

Intro: Boston has a number of nicknames, many due to historical contexts:

- City on a Hill, The Hub, The Athens of America, The Cradle of Liberty, Beantown, Titledown, City of Champions, America's Walking City. In fact, Cambridge is the number one city in the U.S. with the highest percentage of pedestrian commuters (25.76%). When I mention Boston being a Walking City, you might think about your walk to work or school every day, but tourists probably think about walking the Freedom Trail, the 2.5-mile journey from Boston Common to the USS Constitution in Charlestown. Whether your walking to work or school or the freedom trail, all of us understand what it means to walk.
- When we come to Ephesians 4 today, Paul begins to unpack how we live the Christian life, and he does this by repeatedly referring to "walk" imagery. I believe he chose this metaphor, which is still live today, because he knew that everyone could understand and relate to it. Think about your walking for second. Do you ever find yourself just walking aimlessly without purpose? Probably never. Most, if not all, of our walking is always done with purpose, direction and intentionality. So should it be in the Christian life.

Read Ephesians 4:1

I. Walk Worthy of Your Calling (4:1).

Context ("Therefore"):

- Chapter 4 marks a strategic shift in Paul's argument in Ephesians, dividing the book into two halves. He moves from doctrine to duty, theology to ethics, from the indicative to the imperative (commands).
 - There is only one explicit command in the first three chapters (Eph. 2:11: "Remember...") though there have been implicit calls to obedience.
 - There are 40 explicit commands in chapters 4-6.
- Paul transitions from doctrinal affirmations (what God has accomplished for his people in Christ) to practical exhortations (how they should live as a result). The knowledge that Paul has shared with them in chapters 1-3 should lead to a particular way of living and conduct as shared in chapters 4-6.
- Application divorced from the gospel becomes an empty and powerless moralism. Religion says, "Obey in order to be accepted," but the gospel says, "You are accepted (gospel doctrine), therefore obey (gospel obedience)."
 - a. Your calling makes it possible for you to walk worthy.**
 - i. This "calling" language is a reference to your conversion, when you heard and responded to the gospel.
 - ii. We first saw Paul use this "walk" language in 2:2: "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once **walked**..." But as a result of the gospel (2:4-9), God has recreated you in Christ Jesus so that you might **walk** in good works (2:10). It is because you are now alive that you can walk in good works.
 - iii. "...in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead..., we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

b. Your calling gives you motivation to walk worthy.

- i. Reflect on the great news of your calling in the gospel
 1. You have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (1:3).
 2. You have been chosen by God (1:4).
 3. You have been adopted by God as a child of God (1:5).
 4. You have received salvation, redemption and the forgiveness of your sins (1:7).
 5. You have obtained an inheritance (1:11).
 6. You now have hope (1:12; cf. 2:12).
 7. You have been sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13).
 8. You are now alive, raised and seated with Christ (2:5-6).
 9. You are a new creation (2:10).
 10. You are now reconciled to God and a part of the body of Christ (2:16).
- ii. This is all a picture of the immeasurable riches of God's love, grace and kindness (cf. Eph. 1:18).
- iii. To walk worthy is to live and act in a way that fits with the great and glorious nature of God and the gospel.

c. Your calling gives you direction to walk worthy.

- i. "For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness" (1 Thess 4:7).
- ii. "...who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (2 Tim. 1:9).
- iii. Ephesians 4:1, thus, serves as a header statement for the rest of Ephesians. In the rest of this book, Paul is going to amplify what is involved in walking worthy of the calling to which you have been called. He will highlight be negative and positive qualities in all the different spheres and aspects of life (church life, social life and home life):
 1. 4:17: You must no longer walk as the Gentiles do...
 2. 5:2: Walk in love
 3. 5:8: Walk as children of light
 4. 5:15: Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise.

d. Why can we learn from the "walk" analogy?

- i. Walk conveys movement and progress.
 1. In Paul's mind, believers never stop walking but continue until they die. Paul is not interested in simply one-time obedience. Paul desires to see complete transformation, a transformation that will take time and is a process.
 2. Don't get discouraged. Don't stop walking.
 3. "Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more" (1 Thess 4:1).

- ii. Walk conveys direction and a goal.
 - 1. When you go for a walk, you usually have a destination in mind. As the temp continues to rise, my wife will walk my kids to school in the mornings. They don't just leave the house and walk aimlessly; their end goal determines each and every step. There is usually a purpose in why, when, where and how we walk. This walk begins with the transforming work of the gospel and ends in glorification when we meet Christ face to face.
 - 2. Maturity in Christ is our goal (Eph. 4:13).
- iii. Paul is emphasizing that the Christian life is a step-by-step, ongoing and everyday process. As you are on this journey of the Christian life, you can look back and see where you've been and look forward to where you want to go. Be careful about looking side to side.

II. Walk Worthy of your Calling by Displaying Unity (4:2-3).

a. Walk with all humility and gentleness

- i. The opposite of humility and gentleness is pride, selfish ambition and conceit. "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). Then he calls them to look to Jesus.
- ii. Persist in these even when the circumstances might excuse this behavior.
- iii. This is great advice even for evangelism:
 - 1. "...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).
 - 2. "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 2:24-25).

b. Walk with patience

- i. Persist in patience even when the circumstances are difficult.
- ii. He doesn't say, "Only be patient when it's easy to be patient."
- iii. Who are you the least patient with? Most patient with? Why?

c. Walk bearing with one another in love

- i. The thrust is that we should bear with and forgive each other (cf. Col. 3:13).
 - 1. Eph 3:17: being rooted and grounded in love.
 - 2. Eph 3:19: to know the love of Christ...
 - 3. Eph 4:15: speaking the truth in love
 - 4. Eph 4:16: from him the whole body...grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
 - 5. Eph 5:2: And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

- d. **Walk eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**
 - i. We should be eager to maintain unity despite all of our differences.
 - ii. In one sense, the church already possesses unity because of what God has already accomplished (we don't create unity) but in another sense, the church needs to maintain this unity and must live in a way that is eager to do so.
 - iii. Peace is the fastener that preserves this unity.
- e. **The Fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23.**
 - i. Romans 8:4: "...walk according to the Spirit."
 - ii. Gal. 5:16: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify..."

III. Walk Worthy of your Calling by Confessing Unity (4:4-6).

- This section serves as a theological basis for the practical admonitions in 4:1-3 and for the emphasis on unity amid diversity in 4:7-16.
 - a. **There is one body**
 - i. See Eph. 2:15-16: they death of Christ tore down the enmity between Jews and Gentiles and united them together in one body, the church.
 - b. **There is one Spirit**
 - i. See Eph. 2:18: both Gentiles and Jews have access to the one God through the Spirit.
 - ii. See Eph. 2:22: they are also being built into a dwelling place for God by his Spirit.
 - iii. Paul is reminding the church that they should keep the church united together with peace because of what God has done by united them.
 - c. **There is one hope**
 - i. Paul returns to the concept of their calling, and connected with this calling is the hope of the gospel (this hope has come to those who used to have "no hope" (2:11).
 - ii. We do not have separate "hopes" but are together called to the one hope, the hope of eternal life with God forever.
 - d. **There is one Lord**
 - i. There is one Lord who stands at the center of God's purposes for the world (Eph. 1:21).
 - e. **There is one faith**
 - i. Here, Paul is likely referring to the body of teaching that Christians believe, namely, the "word of truth" (Eph. 1:13).
 - f. **There is one baptism**
 - i. There is debate over what this refers to:
 1. Water baptism: Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38
 2. Spirit baptism: 1 Cor. 12:13.
 3. Metaphorical reference to baptism in Christ's death, speaking of a believer's union with Christ in his death and resurrection: Romans

6:1-11. This would then refer to an inward reality of having been baptized into the “one Lord” by means of the “one faith.”

g. There is one God and Father

- i. This last affirmation is the climax of the series of affirmations. God is over all, pointing to his sovereignty. God works through all. In other words, God uses people to accomplish his purposes in the world. God is in all.
- ii. Notice the reference to the Trinity in these few verses.
- iii. “...The one God is Father of and sovereign over all things. He has created everything and works intentionally through and in all things to accomplish his intended goal for the universe he created” (Thielman, 260).

h. Side bar: Is it arrogant to claim that there is one God and Jesus is the only way?

- i. India Story: The Ujjain Temples
 1. “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear, noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them” (Psalm 115:4-8).
- ii. India Story: Emisgil (no one ever told me that Jesus rose from the dead).
 1. If Jesus is alive, that changes everything.
- iii. Story from Boston about sharing with a Buddhist (Harvard Ph.D. Student)
 1. I’m tired. I have no peace. My mom has always been a devout Buddhist and she has no rest or peace. I don’t want that.

The Point: In view of all God has done for us in Christ, walk worthy of your calling by walking in unity.

How’s your walking?

- You’ll never get to the destination God wants you to get to if you don’t take the first step.
- What step would God have you to take today? Would you pray, “God, what would you have me do today?”

Col 1:9-10: And so, from the dad we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.