The Aim of a Worthy Walk

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[0:00] Good morning. Good morning. I woke up this morning.

! But with this pinch-nerve deal, I've had trouble sleeping, and so I'm constantly getting up and down and changing position and trying to find some position where this throbbing would stop or cease.
And so sometimes I get up and on top of the mattress I'm just stretching, you know. So apparently while I'm stretching I fell asleep. And I woke up this morning in that same position, and so I was kind of not at a favorable position.
So all that to say, pray that I can endure, that God would help me, my focus to be on this and not on that.
Turn with me in your Bibles to the epistle of Ephesians chapter 4. We'll continue walking through Paul's practicum, Paul's practice of what we believe in chapters 1 through 3 of Ephesians.
[1:42] He's calling us to walk in a manner worthy of our calling with which we've been called. That calling that is all of chapters 1, 2, and 3.

A calling which is all the blessings with which we've been blessed with. The salvation with which God has saved us. The reconciliation that we have in the body of Christ and the one body that God has created.
As well as the mystery of the gospel that now God uses to save people. So all those callings, all those blessings, now Paul changes in chapter 4, 1, 2.
Therefore, because of all that, walking a manner worthy. And so we've been kind of opening that up, looking at that. What is the walking? What is walking worthy? And then Paul in verse 2 starts talking about the characteristics or the distinctions.
The distinctiveness of the one who walks worthy has humility of mind and gentleness and patience and forbearance.
[2:51] And then we come to verse 3, which is interesting. Because it's as if he's pointing us in a direction that shows the purpose of all of that.

Why should we walk worthy? And why are these particular distinctions, these characteristics, where is that going?
And where it's going is toward protecting the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And so it's an interesting turn that he makes.
So we're going to talk about this. What is this unity of the Spirit? How do we protect it? How do we defend it? And why is the worthy walk connected to that?
Why does the worthy walk lead to that? So before I start giving the whole sermon, let's read the text. We're going to read today in Ephesians 4.
[3:54] We're going to read 1-6 because that's in verses 4, 5, and 6. He talks about the kind of unity that he's describing. So if you're able, please stand as I read Ephesians 4.

Verses 1-6. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you, urge you, plead with you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.
Walk worthy 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.
There is one body and one spirit just as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.
[4:54] One God and Father of all. Who is over all and through all and in all. So reads the word.
Let us pray. Father, give us understanding today.

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Help us to follow Paul's logic and his reasoning and what he wants us to do. Why unity of the Spirit is so significant and how, Lord, do we maintain it?
How do we defend it? How do we protect it? Grant us understanding in that. Why our unity is at the crux of what we are to do.
Why we walk worthy. So we ask these things, Father, in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated.
Does that say it's almost 12?
Ah, it doesn't matter. There's a... Try to read the clock back there. It's 11. There's an old...
[6:04] Huh? All right, never mind. There's an old jingle that goes like this. To dwell above with the saints we love, oh, that will be glory.

But to dwell below with the saints we know, well, that's a different story. Anyway, here's another take.
I love thy kingdom, Lord.
The house of thine abode. The church, our blessed redeemer saved with his own precious blood. I love thy church, oh God.
Her walls before thee stand. Dear as the apple of thine eye and graven on his hand. For her, my tears shall fall.
[7:09] For her, my prayers ascend. To her, my cares and toils be given till toils and cares shall end. Beyond my highest joy, I prize her heavenly ways.

Her sweet communion, solemn vows, her hymns of love and praise. Sure as thy truth shall last, to Zion shall be given.
The brightest glories earth can yield. And brighter bliss of heaven. I love thy kingdom, Lord. I love thy church, oh Lord.
Do you love his kingdom? Do you love his church? For her, for this body, do your tears fall?
And your prayers ascend? To this body, are your cares and toils given till cares and toils shall end?
[8:21] Do you prize for heavenly ways? Even when she falls so short of it? Do you think of this local body as a sweet communion?

Do you think of this? So Paul calls us in Ephesians 4 to walk in a manner worthy, right? And he says now in verse 3 that the purpose of that is to be diligent, to preserve the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.
And so we're going to ask today, what do we mean by unity? Particularly unity of the spirit. How do we defend it? Protect it? Maintain it?
And how can it be hard? Why must we defend it? What must we defend it against?
What must we protect the unity of the spirit from? What threatens the unity of the spirit in the body of Christ? So this is the direction that Paul is going toward.
[9:29] We've seen so far in verse 1, the appeal. He urges, he pleads for them to walk in a manner worthy. Right? It's a direction and a choice. A walk, right?

It's an intentional walk. And then we saw in verse 2, the attributes or the distinctives of that worthy walk. What are the characteristics? What characterize it?
He starts with humility or lowliness of mind. To think low of yourself and high of others. That's where it starts. And then it goes to gentleness, right?
That strength under control. And then it goes to things like that word, that P word, patience. Right? Literally long-suffering.
Not short-tempered, but long-tempered. And then bearing with one another in love. So it's about one another. Walking worthy is primarily about how we care for one another, how we treat one another, how we regard one another.
[10:31] What's our attitude toward one another? Is it humble or is it prideful? Is it haughty or is it lowly? So he talks about those attributes.

And then he comes now to the aim, right, in verse 3, being diligent now. We have all that. Walking worthy with these characteristics. Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
It almost sounds like verse 3 is out of place. It's kind of like, why is that the purpose? Why is that where we're going? And the aim, the goal of our walking worthy, the purpose and priority of our walking worthy is this unity.
Consider what Jesus prayed. You know, in the night in which he was betrayed, right after the upper room experience, when Jesus walks out of the upper room in John 17 and he prays.

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And John 17 is the real Lord's Prayer. That's where he's praying to the Father. And one of the things he prays for is the unity of the church.
[11:41] He says in John 17, 21, he prays that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us.

Why? Why this unity? Unity. So that the world may believe. It's connected to our mission. Unity is connected to our purpose, our mission, our impact.
That they may be one so that the world may believe that you have sent me. Our unity has a direct correlation to our mission. That's why it's important.
How we treat one another has a direct correlation to our mission. Jesus says they will know, the world will know, you belong to me because you love one another. It's not because we're reaching out in some particular ways, but because we're reaching across to one another.
And now he says unity has to do with that as well. There are threats to unity. Why do churches divide?
[12:55] Why do churches fail? Why do churches constantly divide and move away? Well, it has to do with one another. It has to do with persistent love or the unwillingness to persistently love.

The unwillingness to bear with one another. The unwillingness to forgive. The unwillingness to long suffer. We don't want to do that.
So we'll go somewhere else and mess up some other church. And then when they're messed up enough, we'll go to another church and mess them up. What is Spurgeon saying?
If you find the perfect church, don't go there because you'll wreck it. So threats to unity are things like pride, harshness, impatience, intolerance.
These things lead to division. Gossip, slander. These things lead to division. These things harm the unity of the spirit. So what's the greater purpose of walking worthy?
[14:02] We walk in a manner worthy of the calling, right? So we're motivated to walk in a manner worthy because of what God has done for us, right? We respond out of love. We respond out of gratitude.

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. So I want to walk. I want to show, you know, give back. But the purpose, right? The direction that we're going, the greater purpose of walking worthy is what now we're going to focus on in verse 3.
Unity. To preserve the unity of the spirit. To diligently preserve, protect, guard, defend the unity of the spirit.
So that's why I read the next verses. Verse 4. What kind of unity? Well, one body, one spirit, one hope. Verse 5, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Verse 6, one God or Father.
Seven items of unity. One, one, one, one, one. One, one, one. So preserving that unity of the spirit. So our focus becomes now on defense.
[15:07] So let's, I want to raise the question, what is this unity of the spirit? And how do we protect it? So we're going to just kind of break down the phrase, the sentence here in verse 3.

First part being the purpose. Or the priority, right? Is to protect the unity of the spirit. So being diligent to preserve or protect the unity of the spirit.
And the second part is the practice in the bond of peace. Or with the bond of peace. How do we protect it? We do it by connecting with the bond of peace.
Or treating one another in the bond of peace. So let's look at the first principle here. First truth. Protecting the spirit's unity is of utmost importance.
Protecting the spirit's unity is of utmost importance. So what kind of unity are we talking about? What kind of unity are we talking about? He says, the unity.
[16:12] Look at it. The unity. Not just unity of the spirit. But the unity of the spirit.

So it's a particular kind of unity. It's a specific kind of unity. The unity. A very precise kind of unity. Which he then explores a little bit in verses 4-6.
The one spirit. The one Lord. The one faith. One baptism. Etc. It's unity of the spirit. So it's not unity that we create. It's not unity that, okay, let's find things that we all agree with.
And that's our unity. It's not man-made unity. It's unity of the spirit. Unity that the spirit has created. Unity that comes from the spirit. Unity that the spirit has already done.
That's what we protect. That's what we maintain. So we have been united in one body through the cross by the Holy Spirit.

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[17:18] So we go back. He's already talked about this a bit. We go back in chapter 2, verse 20. Where he says, We've been built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. Jesus and Christ being a cornerstone.

So we're being built into a building. Verse 21. In whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple of the Lord.
In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the spirit. Right? So God's already created.
He created the body to be something that the temple of the Holy Spirit, essentially. A building of the Holy Spirit. So our unity is not about externals.
So let's think about what unity is and what unity isn't. It's not about externals. It's not about our programming. It's not about the way we message the church. I don't know.
[18:20] What's the modern language today? How you market your church. I don't know what all that language is. Because it's gobbly cook. It's man's thinking.

It's a way of creating unity. Because all our programs are in line and whatever. It's not about an external kind of unity. And it's also not about a feeling.
Oh, I feel so united. I feel other unity. I feel one in the spirit here. Well, that's great. That's fine. But that's not what we're talking about. That might be an offshoot of that.
That might be a result that the Holy Spirit blesses us with a sense of oneness. But the oneness isn't some intangible feeling.
Right? Undefinable feeling. Unity is something that's true. Something that's fact. Something that's done. It's what we already have. So what do we do with that unity?
[19:21] He says in verse 3, Being diligent to preserve the unity. Or to protect the unity. To defend the unity. Eager to maintain.

So if you have the ESV, English Standard Version, it has eager to maintain the unity. Right? The New American Standard has preserved. The NIV has to keep the unity.
All of those words are from the same Greek word that mean, you know, to keep, to protect, to guard, defend. So not create it, but to protect it.
To give careful attention to this unity that we have. To guard against threats. To defend it against divisiveness. And gossip.
And slander. And other things that result. So in the weeks ahead, we're going to look at these verses 4, 5, and 6. And look at these. What is, what do we mean by, what does he mean by one spirit?
[20:19] What does he mean by one baptism? What, what, what, one Lord? One faith? One God and Father? One calling? Or one hope? So, what, what, because those are the, that's the unity we defend.

So we should know what it is. If we're going to defend the one baptism, then we ought to know what it is. If we're going to defend the one Lord, the one God, the one spirit, we ought to know what that is.
And one hope, okay? That's why we're walking through this. It's one thing to say, oh, that's all, that's all great, but I don't know what, I don't know what it means.
I don't know what we, how we do that. And then, notice how important it is. It's of utmost importance because he uses the word at the beginning of verse 3, being diligent.
being diligent. ESV has being eager. The NIV has making every effort.
[21:21] Right? So being diligent to preserve the faith, being eager to maintain the unity, making every effort to keep the unity of the spirit.

So different translations of the same idea. to, the word, the Greek word for diligence, obviously can be translated several different ways, but it seems to have the idea of taking pains with it.
Right? There's a sense of urgency, of haste, diligent, you know, getting to it. Not putting it off, but getting to it. Unity is so important that we get to it.
So, we could use the word priority. It's not a passive idea here. It's not a passive attitude where we just kind of wait and see how it goes, you know, but to make sure that we do all we need to do to keep the unity that the spirit has created for us.
To keep that, to defend that. So, what Paul is telling us is that there are times as a church where we need to draw lines and point things out to people.

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[22:52] If we find someone talking about the one baptism in a wrong way, we need to address it and deal with it. Because that's part of our unity.

Or to wrongly talk about the one Lord. Or to wrongly assert about the one spirit. Or what our hope really is. See, those things Paul is saying, those are the things we defend.
We address. And we use diligence. We make haste. We don't, oh, let's kind of wait and see how it filters out. No, when we see something that is incorrect, right, we're not talking about people who are still learning something.
We're talking about somebody that's espousing a different view than we all know and agree to. We address it. So, there are times, you know, as a church, we want to be loving and forgiving, right? I mean, just use all this verbiage in verse 2, right? We're humble, we're meek, we're patient, we're forbearing. Yes, absolutely, we need to be all those kind of things.
[24:03] But when it comes to truth, we address it. We address it. Or we teach it.

Sometimes we address it gently, sometimes we address it very directly. Because, if we do not, then it, then it creep, then the enemy can creep in and begin to divide the flock.
We really know what we believe about this one baptism. We don't really know what we believe about the one Lord and the one Spirit and the one Father. And suddenly, you have a church of whatever.
Well, they all get along. Good for them. So do people at the Y. You know? I mean, so. Alright, I hope you're grasping.
You'll find in some of Paul's letters, he's very direct. He'll say, if you have a divisive person in your church, you warn them and then they're done.
[25:15] If they don't heed your warning, they're done because divisiveness we cannot stand. So. There have been times in our church where there's, you know, we've addressed things and people have left and it's like, suddenly things go better.

Anyway. I used to worry about people that left, you know. Now, not so much. It's not my church. It's a church I need to be part of.
It belongs to another master. So, so, we call it the unity, Paul calls it the unity of the Spirit, something that the Spirit created.
So, how did he create that? How are we joined to the body of Christ? When, when were we united? Right? When was, when was this unity created? 1 Corinthians 12, 11.
All these are empowered. He was talking about the gifts of the Spirit. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills.
[26:19] For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Jews are Greek, slaves are free, and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
For the body does not consist of one member, but of many. So, God takes the many and unites them into one body. We're many, we're diverse, we have different giftings, we have different backgrounds, but we're united by becoming, by the Spirit's work of bringing us into one body. Baptizing us into one body. Creating us in one body. So unity is created by the Spirit. Every born-again believer is joined into the body.
And they are united as the true body of Christ. So, in protecting unity, we are to use diligence to protect or to defend the unity.
[27:28] We do it, if it's the Spirit's creation, then we do it by working with the Spirit. Does that make sense? It's not, you know, it's our job to defend, but how do we, how do we defend?

So, I do it with the Spirit. By walking with the Spirit. And, and we noticed earlier these characteristics in verse, in verse 2 are, is fruit of the Spirit.
So, so it makes sense that we walk with the Spirit. We are in tune with the Holy Spirit. We are led by the Spirit. That's how we defend it. So, first thing that we notice in the first part of verse 3 is protecting the unity of the Spirit is of utmost importance.
It takes diligence. It takes effort. So, now the question is how? How do we defend it? That we defend it and that's important. We'll see that. But how do we go about this?
What is the attitude and the Spirit and the manner in which we do this? This is where it gets interesting. So, the second part of the verse he says, we protect the unity by way of pursuing peace with one another.

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[28:40] What does he say in verse 3? Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit. How? In the bond of peace. Or with the bond of peace. Or by way of the bond of peace.

Okay. Didn't expect that. I mean, defend knowing that we need to take up weapons and swords and go attack things. He says, we protect the unity by way of pursuing peace with one another.
The bond of peace. What's a bond? What's a bond? What's a bond? What is something that binds? Well, a bond. At the beginning of the letter, Paul says he's a prisoner of Christ. He's in bonds. Right? He has fetters.
He is chained. He is shackled. Right? So that's one kind of bond. You know, you're bound. It's something that binds things together.
[29:48] Well, glue binds things together, doesn't it? There's bonding agents, things that bind things together. So you have a book. Right? What's this part here called in the book?

It's called the binding. What's it doing? It's holding it together. Right? Yeah. So it's as simple as that. So it brings together. Right? It bundles it.
It joins it. Unites it together. So, and here he says, and again, Paul's being very specific, preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.
Not any kind of bond of peace, but the particular kind of bond. A specific bond. Well, what is that? What's the bond? Well, it's the next words.
In the bond, of peace. Peace is that bonding agent. Peace is what binds, what glues, what holds together.
[30:50] Peace. It's not just any peace. It's also the peace. So, New America Standard removes the the in front of peace here. Probably ESV has the same thing because it's, you know, when they translate the scriptures, they get tired of some words and so they just don't include them because, you know, to the translators, they're just not that important.

That's why I use a New American Standard 1977 version because it's before they started removing more and more words. It drives me nuts. Oh, it then sounds smooth.
I don't think Paul was concerned with smoothness. I think he was concerned with precision. I think he was concerned with truth and making sure you get it.
So, same thing again here. So, it's the bond of the peace. So, it's not any just generic peace. It's not just peace as in the absence of conflict. It's a specific kind of peace.
The bond, the bonding agent of peace. What peace? Well, it's the peace. Well, what is that peace? Well, again, let's take the context of Ephesians chapter 2.
[32:03] When he talked about this peace, chapter 2, verse 13, he says, he talks about how Gentiles we were far away, but now, verse 13, chapter 2, verse 13, now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Okay? This is how the Holy Spirit is going to create this body. For he himself is our peace. He's what brings us together. That peace, his peace is what unites us.
Who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall. Now, this kind of peace, when he's talking about this kind of peace in verse 14, notice what it does at the end of verse 14.
It breaks down barriers. This is not a kind of peace that smooths things out and covers things up and sweeps it under the rug. This is a kind of peace that exposes what needs to be dealt with and deals with it.
Breaks down the barrier wall. It's a peace that has force. It's a peace that makes a difference. Okay? It's a peace, he says, breaks down the barrier of the dividing wall.
[33:14] What is that? By abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is what? The law. The law is the enmity.

Wait a minute, I thought the law is holy, righteous, so good. It is. But since we can't keep it, it becomes my enemy. Because now it accuses me of what I am. I'm a sinner.
I'm a trespasser. I am the one who commits iniquity. I'm the one who breaks God's law. The law's good. Nothing wrong with the law. Probably me. And now that law, which was good, now becomes my enemy because of my accuser.
It's just what the law does. It's just what it does. You run that stoplight? Why are you looking at me? I know, I'm looking at you. You run that stoplight? What does the officer say?
You say, well, I didn't see that stoplight. He says, I don't care. You broke the law. Period. The law accused you. I remember one time I was going to the shopping center and I didn't see the speed

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limit sign and I was doing 35 to 25, I don't know what it is, maybe 105, I don't know what I was saying.
[34:22] Anyway, he pulled me out and I'm like, I didn't see any. Well, it doesn't matter. It was there. It doesn't matter. The law was posted. So, so it's, you know, the law become whether I knew all the laws of the Old Testament or not, I break one law, I break them all.

So, so he, he, in this, Jesus is breaking down that barrier. He's taking, he's abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances.
So he abolished, in his death, he abolished the law as our accuser. He didn't do away with the law that is righteous and good and shows us direction.
He did away with the law as our condemner, as our accuser. Amen. Because he fulfilled it for us. Amen. It doesn't mean, oh, now I can kill and not have anything.
You know, it doesn't mean that, of course, obviously. And so, he makes the two into one new man, thus establishing peace.
[35:29] So it's not only peace with God, but it's peace with our brothers who weren't our brothers before with Jew and Gentile and, right? Cowboy and Indian.

So, what was it? Columbus Day? So he makes peace with Columbus and the indigenous peoples. Does that work? Well, if they're in the same church together, yeah.
Hopefully, I won't get into that. I got a stake in both, so I got an intention. So, so there you go.
So, that's the peace. That's the peace. The peace that Jesus established, right? The peace that Jesus broke down the law, the accuser of us, right? Taking away the enmity so that we might be at peace with God and with one another.
So again, that's peace that we didn't do. It's peace that Jesus did. So it's the unity of the Spirit that the Spirit does, not us. It's the peace of Christ that Christ does, not us.
[36:44] We get the results of it. We get the, but because we've experienced the peace that Christ has brought, He, He now calls us to walk in that peace.

Walk in the bonds of peace. which will help, you know, that's going along with the patience with that brother. That's going along with the forbearance with that sister.
That's going along with the meekness toward that haughty one. because that's my responsibility.
So, how does this peace bind, right?
So He's talking about the bond of peace which is, which is this peace of Christ. So, how does this peace of, how do we apply this? In other words, how does this peace bind us together?
Well, it's because Christ is for all of us. He's taken away the hostility of the law. For all of us, by carrying our sin, He's taken away our curse and what the law could accuse us of.
[37:50] So, for all of us, right? It's bound us together because we've all, we've all experienced the results of His work. So, if Christ has established peace for us with the Father and peace with one another, to live in conflict with others is contrary to who we are.

If God has given us peace with one another, if God has given us peace with the Father, for us to be in conflict with one another, right, is contrary to what God has done.
God has given us to be in conflict. God has given us God has given us to be in conflict. peace with one another. It's a different way to look at it. So, what we need is to pursue peace with one another. if we live in conflict when we have been called peace, given peace, to live in conflict with that is to be a hypocrite.
To act as if I've got to get some more peace. If the peace Jesus has established isn't enough for me, I want to attack that person.
[39:08] I want to attack that person. I want to complain and grumble about that person. I want to gossip about that person. I want to bring slander toward that person because Christ's forgiveness isn't enough for me because I deserve more.

Right? But see, that's the mindset we get into when we get hurt, when we get rubbed the wrong way, when we get I mean, and legitimately hurt. Still, my attitude is to be patient, right?
Long-suffering, bearing with as far as I can. If there's a sin that continues, then I have another responsibility. I need to go and confront that then, okay?
But at first, I need to just bear with it. I need to be patient with it. I need to let it go. If it becomes a pattern, if it becomes something that's hurting the flock, then yeah, I need to go address it. But most of it, if it's just toward you, Jesus is like, you know, right?
Turn the other cheek. Just bear it. It's only you. It's only you, Bill. They're not doing that to others.

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[40:18] It's just you. It's a bear. Now, if they're spreading that, well, then that's different. Follow me? I don't know if anybody's following.

I didn't hear anything. So this whole thing of peace, how we work with others in peace, the bond of peace, this is not new. This is not just Ephesians.
This is in seven different letters of the New Testament. All right, so it's in 1 Peter 3, it's in 2 Corinthians 13, it's in 2 Timothy 2, Hebrews 12, Romans 14, Colossians 3, the same kind of discussion.
In 1 Peter 3, he talks about refrain your tongue and seek peace with one another. In 2 Corinthians 13, he talks about live at peace and be like-minded with one another. 2 Timothy 2 and Hebrews 12, he talks about pursuing peace with one another.
Romans 14, 19, Paul's talking about bearing with the weaker brother instead of being selfish. He says, so then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.
[41:30] That's the emphasis. Pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding. Be positive and work on positive things as much as you can. Colossians 3, above all these things put on love which binds, love's another one of those bonding agents which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful. Well, that's a little more strong language, isn't it?
Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. What does that mean? let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body.
You were called to peace. So let the peace of Christ rule. The word could be translated umpire. Let the peace of Christ umpire.
Are you familiar with umpires? Seen umpires? Do you always agree with them? Now in baseball they got it on a computer thing. Oh, that was way out of strikes. And then they show the replays like, no, no, that, that.
[42:41] Keeps everybody accountable. But what's an umpire do? He makes a call. He makes a call. Yeah, that's a ball, that's a strike. No, you're in, you're out. Sometimes they're wrong.

But it makes a decision, right? An umpire makes the call, governs and decides and settles the issue. So in your heart, let the peace of Christ umpire, make the call for you.
Let the peace of Christ direct you how to respond, how to treat your brother, to decide on your attitude. You start with the peace of Christ.
peace of Let that direct you. Let it settle for you how to act.
In another place, Paul says, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with one another. As far as it depends on you, be at peace.
[43:41] Don't start something. So how do we protect unity? Here's the bottom line. We protect unity by pursuing peace with one another first.

We seek to edify, we seek to build up, we seek to encourage, instead of seeking to please ourselves. When I get hurt, what do I want to do first?
Right? I mean, depending on your personality, right? But I might want to strike back, I might want to defend, I might want to go crawl in a hole and cry. I don't know, it depends on how you hurt and who hurt you and all that.
And what he's saying is here's the radical difference of Christ in your life. Christ in your life, the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, causes you instead of reacting in one of those natural human ways, to react by starting with the peace, let that apply for you.
So, how, how, I guess one application is that there's that saying that got taken too far, what would Jesus do?
[44:59] Which, which, by too far I mean, we have no clue what he would do in these certain situations. We have a general clue about how Jesus would act. I don't know how he'd act in a specific thing.

So, that, anyway. But I could ask that. Is there ways that Jesus has responded to this, or that I see in Scripture to respond to this, that helps me know what to do?
I may have to meditate on that, right? I've got to reflect on that for a while. But if you're struggling in a relationship, especially within the church, with another Christian, and you're really struggling and you're having a hard time getting over it, and you're having a hard time letting it go, forgiving it, and all that, I pray through this.

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Okay, Lord, how do I make the peace of Jesus umpire this? So it kind of takes it out of my hands, right? It makes me step back and say, okay, what would Jesus do?
if that works, or what is consistent with biblical truth? What is consistent with those characteristics, right? The humility and the meekness and the patience and the forbearing, what's consistent with that?
[46:16] And just that one alone is going to tell me, okay, that's not normally how I'd want to do it. Right? That's going to take the power of the spirit.

that's going to take me humbling myself under the mighty hand of God. That's going to take me surrendering my will, my desires, my agenda, my feelings to Him.
But that's what walking worthy looks like. It's not simple. It's not easy. This is where the rubber beats the road.
folks, isn't it? Our relationships to one another. And we love each other. We are very fond of one another and all that. But there's times where some issue comes up and, ooh, that hit me wrong. Oh, I got it. And now I'm up all these nights thinking, okay, I'm going to respond. Instead of, okay, Lord, how does your peace make the decision for me?
[47:24] it's not about, it's not going to be about getting my way, that's for sure. So how do we protect unity? By pursuing peace with one another. What does it involve?

It involves a lowliness of mind instead of pride. It involves a gentle action instead of a harsh one. It involves long suffering instead of a short temper.
and it involves bearing with one another in love instead of intolerance. So ask yourself some questions. When you struggle with another person in the body, ask, am I pursuing peace?
That might wait, that might put all things, brakes on everything right there. Am I seeking peace or am I seeking something for myself? is it an issue of sacrificing myself or sacrificing truth?
Am I protecting unity in the faith or am I protecting my feelings? Walking worthy of the calling of which you've been called involves being diligent to guard the unity of the spirit in the bond of the peace.
[48:44] Let us pray. Father, thank you for your word. I felt like, Lord, we're kind of digging into some new ground here. We're digging in some areas where we haven't dug before, and so connecting some dots is going to take us a little bit.

And so Father, help us in that regard. What we're talking about today, this protecting the unity and the bond of peace. I mean, responding to one another by pursuing peace with one another instead of my agenda, that's a whole different road.
And so help us, Father. We want to walk worthy. And we recognize that walking worthy is a call that requires things I don't naturally have.
it requires being close to you. It requires walking with you. It requires keeping in step with your spirit, surrendering our will and sacrificing our feelings.
Some of that stuff that frankly, Lord, that's new. So we ask you, Father, as always, please, please, Father, give us a faith that does not fail, and grant us more and more of your grace to walk in step with Jesus.
[50:06] We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

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