



Empowering People to Change the World

The Weight of Your Calling

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Ephesians 4:1-6

Our theme for the letter to the Ephesians is “Born for War.”

Just before my sabbatical, we were in Ephesians 3, and I spoke on a “Bold and Confident Church.”

- Paul, the author, has spoken of our position of power and authority in Christ, seated in the heavenly realm with Christ.
- He has instructed of the power and anointing of the local church over “principalities and powers.”

We are now in Ephesians 4, beginning the second half, the most practical aspects of the letter...

Paul begins this next chapter of his letter (not literally, since he didn't write in chapters, but metaphorically); he is opening new revelation to the leadership in the Ephesian Church.

- This is one of his most beloved churches. He loved this church.
- There are no negative commands in this letter.
- He is very positive and challenging of the potential of this church.

Ephesians 4:1-6

Prayer

Verse 1, “Prisoner of the Lord”

- Paul will mention three times in his letter concerning being a “prisoner of the Lord” and an “ambassador in chains.”
- Paul sees himself not as a prisoner of Rome, but a prisoner of the Lord!
 - Paul viewed his imprisonment as from the Lord and by the Lord.
 - God had put him in prison!
 - Think about what he's saying, “I'm an ambassador in chains.”
 - What an ironic statement. I think of an ambassador from a 21st- Century perspective as a person who is in freedom to represent one's nation, president, or king.
 - But Paul is a prisoner who is an ambassador! But he is a prisoner by His King; Jesus has placed him in prison, and he is an ambassador while in prison!

- For Paul, being a prisoner of the Lord made him MORE bold! I think Paul had long settled his freedom and his life.
- He wrote in Galatians, *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live...I live by faith..."*
- And again (in Galatians), *"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."*
- When you fear no one but God, you become a dangerous person!
- Paul must have felt fear in his life, but he managed that fear through a confidence in Christ. Paul was confident of his vision and calling.

The Weight of Your Calling

Verse 1b

- "Worthy" in the Greek is "sufficient weight." CS Lewis spoke of the "weight of God's glory."

- Paul is speaking of the weight of a vision or calling from God.
- There is a weight to the walk. The weight of the walk is sufficient to the calling of God on your life.
- Here's a very important lesson for life: When you know your calling from God, when you have something meaningful that you're living for that is from God, it gives purpose to your suffering!
- Paul could say he was a "prisoner of the Lord" because he knew he was called to bring the gospel to the gentiles, and because of that calling, he was in prison! Thus, he was a prisoner of the Lord!
- It's a weight he carried. It's a weight we all carry if we know our calling.
- All of us are called. Paul is writing to the saints in Ephesus and is saying, "walk worthy of your calling!" Everyone has a God calling!

1. The Weight of Responsibility

- You are called by God to be responsible. And it's a heavy weight sometimes. Doing the right

thing is never easy. It's actually really hard sometimes.

- Ex. So a man is called to be a husband and a father. That's a holy calling. It means you take on responsibility and you suffer. You have to go out and get a job and make enough money to serve your family. You have to work long hours at times to be able to take that vacation. But your suffering has meaning, it has purpose.
- I know this sounds morbid, but it's not meant to be: you are a prisoner of the Lord for your marriage, for your family.
- Ex. All of us are called to do something with our lives. God created you to carry responsibility from the Lord. Some are fathers and mothers, the highest calling in my opinion, because you are discipling and building into young people what only you can give them.
- "Take up your cross and follow Me" - that cross is weighty! It's darn heavy. It keeps you up at night.
- The weight of responsibility is the weight of your calling!

Verse 2

2. The Weight of Love

- God's calling is based in love. If we are a doctor, we love our patients. If we are an auto mechanic, we love the people whose car we work on. If it's a schoolteacher, you love your students. If you're called to politics, you love the people in your district and serve them...
- "Lowliness, gentleness, and long suffering" are all similar in meaning. The rubric is humility. Love can't be birthed without humility.
- Ex. I was mentored by many great leaders, but the last strong relationship with a mentor I had, was HB London, and he would often say that "humility is the greatest character quality of a leader."
- In this letter, love is mentioned fifteen times.
- Paul said that what he did was because the "love of God compels us." We serve out of love; we suffer because of love.
- But it's a weight. It's a heavy weight to love as Jesus loved.

Verses 3-6

3. The Weight of Unity

- We try our level best to forge unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ. It's not always possible, but it's our weight to work on it.
- Ex. Last year during the covid crisis, Governor Polis made churches shut down. And I could sense confusion and fear among pastors about what to do. I called a meeting, and 85 pastors showed up. We talked about courage and freedom and we opened up...
- The weight of unity is hard at times! I work closely with people who I don't agree 100% on certain biblical issues, but I just love these men! They are mighty men of God, and we are ONE BODY.
- Ex. I wish my left arm was as strong as my right arm. I wish my back didn't hurt sometimes when I get up in the morning, but I need my back. I need my left arm...

Matthew 11:28-30

- I like what Liz says, “Spiritual performance for Christ is a heavy yoke, but spiritual partnership in Christ is a light yoke.”
- This is a partnership in Christ and His power working in and through your life.

Discussion Questions for Community Groups

- 1)What is your calling from God?**
- 2)Do you feel the weight of that responsibility?**
- 3)How are you doing in the weight of love and unity?**