**“For This Reason Walk”**

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Exodus 16:2-15

Ephesians 4:1-16

John 6:22-35

 10th Sunday after Pentecost

“Walk, therefore, in a manner worthy of the calling to which **you** have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Grace to you and **peace** from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

Paul was, **literally**, a **prisoner** **because of his walk in the Lord** … but he begins this lesson on Christian life **identifying** **US** as **having no choice either (bound to action)**, “**prisoners captive**, to **tread upon this earth charged with** **duties that will not change**”. They (even the special gifts and capabilities given to each one of us individually) might get (sinfully) **ignored by us maybe or neglected**. Yet their **exercise** is always **expected of us**. We must **act**, and **act right**.

This **action** is **because we are Christian**, so “**therefore**” begins this second half of Ephesians. **Who we are** expects, then, **ways to act** … and **that we do act**.

There is, however, no **compulsion for that** other than the **compulsion of the Word**. You will never find whips upon your backs or a prodding with anything but awareness given by language heard to describe you by **what God’s made you for**. The **Gospel** will make **imperative a response**, but one can **ignore that imperative**. Paul turns to **exhortation** (“I **urge** you, therefore”). “For **good reason**” (the best reason beyond what anyone could imagine), Christians have **purpose** and can and ought to act / can shape the world or our part of it, in some ways **similar to each other**, but in other ways **very unique to oneself**. We’re encouraged to **do so**, and **doing-so** is the **only natural thing we can do as Christians**. It’s **un-natural for us to not act**, so the compulsion (if any) is **adapting to a nature as “Christian” told us and learned by God’s Word**.

**Text**

With **“humility” (or an absence of pride)**, and a **“meek” (or not-at-all arrogant) approach**, **“patiently” (with “longsuffering”)** one begins all learned steps. The deadly sin of **pride** felt then expressed antithetical (the opposite-of proper) for a Christian. **Humility (not false humility, but the real kind)** is the very **sign of maturity or growth** in a **developed** **(or learned and practiced)** Christian nature. If there’s one thing to look for (as God does) in determining the **usefulness of a person for a task** (beyond the **gift set**), it’s **humility**. For anyone to be **divinely useful**, **humility** (which always expresses itself with gentleness and patience) is **character (or skill set) “number one”** on the capability list.

The **goal**, then, is that we “**bear with one another in love**” (which is forgiveness and a forgiving and humble (seeking forgiveness attitude) practiced, doing all of this “**eager to maintain** the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” … for the **purpose of** **peace for Peace (which is the very person of the Christ of God)**.

Just as much as even **acting** (or **walking**) is the **“therefore” to who we are as God’s “adopted inheritors, sealed with the Holy Spirit”**, so our **purpose is from the “therefore” of that content in Jesus Christ**. There **IS** “one body and one Spirit” (not many)—"just as we all” (the baptized believers / Christians) “were called **TO** **the one hope that belongs to our calling—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all**”: “**He** (who ascended on high) “**led a host of captives” (that’s us “captive, then, baptized to God), “and gave gifts to men”.**.

**We** can get caught up in the, just, **“walk” word** and, so, fall into just **meandering** **(not accomplishing many God things)**. I personally think that lots gets done in the name of a **spirit”** that **has very little to do with “holiness”**, but it feels good, so is deceptive. We can consider **feelings** the goal, but there is, truly, “one **Lord**” (not many), “one **faith**” as in true doctrine, and “one **baptism**” (not with “**re-**baptisms” being considered a “thing”, but not). The **first place where humility must display itself** is in **submitting to what is** “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, who **is** **(indeed)** over all and through all and in all”. The opposite of that humility (pride) only knows what it **wants to know**, stopping the process **growth in God and movement practiced in the knowledge of Him (Who and how He is absent human opinions)**. Our **plethora of choices in conflicting theologies** **tells me** that **way too many are walking in human opinion, so aimlessly then** when the **criteria** and **divine expectation** **IS** “**one Lord, one faith (in content), and one baptism**”.

But **we**, often, don’t **care**. **Moving aimless ourselves** (or, maybe, **not moving at all**) we can be found considering “good **enough**” **Good** **enough when it never is**. Paul starts **where a Christian “walk” must**: from the **One in Lordship and content and baptism Who us makes us and everything else useful possible**.

**“He” (Jesus)** “**descended** and **ascended” after His work**, “filling all things” (so still working in all things) … and “far above all the heavens” in stature and ability to perform them.

People have **misunderstood by laziness or an unappreciative attitude** for all the years that there have been years. Exodus accounts two to three million **saved** “grumbling”. Then made to increase their **learning days** to every one of them for their entire journey, to thank God daily for divine food that’s **daily just enough** so as to not stray planning for their own futures but depending upon God and His service of Food. Jesus just came from feeding twenty thousand, then told them that to have life they all must “eat the body of the Son of Man and drink His blood”.

**Application**

We’re given **the divinity of the Lord’s food in the Supper today**. Yet I’ve seen (you all have, no doubt) **ignore His provision of divine Food in the Body and Blood of Jesus through bread and wine. Even we often don’t crave it enough**. Many (having left that invitation and a unity with, even, parents and grandparents behind) walk to entertainment over the divine food that they apparently no longer **believe-in** or **care about** **apparently**. ….

Paul doesn’t go much further here than **trying to instill the necessity and reason for a Christian “walk”.** He says that we all have our roles to play but that all those must be learned and expressed in humility with gentleness and patience. And here’s why a growth and a learned movement (“walk”) is necessary: “that all attain to the unity of the faith” (again, in one doctrine / God’s doctrine / truth) “and the knowledge of the Son of God” (what that truth is), “to” (not childishness) but to “**MATURE MANHOOD**, to the measure of the **stature” (and abilities) “of the fullness of Christ**, so that we may no longer **be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes**. Rather, **speaking TRUTH IN LOVE**, we are to **grow up** in every way **into Him who is the Head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love**.”

Saints are **to be** “**equipped**” (grown), and that happens by “apostles, the prophets, the evangelists” (those three are the Word of God / it’s Scripture), then “pastors” (faithful “pastors” and “teachers”). They’re to “**equip**” saints for “the work (or **walking in**) of **ministry** **(usefulness)**, for the building up of the body of Christ”. God **intends us** to be not **just saved**, but also useful and emboldened and grown into the “fullness of Christ” and the “knowledge” of Him … **of-purpose** and, again, **useful one to another** as in parents to children / children to parents and friends to friends.

May the Lord help us to **embrace our “captivity” under Him, making us ever more humble yet gifted glory and fed-for-it** (it’s why the Exodus and John 6 text was attached to this in the lessons for this weekend, us **“fed” for growth**. In **+**Jesus’ name, amen.”