

# Distinctives of a Worthy Walk

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 25 October 2026

Preacher: Bill Story

[0:00] He comes for those who are sick, not for those who are well. He comes for the sinner, not for the righteous. This beginning part, because Paul has made a great transition from what God has done to now what God calls us to do.

So from what we believe, right, to how we act. The riches in Christ and our response to him, chapters 4, 5, and 6.

So we're looking at the beginning of what is this worthy walk? To walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called. How do we do that? Can we do that?

Well, yeah, we can. And I think it's, as we found in Ephesians, the way Paul lays things out, the way Paul is so deliberate, so careful. I believe he stopped this through.

And so when he's going to talk about how we walk worthy. He's going to start with some things that might surprise us.

[1:35] What does the worthy walk start with? What are the characteristics of those who follow Jesus? Okay, so we want to read the text, then we'll pray, and then we'll dig in to the text with the Lord's help.

So I want to read from chapter 3, verse 20, the last two verses of chapter 3 of Ephesians, and then chapter 4, 1 through 3.

So if you're able and you'd like to please stand and honor the reading of God's Word. Ephesians chapter 3, beginning at verse 20. Now to him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, beyond all we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.

To him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called.

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love. Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

[3:01] So it reads, let us pray. Father, guide us today as we look at these words, as we consider a couple of words, a couple of phrases that describes a worthy walk.

That are not, to be honest, our favorite words. As we look at patience. As we look at bearing with one another.

Father, may we pray for you to seek your working in our lives.

To manifest these characteristics. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. There's a bunch of water bottles up here and I'm trying to make sure I'm drinking from the right one.

They all look the same. Actually, they're not. I forgot mine. It's in the car. I went down and grabbed one from the kitchen. Anyway.

[4:27] So let's start by thinking this. What does a true Christian look like? What does a true Christian look like?

What distinguishes a Christian from the world? Right? What sets them apart? In what ways do those who follow Jesus stand out?

Their light is shining. Okay. How does their light shine? What makes them shine? What makes them distinct? Humility. Love for one another.

Forgiveness. Forgiveness. Compassion. Compassion. Peace in situations that normally would not have peace. Peace that passes understanding.

Peace beyond understanding. Right. When you shouldn't have peace. Yeah. Endurance through trials. Peace.

[5:29] Peace. So Christians walk on a, as Jesus called it, a narrow road. Right? We make the harder choices. The road less traveled, so to speak.

Right? Not the natural, easy responses to the world. So, today we are going to look at two rare characteristics that make Christians distinctive.

So, last time we looked at humility and meekness or gentleness.

Now, in verse 2, we look at the next two, which, as I said, are not popular. They're not ones we see, you know. Patience.

What does it mean when we have patience, right? By the way, do you pray for patience? No way. I'm not too. That's kind of the Christian joke, right?

[6:28] Don't pray for patience. Because then God will put you through trials. Because that's how God teaches us. That's how God brings that out in us. Through trials. Patience right now.

With me. And then forbearance. So, he adds to patience, in verse 2, showing forbearance or bearing with one another in love.

So, these are characteristics that are a bit more rare. In fact, in my experience as a pastor, after almost 40 years, I have seen many people who get into a situation in churches I've been in, and when they encounter difficulty, and when they encounter irritants, when they encounter people that they are not easy to love, what do they do?

Leave. They leave. They leave. That is not biblical at all. To leave. Because the other alternative is to show patience.

And to bear with. And that's distinctive Christianity. Christianity. And it's rare. It's rare. When I first came to Little Log 20 years ago, there were a lot that left early on.

[7:58] And maybe about, what was it? What year are we now? 2027? So, a little over 10 years ago, God started changing things. And He brought us people and nurtured people in our church that were patient and forbearing.

And I knew that was true when I was confronted about something I had done that had offended somebody. And I thought, well, thank God. Not that I had done something wrong, but that they cared enough for me to let me know, right, so I could make it right.

And not have this thing going on, and they just leave, you know, kind of thing. What a blessing. What a blessing to have a Christian community that loves one another enough to say the hard words.

Right? And still be willing to bear with. Okay, so let's look at this. We looked at the call to walk worthy in verse 1.

Notice, made two observations about verse 1, that Paul, first of all, Paul appeals to Christians from a posture of grace.

[9:16] He does not appeal to them as their apostle. He does not appeal to them from a top-down kind of thing. He does not command them. He does not demand of them.

He appeals to them from a posture of grace. He's a gracious person, Paul is. I don't think he always was. But as he's writing this, he's appealing to them.

He's imploring. He's calling to them. He's not ordering them. He's not using his authority. He's appealing as a prisoner of the Lord. And then secondly, we observe that he appeals to Christians who are already receivers of grace.

Walk worthy of the calling which you've already received. The calling with which you've been called. And I think that's maybe his way of summarizing chapters 1 through 3.

The calling, all those blessings, all those ways that God has worked in our lives, all those wonderful things that God has done for us, right, through the gospel, through Jesus Christ.

[10:24] So walk worthy of that. So live it out, right, to walk. And he uses this term walk in verse 1. Walk. So the image of walking is movement, right?

Going forward, making progress. Not rushing, but walking one step at a time. We walk by faith, right? And so it's about direction and about choices that we make.

But it's about movement. So we looked last time at the first two characteristics. What characteristics distinguish walking worthy of our calling?

So there are four marks all together here in verse 2. With all humility and gentleness. So we looked at those last time. Humility. Literally, lowliness of mind.

So humility is a mindset. It's an attitude. Right? It will affect our actions. But it's really about what we believe about ourselves. Humility.

[11:25] A lowliness of mind. Not thinking I'm above anybody else. It's the characteristic Jesus had to come and take a body, a human body, right?

And lay it down for us. He did not hold on to his equality with God. He emptied himself, right? He humbled himself. And so humility of mind.

And then secondly, gentleness or meekness. It's just also this characteristic of not... Kind of takes humility the next step.

It's not resisting those that oppose us. Not laying down as a doormat. But also not fighting.

Not being a fighter, right? Not being defensive. Not resisting. Overlooking the traits. Some of the hard things about others. So Jesus was meek, right?

[12:19] He says, come to me all who are weary and heavy laden. Right? I am gentle. I am meek. Right?

She can come to me. So those are the first two. Now the next two, I think, are less about attitude and more about action. So I think these next two characteristics, patience and bearing with, are the outflow of one who has a lowliness of mind and a meekness about them.

So walking worthy is distinguished by patience. Distinguished by patience. So what's patience?

Anybody have that, by the way?

Is it? Anybody? Yeah, it's the fruit of the Spirit. Which tells us what? We need the Holy Spirit for patience. Right?

It's the fruit of the Spirit. Not the fruit of Bill. Not the fruit of you. It's the fruit of the Spirit. We're depending on the Lord to bring this out of us. To cultivate this out of us. We're the, you know, He's the vine.

[13:27] We're just the branch. Right? The fruit comes through the branch that's connected to Jesus. Patience. It literally means suffering long.

That's what patience means. Long suffering. Suffer long. Right? Or long-tempered. You've heard of short-tempered? This is long-tempered.

Right? And that's God. That's how God responds to us. Right? He is patient with us. He long-suffers with us. He does not, you know, get us right away.

It's a restraint with others. It's not giving in to our passion to respond or react immediately. So long-suffering is enduring the wrong, particularly that wrong done to us.

Enduring the wrong versus just reacting or being enraged. It's making allowances. It's making allowances. Patience is.

[14:32] Making allowances. It's kind of a long view. Being tolerant of others. Are we tolerant?

Are we patient with weaknesses of others? It's not our natural go-to, is it? It's not natural. Natural is to react. Right? So it's a fruit of the Spirit.

It's something that is developed in us. So why do we need patience? Right? Aren't all Christians always kind?

No? Not all? Did I hear grumbling over there? No? Not always? No? No? Yeah. Half of the letters in the New Testament we would not have if Christians were so perfect in the first century.

Corinthians, for goodness sake. All kinds of problems. That letter would be called the Coloradans today, wouldn't it? Corinthians? Coloradans? California? No, if I said Californians, you'd be all like, yeah, yeah, Californians.

[15:44] They're both the same. Yeah. Especially since the Californians moved to Colorado.

That's right. Yeah, that's it. That's it. Uh-huh. So it's inevitable that we will clash.

There will be a clash of personalities. It's inevitable that people will disappoint us. Other Christians will disappoint us, let us down, right? Be forgetful.

It's inevitable. They will irritate us. They will offend us. That's why Paul says, patience. Patience.

Long-suffering. Because you are working out the Christian life alongside other Christians who are like you and can irritate others.

Not necessarily even intentionally, right? Or weaknesses. So Paul has no rosy-eyed view of the church.

[16:45] He does not just kind of say, you know, can't we all get along? He tells us what we need to do to reflect Christ. Right?

And it takes intentionality. So we're all in process. Right? God's not finished with us. Thank goodness. Right? I've got a long ways to go.

I feel. Some weeks I feel like I went backwards instead of forwards. We are saved by Christ. We've been changed by Christ.

We've been transformed. But we're not in our final state yet. We're not perfected yet. We're not. We haven't reached the image of Christ yet. That's the goal. Right? The Father is conforming us to the image of Christ.

And that's going to take a while for us in learning to overcome certain kinds of sin and learning to overcome our selfishness and learning to choose others instead of ourselves.

[17:44] So in my experience as a pastor, as I brought up before, I've had a few experiences that have changed my expectations.

When I first came out of seminary, you know, and you're all young and excited and, you know, I'm going to change the world. And all I've got to do is just get this into people's hearts and know that'll do it.

And it's not quite that easy. And some hearts are harder than others. Even Christian hearts can be harder than others. And what's shocking, you know, I met people in Illinois when I was in Illinois that just floored me.

They lied to me. They betrayed me. They, you know, you name it. They did it. And it was, I was just like, how do these people call themselves Christians?

And these were leaders. And so I had some big things to learn. And then when I came here, the first years here, we had some difficulty early on.

[18:56] We had to confront some stuff. And I saw some selfishness in some, right, some people that did not want to be under authority. They rejected authority. And I remember telling one of the people that we confronted later, a year or so later, after they had left the church.

And this one fellow wanted to come up and give me a big hug. And I pushed him away. And I said, nah, we don't have that kind of relationship. I know who you are. I know who you are now.

If you'd like to know, you could read the book of Jude and you'll find out who you are. Because that's what I discovered about you. And he's all, oh. Yeah, truth hurts, doesn't it?

But it's just, you know, and so I'm, so my expectations about Christians have changed. It's, it's, I still expect goodness out of Christians.

I still expect kindness out of Christians. Those kind of things. But I'm not overly floored anymore or shocked when there's another side.

[20:05] There's a dark side to folks. But it is surprising, I'll tell you. And I think it's why a lot of pastors don't stay.

You know, the regular term for pastors is about three years. One and a half to three years because, you know. Yeah.

And that may be true for a lot of folks in, you know, as far as their attendance. They come for a while and then they get disappointed and they move on. There's not a commitment to stay together and wait for God to build among us, right?

So expectations. I think that that is a healthy thing to have in a church is to, is to not have the expectations that you'll never be annoyed by another believer.

I mean, you know, and not be disappointed and even really disappointed. That those things happen in churches. Sinners are in churches.

[21:18] Did you know that? There's black sheep in churches that, you know, that have old habits, right? And that's why Paul calls us to patience.

Because who are we? Who am I? Right? To think you should be, you know, you should be more sanctified by now. Well, so should I. Should, should, should.

If we're going to shoot on each other. So, as if there's no pride, right? And no grumbling.

We don't have any grumbling in our church, do we? We don't grumble about each other. Again, it's why Paul talks about don't grumble. Because we grumble.

That's our nature. Our nature is to be critical. So, think about how God deals with us. So, if God wants us to be patient toward others, think about how God is toward us.

[22:16] He's patient toward us, isn't he? He is slow to anger. And in 1 Timothy 1, Paul talks about how he's an example of God's perfect patience toward the foremost of sinners.

Paul looked at himself as an example of how gracious God is, how patient God is. That he would, that he would have mercy toward Paul.

And that should be our own view. That's why, you know, if we look at who we are, we would be more patient with others. In fact, in Romans, it talks about how God's patience is what leads us to repentance.

Romans 2.4. It's the patience of God that leads us to repentance. Not the anger of God. Not the terror of God.

It's the patience of God. So, James, let me look at an example from James chapter 5. James calls us to patience as well.

[23 : 27] And he talks about it in some different ways. So, it kind of gives us a feel for where we apply patience, right? With people, but in what kind of situations. So, he gives three different examples.

James 5.7, he says, Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits. So, he's going to give an example of a farmer as someone who's patient. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth. Excuse me. Being patient about it until it receives the early and late rains.

You too, be patient. So, patience is like the farmer, right? Waiting for those crops to come. They don't come the next day. They don't come the week later. They come in season, right?

They come after the rains. They come after we've cultivated, after a lot of work. Waiting. So, patience means waiting for God to work. Okay?

[24 : 24] If we're impatient with somebody, another believer, we need to realize patience is about waiting for God to work. Right?

So, then he gives, James says, Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another.

There it is. Do not grumble against one another's brothers, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the judge is standing at the door. So, patience involves not grumbling. Not groaning about others. That's the most natural thing to do. But, Dylan and I were just catching ourselves on something we were grumbling about. Thought, you know, hey, hey, hey. Gotta work on that. You know, grumbling. Because we're impatient. And then, finally, James says, So, patience involves endurance.

[25 : 41] Right? Enduring. Not just waiting, but then enduring. The steadfastness of Job. Right? So, enduring those things. So, how do we cultivate patience?

Is that something I put on my list? I say, I'm going to work on patience. So, that's where you get into that problem of, do you pray for it?

Right? So, what was there, Ron? I say, first off, you gotta have a little spirit. Yeah? Yeah. Right. So, since.

So, let's connect some dots here, right? So, it talks about being patient. But then, Paul tells us that patience is a fruit of the Spirit. So, that means it's not me that needs to put patience on my list and work on it.

God will work on it for me. God will work on it for me. And I'll probably work on an area of patience or patience with certain individual or situation. That I wasn't high on my list.

[26 : 44] Right? That seems the way the Lord goes. I want to work on this and he's over here working on this. It's like I kind of have to give in to him because he's kind of in control. So, kind of.

So, it's God's job. It's, so, if it's the fruit of the Spirit, right? I, you know, remember John 15.

That principle Jesus taught us. Abide in Christ. Like, as the branch abides in the vine, so you abide in me. So, Christ is the vine.

Right? He is the, he has, is the life and the power all flow through the vine. We're just branches that, that are connected to that vine. Right?

And then he says, apart from me. Right? Cut the branch apart from the vine. How much fruit will you bear? You branches. Nothing. You don't, can't do anything apart from Christ.

[27 : 42] So, so what does that mean? That means I latch on to Christ. That I draw my strength from him. That I wait upon him to have that fruit flow through. It comes in seasons.

So, it's gradual work of the Spirit. It's why we go through trials. It's why we're tested by others.

So, if I'm grumbling a lot, I'm probably not passing the test. Right? And he'll let me know that. He's, the Holy Spirit's gentle about that.

Just kind of, hello, anybody home? And if I continue, then it might get a little louder. It might be a two by four eventually.

I don't know. But he's very gentle. He'll call, he'll remind, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah. Conviction, not guilt. Conviction, not guilt.

[28 : 44] Okay. So, that's the first thing. So, it's distinctive. Walking worthy is distinguished by patience or long suffering with others. And then the same thing with the fourth one.

Walking worthy is proven by loving forbearance with one another. So, I want you to notice three things about this, this forbearing.

So, one, we're going to look at the term bearing with. Secondly, we're going to notice that it's relational. And then third, notice the manner of it.

So, bearing with to, so, the New American Standard that I'm using, that I'm reading from, has showing forbearance to one another in love.

Different translations have a different. What does the ESV have? A lot of you have an ESV. Long suffering. It just says long suffering? Well, I don't know.

[29:45] Oh. I have the New King James and that's talking about long suffering. Okay. King James has long suffering. The horse. The horse?

Tolerance. Tolerance. Okay. So, however, it's translated various ways because it's one of those phrases, one of those terms that can be translated different.

Literally means to hold up or to uphold self with the implications of to endure. So, it's an outflow of patience and meekness.

Right? To endure. To bear. And to specifically to bear with weaknesses and failures of others. So, that makes sense, right?

We're bearing with, I might get impatient about somebody's weakness. I might get frustrated with somebody's inability, their failure.

[30:44] You know, they keep failing or they keep disappointing. So, bearing with is with those kind of things that tend to annoy us. So, it doesn't mean to bear with, you know, so it's, I think there was an old cartoon strip that was called Grin and Bear It.

You remember that kind of grin and bear it? It's kind of like, okay, just kind of, you know, whatever. You got to grin and bear it, right? It's kind of, you resign to that. Well, this isn't like that. This isn't about, okay, I just got to resign.

Okay, those people are never going to, you know. But it's a positive bearing with. It's more intentional relationship. Bear with. So, we note that.

Relational. It's with one another. And one another, remember, is a mutual responsibility phrase. He doesn't say bearing with others, just with others.

But he says, with one another. So, it's reflexive. So, I bear with Ron and Ron bears with me. I didn't say we both have that responsibility toward each other.

[31:56] And it's one of the things that distinguishes Christianity. So, I asked at the beginning, what is it that stands out about a Christian? What makes a Christian stand out? What makes them different?

Bart, you said love. Right? And Jesus said, what is it that the world will notice? By our love for one another. How will the world know that we belong to Jesus?

By our love for one another. First, before our love for the world. Jesus always emphasized that. And so does the New Testament.

Don't lose that. Our love for one another is our greatest testimony to the world. Say, well, I don't see how that... Shouldn't we be... Yeah, we should be out there, of course. But the world will see how we love one another.

How we take care of one another. Because it's rare. It's a rare kind of love. It's a distinctive kind of love. So, Matthew 17, Jesus came down from the mountain, the transfiguration.

[33:06] Remember this? He comes down and he sees that his disciples are arguing with other people. And the disciples were unable to heal this father's son, I think it was.

And so Jesus comes down and goes, what's going on? And then he says something interesting. He says, how long must I put up with your unbelief?

And he's using the same phrase. How long must I bear with you? How long must I endure your unbelief? I will not be with you much longer.

Well, what he's intimating is that all along he's been bearing with these 12 men. He's been enduring. He's been putting up with them. Their lack of faith.

Right? Their lack of connecting the dots. They were frustrating people. You know, we see him from time to time saying, where's your faith?

[34:14] Where's your faith? You know, they're out on a boat in a storm. And Jesus is so confident he's sleeping below, right? Everybody above's freaking out because they think they're going to die.

Right? And they wake Jesus up. And what is he saying? Where's your faith? And then Jesus does the Jesus thing, right? Hush be still, right?

And then they recognize, wait a minute, who is this? That can calm the seas and stop the wind.

Amen. So, he's challenging them.

And he's teaching them. That was Jesus' manner toward them. And then notice then the manner of this. So he says, Walk worthy of the calling of what you've been called.

With all humility, with all gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another. In what manner? In love or with love.

[35 : 19] Showing forbearance with one another in love. How do I bear with others? What is going to drive me and motivate me and help me to do what's not natural for me to do?

To bear with. Love. Love. How did Jesus bear with his disciples? He loved them. He loved them.

Love. Love. To quote Paul, right? Love bears all things. Love endures all things.

Love covers a multitude of sins. Right?

Love is not about doing what I want. Love is acting in a way for the good of another. Right? Love is an intentional choice.

[36 : 17] Right? To act sacrificially to meet needs of another person. Jesus lays down his life. He displays love by laying down his life.

That's for our good. So Ephesians 4, 15, 16 is going to talk about love. How we express love for one another. We speak the truth in love to one another.

In chapter 5, 2, he talks about how we walk in love. With one another. Just as Christ has loved us.

So love is key. But love is demonstrated by bearing with.

Okay? It's not the exact. Love is the big category. And the patience and the gentleness and the bearing with our expressions of love.

Because we love. Because we love. Because we're committed to love one another. Because he's called us to love one another. And yet we don't. People turn on the church because of the hurt of the people.

[37 : 19] Yes. And they turn on Christ because of the hurt of the people. Yes. We were just talking about that. Yeah. I mean, how many people do you meet that used to go to church and don't go because they've been hurt?

Or they turn their back on Christ because that's what Christ is about. And that's the love that they're supposed to have because of Christ. Why would I want that? Right. Or they have a bad experience in a church where, you know, we shoot our own wounded kind of thing.

Yeah. Right. And that's. Or, you know, the claim is the hypocrisy of the church. Right. So we're. Which, you know, is true.

Yes. We're all hypocrites. The difference is. The difference is, I hope, for us, God working in us, is that we recognize our hypocrisy.

And we work on it. We turn on it. Right. Because, of course, everybody's. Nobody's perfect.

Nobody's got it all done. Well, and that's the Holy Spirit's job, right? Right. It's to recognize my sin.

[38 : 20] Right. And mine is to repent of it. So here's how Paul starts it. You know, how do we walk in a man of worthy? Right. That lowliness of mind, my attitude. Who do I think I am?

Right. I value others more important than myself. Then that gentleness, that nature of the horse, right? The strength under control. It's not that you lay down about things, but you willingly sacrifice. And let go things to not fight, to leave room for that person. And then you got the long suffering. And now we have the bearing with one another.

So the question is, are we committed to do that? Are we willing to do that? Do we love Christ enough to do that? Because this body here is the representation of Christ in our world for us.

This body right here. This is Christ. We are the body of Christ. And so if I love Christ, I love the people in this room.

[39 : 26] And the people who aren't in this room today because they're, you know, whatever. But I love these people. And some of the people who aren't here, I need to call them. And how are you doing?

I miss you. Don't say any shoulds and oughts to them. Just say, hey, we miss you. So, how far does this go?

Are there limits to how much I bear with others? What does it look like? So, Colossians 3. The words are almost similar to Ephesians 4.

Paul says, Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another.

Same phrases, right? And if, okay, how far do we go with this? Okay. If one has a complaint against another, what do we do?

[40:29] Forgiving each other. Oh, come on. I've got to complain. I want to go tell everybody. Forgiving each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. And above all these, put on love, which love is embracing all these things, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

So notice here in Colossians, same kind of qualities Paul's talking about as he does in Ephesians 4. Romans 15. Where are we to be intentional in bearing with others?

So Paul says in Romans 15, We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak.

We who are strong, we who are mature, we who are down the road a little bit in this Christian experience, who have overcome some things, not perfected by any means, but have grown and matured.

We who are strong, right? It's our responsibility to bear with the failings of the weak and not to just please ourselves. Let us, let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

[41:41] For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell upon me. So bearing with means bearing with the weaknesses and the reproaches that come on the church.

Right? The reproaches that come upon the church that we're not necessarily responsible for. They just come because people are bitter, people are hurt, people are wanting an excuse.

Okay, let's get down to the nitty gritty here. How we doing? I've got lots of time. Lunch is downstairs. By the way, I went down to get that water.

Yeah, it smells good. Yeah. Just a couple of questions to reflect on. Why are patience and bearing with one another so important?

They are qualities of walking worthy of Jesus. They are distinctive qualities that a true Christian looks like or has.

[42:59] It's what it looks like to be transformed by Christ. We were dead in sin. Now we're alive by the power of the Spirit. So here's the nitty gritty.

Then how can weak, sin-struggling Christians do this? How can we who fall a lot of times, we who are struggling with sin, we're not free of our sin yet.

We've overcome sin, but we still struggle with sin. Right? We have those bad days. We have those trials that make it hard. How can weak, sin-struggling Christians do this?

We've answered it before. Only by the power of God. Not by me pulling up my boots and getting, I'm just going to really try harder now. But by learning to look to the Lord, to look to Him.

Right? To abide in Him. That picture of the vine and the branches, the branches just clinging to Jesus and drawing my strength and power from Him. So it's not a passive walk.

[44:08] It's an active faith. We seek the Lord's help. We seek His power. We seek His enabling. We're depending upon Him. So, just for personal reflection, is this how you live?

Are you longing to live like that? Are you working toward living like that? Right? Are you seeking the Lord to make you more like that? Right?

Lord, I want to be more faithful. I want to be more dependent on You. I want to be that branch that's always connected to You so that You produce the fruit through me as You will.

So, especially in relation to one another. Now, there are some of you here, a lot of you here. You're easy to love, at least so far. And I am too, right?

Until you really get to know me. And that's going to be true. We're going to have personalities that we match with and we get along easily. And then there's personalities we don't.

[45:19] We're not kind of like that. We're a little different than that. So, they make us a little uncomfortable. And then, the longer we get to know them, they can disappoint us. And so, I get to learn to be like Christ.

To bear with. And long suffer. Are you seeking to follow Jesus? Are you living by His power? That's probably a better way to ask it. Are you seeking to follow Jesus? Yeah, I want to be a follower of Jesus. But that's not about my strength. That's about living by His power. Because remember, what did He ask?

He said, Follow me and I will what? I will make you fishers of men. Your part is following. You follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

You don't need to go manipulate anything. You don't need to go, you know, I'll make you a fisherman. And I'll make you each different kinds of fishers of men. You're going to reach different kinds of people because of how I gift you.

[46:27] Do we believe that? But it's only as we follow Him. As we follow Him. Okay. Branching into a different sermon.

Sorry. I missed last week. So, got to make up for it. Let's pray. Father, we thank You for Paul and the way he thinks through not only what he teaches us about what You've done, but as now He is teaching us how we walk, how we direct our lives, how we make choices, what kind of people we are to be.

We thank You, Lord, for the way he thinks through carefully. It starts with humility and then continues with meekness and patience and bearing with.

And Father, we know that those are the nitty-gritties because there's been times in our Christian lives where we've had kind of butted heads with other Christians or had disagreements disagreements or had some frustrations.

And Lord, we want to not be those kind of people that run away from that, but that You would help us to do what's right and then by that, make our church stronger because we're more like You.

[47:47] So this is what we pray. This is what we pray and ask for You. In Christ's name, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.