - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
    - b. The problem is with the human heart. They won't have it.  
**Acts 13:46 NAU** - "Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles."

- B. For God's elect the Gospel call goes forth effectually
1. There are many verses in the NT that address this  
**1 Corinthians 1:9 NAU** - "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."  
**2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 NAU** - " But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. <sup>14</sup> It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
  2. It is a powerful, irresistible calling
  3. **1689 Confession, Chapter 10: Of Effectual Calling**  
Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh: renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

III. This call of God upon His elect people has a profound effect upon God's people. Do you consider these things often?

- A. First of all it brings us into a relationship with Christ
1. The Christian life is about a relationship.  
Calvin – "The whole purpose of the Gospel is that Christ be made ours, and that we be engrafted into His body.
  2. The Christian is the one who has seen the beauty and excellence of Christ and the cross. We embrace Him in His person  
Our lives have become captivated with a desire to know Him more, love Him more, serve Him more.
- B. Second of all, it results in a transformation of life  
**2 Corinthians 5:17 NAU** - "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."
1. The Christian has had his heart renewed. We now love Christ more than life. We love His Law – it has been written upon our hearts. We now hunger and thirst after righteousness.
  2. We have been transformed from darkness to light.  
**1 Peter 2:9 NAS** - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"
  3. Our calling is a heavenly calling. We seek those things that are above

- C. Paul entreats us to walk worthy of our calling
1. The idea of walking implies progress. It really describes the entirety of our lives.
 

**Genesis 5:22-24 NAU** - "Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had *other* sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."

    - a. Genuine Christianity involves steady growth in knowledge and holiness
 

**2 Peter 3:18 NAU** - " but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity."
    - b. We start off as mere spiritual babies. We readily consume the milk of God's Word and experience staggering growth.
 

**1 Peter 2:2-3 NAU** - " like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, <sup>3</sup> if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."
    - c. We don't remain as babies. We move on to consuming the beefy matters of God's Word.
 

One of the great concerns in **Hebrews 5-6** is that these Christians had not progressed.

**Hebrews 5:12-14 NAU** - " For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."
  2. We must progress and grow in the faith. This translates in how we live. It affects everything. In the remainder of this letter Paul will apply this to the various relationships of the Christian
    - To our fellow believers - **4:2** - " with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love"
    - To the society in which we live - **4:25** - "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one *of you*, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another."
    - To our family -
 

**5:22** - "Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

**5:25** - " Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church"

**6:1** - "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

**6:4** - "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

- To those involving our vocation -
    - 6:5** - "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters "
    - 6:9** - "And masters, do the same things to them"
  - To the invisible forces of evil
    - 6:11** - " Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
3. The high calling of the Gospel carries with it high responsibility. We must walk worthy of our calling.
  4. If you have been called from darkness to light you have a responsibility to walk in the light.
    - Ephesians 5:8 NAU** - "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"
  5. We have been granted saving faith. If you have been granted saving faith you should be a man or woman of faith. We must be people of faith trusting in His Word, believing His promises.
  6. We have been saved unto holiness – we must walk worthy of our calling
    - Ephesians 1:4 NAU** - "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."
    - 1 Peter 2:9 NAS** - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"
  7. As we walk worthy of our calling we should live a life of joy, praise, and gratitude towards God.
    - We should display love, graciousness, patience, mercy, forgiveness, goodness and peace towards our fellow man.
    - Ephesians 4:2 NAU** - " with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love"

#### Conclusion:

1. Paul's constant prayer for the church was that they would walk worthy of their calling.
  - Colossians 1:9-13 NAU** - "For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. <sup>13</sup> For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son"
2. God has united you to His body to love one another, to zealously labor for the glory of His Kingdom.
3. God has called you from death unto life. He has called you to a life of holiness. Walk worthy of your calling.