



Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

**SIT
WALK
STAND**

WEEK FIVE – WALK IN UNITY

Read Ephesians 4:1-6

We move now, from sitting to walking. This is not referring to some ambling along, it is about purposeful walking. In this chapter, Paul gives us seven unities that need to be kept if we want to lead a life worthy of our calling. First, however, he reminds us of the need to be humble, gentle, and patient with each other and encourages us to make allowances for each other's faults. For what reason should we do this? **BECAUSE OF OUR LOVE.**

One writer, Jack Hayford, says it is: **“THE BELIEVERS CALL TO RESPONSIBILITY.** We move from our place in Christ to the character, lifestyle, and relationships of the people of God.”

- Do we appreciate that we **all** have faults, not just people other than ourselves?
- We talked in Study Three, about the need to love our fellow Christians and how that is not always easy. However, who could argue with Paul about the need for an easy life? As he reminds us in the opening verse, he is a prisoner for serving the Lord. His sufferings for serving the Lord were many.

Verse three reminds us to keep ourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and to bind ourselves together with peace. The old adage: **UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL** (from Aesop's Fables), remains true. It talks in Deuteronomy about one man putting a thousand to flight but two men, ten thousand.

One of the great examples of unity is in Acts 2:1. *“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all WITH ONE ACCORD in one place.”* Then the Holy Spirit fell upon each of them! The results of that unity were, and still are, phenomenal.

The first unity is that of **ONE BODY**. We have often talked about being members of the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12 says *“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ.”*

- When one part of our physical body is not working properly, it affects the whole body. That applies to the body of Christ.
- What might that mean for us as individuals?
- What might it mean for the body of Christ?

The second unity is that of **ONE SPIRIT**.

Have you noticed in committee meetings that when people desire the same outcomes, a plan of action is so much easier to achieve?

- How do you think we can achieve this oneness of Spirit?
- What effect would that have on our own church and the wider church?

The third unity is **ONE HOPE**.

If we do not all aspire to the same outcome, then we cannot achieve our goal.

Colossians 1:27 “God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

- What do you understand that to mean?

The fourth unity is **ONE LORD**.

1 Corinthians 8:6 “But we know that there is only one God, the Father, who created everything, and we exist for him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom we have been given life.”

Matthew 7:20-21 “Yes, the way to identify a tree or a person is by the kind of fruit that is produced. ‘Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to me as “Lord”, but they still won’t enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey my Father in heaven.’”

- Are we real? Do we try and look the right part?

The fifth unity is **ONE FAITH**.

- Again, the above verses in Matthew are very relevant. How can we be successful Christians if we do not all believe the basic principles of the Gospel? What are they?

The sixth unity is **ONE BAPTISM**.

This is generally thought to refer to baptism by water when we acknowledge our sins and believe that we are raised to new life in Christ. *Acts 8:26-39* relates the meeting of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. He was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah when Philip, as commanded by the Holy Spirit, ran, and overtook the chariot. He explained Isaiah 53:7 to him after which, the eunuch, seeing water, asked Philip to baptise him there and then! It may also refer to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, as in Acts 2.

- Do we understand the symbolism of baptism?

The seventh unity is **ONE GOD**.

Understanding verse 6 is essential. So many religions have several gods but Christianity proclaims one God and Father of all.

- Do we appreciate how important it is to believe that God is our Father?

Read Ephesians 4:7-16

Verses 11-13 explains the gifts of the risen Christ and their purpose.

Yet again, we have an example of Old Testament scripture being fulfilled in the New Testament. Psalm 68:18: *You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive; you have received gifts among men..*”

Paul sets out these gifts Christ gave to the Church:

The apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

“Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.”

It’s important to understand that no one man can do what God is able to do. So, in his wisdom, God has provided a range of ministries for this work. These particular roles tend, in part, to be leadership roles and as such require great commitment from those to whom they are given. However, whether anyone holds a particular leadership role or any role in the body of Christ, all are of equal importance and value.

Churches such as the Anglican Church do not identify ministers in this way but that doesn’t mean we cannot see individuals fulfilling these roles. Some denominations do identify the roles. The important thing is anyone who believes they have a particular calling, do their utmost to fulfil that calling. To give an example, Matt Woodcock who was previously here at Hull Minster was undoubtedly an evangelist. He was able to talk to anyone, be they sitting on the streets or in the Council Chamber. He’s not a guy to be tied to a narrow scope of work.

We also need to understand that there are many other ministries: of helps, and administrations, and so on – 1 Corinthians 12.

- Do you know what is your calling? It can be anything: teaching Sunday School, providing catering for the church, visiting people, welcoming those coming into the church, cleaning etc. Colossians 3:23-24 says: ***“Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and the Master you are serving is Christ.”***



Prayer: Father God help us to walk in your ways serving you and others and keeping the unity of the faith. Amen