

What Makes a Good Walk?

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Date: 27 August 2023

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[0 : 00] or so of the church we preach through the gospel of John. We'll be continuing that sometime in October, Lord willing, and we'll pick up in John 14. So we'll probably finish John around December.

We paused over the summer and we did one Sunday in each Psalm. So we started at Psalm 1 and we finished on Psalm 8. Lord willing, we'll start next summer in Psalm 9 and do about eight weeks of Psalms again. So now for these six weeks, we're doing a little series, as Jeremy mentioned, on the biblical church. The series is called Life in the Father's House, and that's a phrase Jesus used in John 17. He said, I'm going and I'm going to prepare a place for you in my Father's house.

There are many rooms. And he said, I will not leave you orphans. I will send my spirit to be with you and to prepare you for my Father's house. And so that's what we're looking at today, Life in the Father's House. And for this series, we've been using different passages. So we'll be preaching through these first 16 verses of Ephesians chapter 4 today. As I read this, you can follow along for yourself. Keep in mind that this is God's very own word for you, his people. We believe, we confess that this is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, and sufficient word for you.

So when I'm done with our scripture reading, we'll say, this is the word of the Lord. We'll respond as a congregation. Thanks be to God. Ephesians 1. I'm sorry, Ephesians chapter 4, starting at verse 1.

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Verse 8, wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? Verse 10, he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things.

[2 : 50] Verse 11, and he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and some teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Verse 15, but speaking the truth in love, may we grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fit, joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body into the edifying of it, itself in love.

Verse, that's verse 16. And this is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. The Bible says that the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

Would you pray with me? Amen. Speak, O Lord, until your church is built and until the whole world is filled with your glory, we pray once again today.

Amen. Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what makes a good walk? When you go for a walk and you get back and you sit down and look at each other, you say, that was a good walk.

Well, what made it good? Someone said that a good walk, when you come back, everything now has twice its value somehow.

[5 : 14] One blogger wrote about this of family walks. She said that a walk offers the family the chance to de-stress, to breathe fresh air, to not feel rushed from here to there, and to revel in the joy of spending time together.

There's an old man who walked every day, four miles every day, until his body could no longer do it. And they asked him, what's his trick to walking so consistently for so long?

And he says, you don't stop walking because you lose your health. It's the other way around. You lose your health when you stop walking. A good walk, do you agree?

A good walk is good for your soul. Think about it. God made us physical beings on this earth, and he breathed his spirit into us, so we're spiritual beings that long to worship him.

And he could have made us fast like leopards or cheetahs. He could have made us huge, so we just take a few steps and we're there. But he made humans with small legs that walk from here to there, standing upright.

[6 : 21] So it's very fitting that consistently in all of the Bible, your life as a child of God on this earth is described as a walk. Isn't that so fitting? Look at what Paul writes to the church in Ephesus in verse 1.

He says, Church, walk in a manner worthy of the calling for which you were called. What is it that you need to do if Christ called you?

Now you need to walk as a church. You walk together. So walking with Christ in this life, that means that you're cherishing his presence with you.

It means that he is with you. While you are in this body, on this earth, you are walking day by day, step by step with Jesus Christ. And as you walk with Christ, he teaches you to enjoy his presence walking this earth.

What's more, he teaches you to enjoy walking with Christ and his family. So I'm going to try to persuade you this morning from Scripture that the best thing for your soul, the very best thing for your soul, as long as you are on earth, is a long walk with the family of God.

[7 : 35] Isn't that what church is? That's what church is. It's a long walk with the family of God on this earth, the best preparation for your soul and my soul, for heaven, for eternity.

So I've got a few observations as we walk through this passage. Number one, Paul preaches to the church in Ephesus that a good walk is a walk that is worth it.

Look at what he says in verse one. I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

A good walk is a walk that is worthy. It's worth it. Now, Paul's writing, he says, as a prisoner. Man, maybe you've had an injury or something that put you cooped up.

You couldn't get outside and go for a walk anymore. And it's the worst, isn't it? There's nothing you would give to be able to just get outside and go walk half a mile, especially if you got to do it with someone you enjoy being with.

[8 : 37] Paul had traveled everywhere, traveled all over the known world, all over the Roman Empire. And he had walked these international highways from one city to the other. Now he's arrested for preaching the gospel.

In other letters, Paul highlights his apostolic authority. He says, you need to obey what I'm writing you because I write with the authority of Christ. But that's not what he appeals to here, is it? He appeals to his joyful weakness.

Look at what he says. I am a prisoner for the Lord. That's why I urge you to walk. This shows the depth of Paul's care.

His love for Christ, it overflows into caring for the church that belongs to Christ, which he obtained with his very own blood. We saw in Sunday school in Acts 20 how Paul's last time to see this congregation was when he said goodbye to them before he got arrested.

In Acts 20, we're told that Paul knelt down and he prayed with them all. That's how they said their goodbye. They spent time praying together. And there was much weeping by all.

[9 : 46] And they embraced Paul. And they were sorrowful that they would not see his face again. And then they accompanied Paul to his ship. And so Paul sails away. And that's what they would have remembered of Paul as they read this letter.

I want to pause for a quick point of application here. The first three chapters of this letter to this church in Ephesians, it tells them who they are in Christ.

We looked at the first, you know, the ending of chapter 1 into chapter 2. He says, You were dead in your sins. That's who you were. But you were chosen in Christ before time began. You are united to him by the power of the Spirit who breathed life into you.

So then after laying the foundation of three chapters of who Christians are in Christ, by grace and faith alone, not by good works so that no man should boast, now he begins chapter 4 with what this means now.

If this is who you are in Christ, here's what it means is you walk with him. And I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of Christ who called you. It's worth it. If you don't know what this means, to be dead in sin but made alive by the grace of Christ, then I want to urge you not to try to walk this way.

[11 : 05] Don't try to fake it. Because what you'll be doing is piling up your pride, your own self-righteousness, righteousness, trying to make yourself worthy. So if you don't know this joy of belonging to Christ and being freed from the bondage of sin and now being a joyful prisoner for the Lord Jesus because he rules over you, then don't try to imitate this pattern.

If you do belong to Christ, it will be inevitable. You will walk with him. He calls this the calling for which you were called.

In John 10, our Lord Jesus says, My sheep know my voice, and I call each one by name. And when I call my sheep to me, they follow me.

So if you know Christ and he calls you to follow him, you will walk with your shepherd. You will continue following him through your life. And you will see more and more with each step.

He is worthy to be followed. He is worth it. This walk with him, if it lands me in prison like Paul, it's so worth it. How could I not follow my Lord Jesus wherever he takes me?

[12 : 15] Paul preached to them in Ephesians 1, verse 7, In Christ alone you have redemption through his very own blood for the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.

A good walk is a walk that's worth it. Think of something that is worth it to you even if you had to walk 100 miles with no brakes.

You would do it. It's worth it. Now there's things that are not worth walking across the living room for as well, right? Paul's telling them, walk in a manner worthy of Jesus Christ.

He is the one who redeemed you by his very own blood according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon you.

If you belong to him, you will see he is worth following. He is worthy of your best thought, like our hymn says, by day or by night, waking or sleeping.

[13 : 20] It's his presence with you on this walk that is your light and your delight. So the best thing for your soul is to walk with the one who calls you, Jesus Christ, and who purchased you with his very own blood.

Number two, a good walk is a walk where you're enjoying a peaceful path. One time we went for a walk where we used to live.

There was a pasture with some cattle on it and we thought it'd be fun. It looks beautiful today. Let's go out. Well, when the cows started taking some steps towards our family, it was not fun and peaceful anymore and that path was one we probably shouldn't have been on.

But Paul says to them, verses one and two, walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you were called. And what is that peaceful path? I love how clear and specific it is.

Look at verse two. It's a path marked by all humility, gentleness, and patience. Bearing with one another in love.

[14 : 25] Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Paul just stacks up five key words here.

You could call these like the five footsteps of that peaceful path. And it's a contrast with the way that's broad that leads to death. This is the narrow path of Christ himself.

And it goes the opposite direction of the pattern of the world. Do you remember Psalm 1? There's two ways to live. Well, James also describes the broad way that leads to death. He says it's a way or a path of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition.

And James says to the church, if that's what marks your unity, then it's a demonic influence. He says if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition, that is from Satan working in your lives.

That is not from the Lord. And it always leads to disorder. But God is a God of order. Look at what he did in the first creation. He brought all things into perfect, harmonious order.

[15 : 29] Why would he not do that with his new creation, with his church? James wrote them in James 3 that God gives wisdom and power to obey what he says is pure, peaceable, and gentle.

Do you hear these same Christian virtues coming to layer onto the church what it means to walk with Christ? So let's take these five that he gives us here and let's make sure we get the correct meaning of each one.

He says humility, gentleness, patience, bearing in love, eager, and peaceful. So first, humility. Paul is writing to them that we have every gift in the church because Christ is the one who stooped down to give it.

That's his whole argument in this passage. So do you see gifts that God is using within the church? Well then give glory to God for those gifts. He had told them earlier in Ephesians, he had said that God has foreordained good works that you should walk in them.

So if you see those in the congregation doing good works, it's because God already prepared that needed to happen for my church at that time and this would be the person I would bring to do it for them.

[16 : 43] So who gets all the glory as those gifts are used in the church? All glory be to God alone. That's humility. What about gentleness? The word gentleness is meekness.

Gentleness. A wonderful way to paraphrase it as one commentator put it is gentleness is power under control. Power under control. And sometimes this was used in the ancient Greek language to describe a colt like a young horse that was being trained.

It has a lot of power but it's under control now. It could also be used to describe soothing medicine. So if you take too much of this medicine, it's powerful and it'll kill you. It'll be poison.

But if you take the doctor prescribed amount, this will help you. Or a soft wind. Too much wind and it's going to wreck your ship. It's going to tip you over. But a soft wind is powerful but it's restrained and it gets you right where you need to go.

What does that look like if the church is to treat one another with God's gentleness? It means that we handle every single one that God brings into His church with extreme care.

[17 : 51] with great tenderness and fragility. That's how we treat one another. Every believer is Christ's precious vessel consecrated and set apart for God's sacred purposes.

That's how the church will treat one another with gentleness. The next word is really a phrase. It's patience connected to bearing in love.

So patience to bear together in love. And these many Greek words could have been chosen here by Paul to describe patience but the one he chooses it's really talking about length like long suffering bearing for the long haul.

It means long sold like a magnanimous soul that's not going to run out of patience. It's long suffering together. You're bearing under the weight of the burden together.

And you do this by taking a long term view. That's patience. What does this look like in the church? Well when things go wrong between a relationship or in the life of a congregation we continue to labor on in weakness and gentleness and humility toward one another and we rejoice that God is the one who heals.

[19 : 10] You know he's talking about the unity of the congregation. And after Sunday school someone brought up a really good point of clarification. This means what kind of unity?

Well it means that we are united under Christ the head with his Holy Spirit we share one faith. Okay that's great but what about when there's a wrong teaching? Should everybody try to have unity under this one wrong teaching?

Because you've probably heard that be used that way. In fact that's how the Roman Catholic Church used it in the Reformation. The reformers said those bringing a wrong teaching to the people of God are the ones causing division.

And that's what Paul was writing in Acts 20 to the church of Ephesus. He pulled the elders in and said there will be those that will bring a twisted teaching. Guard against that. They're the ones destroying unity.

The true unity in a church needs to be united around Christ the head by the ministry of his word. And if anyone brings something against that that's the person causing division. So the Holy Spirit inside of each true believer knows the truth from the word by the help of the Holy Spirit.

[20 : 16] That's the type of unity that the church needs to be characterized by. So we bear with one another toward that type of spiritual doctrinal unity.

Okay well this sounds like very maybe soft words right? Humble gentle patient. Does this mean it's a church of really laid back hippies where it's all just love you know rainbows?

Well look at the next word is eager. He says the church of God full of the Holy Spirit following King Jesus is a church that's eager. Now it's not eager to compromise all those other things but it is eager for what?

Eager to work together to work at it for unity. Picture this you know in Ephesians 5 he describes the relationship between a husband and a wife that's a picture of the relationship between Christ and his bride.

If you saw a young couple having some troubles is it right for the man just to say I'm just gonna be you know be laissez-faire just go along go with the flow whatever you want goes and I mean there's no there's no drive there's no eagerness for unity.

[21 : 28] So yeah maybe it's patient but it's not eager. So Christ he wants his church to be eager he wants his church to have a fire in the belly and to be willing to fight for the unity around his truth.

It's so much easier to just lower the bar of truth and doctrine and pretend like we have a superficial unity but if it's not unity on Christ's word then it's no unity at all. We might as well just go join a golf club or something else you prefer.

If there's unity in the church it's unity around the teaching of Jesus Christ. A zeal to fight for what we enjoy together in Christ which is his gospel and his mission in this world that we get to be part of that.

That's the type of unity we need to be eager to fight for. And the last one is peace. If a person is not at peace with God he will never be at peace within the church.

If you see a troubled soul and they're taking it out they're kicking the cat yelling at their kids those are all symptoms. That soul is not at peace with God.

[22 : 35] They need the gospel. You and I need the gospel. We need God to bring his peace to our soul and to settle us. It's only possible to have peace if it's the Holy Spirit bearing the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

So this can be a point of encouragement for you in your sanctification even maybe your assurance of salvation. Are you more peaceful more at peace with God now than you were six months ago?

Three years ago? Then praise the Lord. That's his Holy Spirit who's growing your peace in Christ and it's overflowing onto your life. I think we can agree these five virtues are pretty clear.

What they mean is no secret. There's no hidden mystery or special explanation needed. That's what the church looks like. Just because it's common sense does not make it common practice though.

Isn't that true? Mark Twain said it is not the things which I don't understand in the Bible that trouble me but it's the things I do understand. So I think Paul's message to us is this that the best thing for our souls is to walk the clear peaceful path in the footsteps of Jesus Christ by his Spirit together.

[23 : 59] The path is clear but the way is narrow and he calls us by his Spirit to follow him one step at a time. Third point. We do this walk not as individuals and not according to our own fancies of where we want to walk and where we want to go.

We walk in step with Jesus Christ in step with his Holy Spirit in us individually and with us as a body. There will be times in the life of a congregation where even collectively we don't know what the right thing is to do.

We don't know but we need to pray. We need to fast as a congregation. We need to get on our knees together and ask for the Lord to show us. We need to be walking in step. And it is true also individually.

The closer we walk with Christ individually, picture the Lord Jesus as the shepherd. The closer that each of his sheep follow his voice, the closer we get to him, the closer we are to one another.

I know that even preaching this series on the church is painful or maybe it's just not something you really want right now. I'm just trusting that in God's providence what the needs of this congregation were and when God brought you, this is what he has for you.

[25 : 13] Even if I don't understand it or you don't see right away why is this what we're focused on. And I was thinking that to walk in step with Christ it can be beautiful when a church is doing it together.

It can be so lonely when it feels like you're being obedient to Christ but you look around or you look at where a congregation is going and that's not the path. Isn't that one of the hardest things Christ calls us to do?

So I don't know each of your circumstances but I do know what that feels like and I pray for you that whatever God has for you and your family he will show you what it looks like to walk in step with him.

I think I also to bring you the full counsel and not be guilty of holding anything back from you without knowing I also want you to reflect and ask God to search you if some of your pain in previous conversations I'm sorry some of the pain that you've had in previous congregations was maybe because you came up short on your own sanctification as well.

You brought your own sins into it. In verse 2 I just invite you to confess to the Lord today even if you can't settle other relationships confess to the Lord times when you've lacked humility times when you and I have lacked gentleness with other Christians when we have lacked patience and have not bared through it together with other believers confess to God if there have been times where you were not eager to maintain true unity as much as it was possible to be at peace with others.

[26 : 52] Now there are others here as well and maybe the same people in the same situation who were truly hurt by legitimate wolves and I don't know their motives or hearts or words even I also want to comfort you if you're a true sheep who's been wounded deeply this was what was on Paul's mind in Acts chapter 20 which we saw in Sunday school which was goodbye to the same church and he said fierce wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock and I ask you then to ask the Lord to heal you then if you truly had those claws or those teeth of wolves who brought in twisted teachings and it was it was a hurt to your soul that you would ask God the good shepherd to comfort you once again with his words for him to pick you up to care for you to make the bleeding stop put the balm of the gospel inside those wounds again today restore you and set you on that path taking those little lamb steps one at a time following your good shepherd because he will never hurt you he is the chief shepherd of your souls this church in Ephesus had division they had been hurt by one another they had issues of pride they needed to bear one another's burdens better than they had and how does Paul minister to them with all these needs look at what he says in verses 4 5 and 6 he says church you who are hurting and broken and wounded there is one body and one spirit just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call one Lord one faith one baptism one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all he says you all if you're a true Christian you stand on the same foundation this foundation is seven layers deep you see what he says we have one body one spirit one hope one call one Lord one faith one baptism one God that's what we all have in common

Sinclair Ferguson pointed this out that reconciliation to God will come to expression in the quality of our reconciliation with one another why is the church to live as one it's because we are one in Christ the visible church throughout the world is made up of you you and I are just regular people but we share a faith in one God Jesus Christ who came to set his captives free so that we would follow him and he doesn't leave those captives he set free he doesn't leave those lambs to fend for themselves and to stumble around in darkness he doesn't leave Christians out there to be devoured as individuals he gathers his people around him he protects them he feeds them if you belong to Christ he is your shepherd and you are one with his flock no matter what your tribe race ethnicity no matter what what you came from what family he saved you out of what churches he's you've heard the shepherd's voice he will care for your soul and he will unite you to his people we share one spirit think of that there is one holy spirit the third person of the trinity and we share one spirit it's the holy spirit that dwells in the believer it's that same spirit in every single true Christian one of our dear brothers here had a loss he told me this story of his friend who was born on the streets in a different country and the lord saved him the lord put his holy spirit inside of him and then his ministry was to take other boys off the street to show them christ's love and when our brother visited him coming from a totally different part of the world different context that spirit that holy spirit inside of him from here knew with these boys with this brother who now passed we share one spirit have you ever gotten to experience what that's like that's a foretaste of heaven and the great cloud of witnesses that will join at the throne of god our shepherd has one flock satan wants to divide and conquer peel you away and tear you to shreds our lord wants to keep you with his flock feeding you and caring for you why do we need to have church unity around truth and doctrine and the love and the spirit that we share well here's another reason is we are stuck with one another for eternity if christ purchased you with his own blood you are his why would we bicker now when we're going to be together for eternity around the throne of christ he will tell us what's important what we need to care about what we think about at that time we do ask the lord with this be thou my wisdom and thou my true word i ever with thee and thou with me lord thou my great father and i thy true son thou in me dwelling and i with thee one we're about to sing this hymn at the end when you hear a voice around you singing that we are one in christ it's the same spirit dwelling in each one of us and that's why the best thing for your soul is to walk closely with christ realizing that as we grow in him we have unity as his one body next observation paul calls us with a difficult reference to psalms here to walk i'm going to put it in my own words walk like your family owns it andrea and i went on an anniversary trip

this past summer and we got there too late to this one place but we really wanted to walk through a little trail in the woods but when we got there the guy said we're closing in 30 minutes but we had just gotten there so we went ahead and walked but the whole time we're watching the clock we're thinking about it and man wouldn't it just be different if we could say go ahead you are the prince of you know whatever i mean your dad is the king he owns all these forests so go out and enjoy it you stay out there as late as you would like it's such a difference now paul says walk like what you really are the reason he says that is because this reference from psalm 68 paints this glorious picture and paul's applying this now to the church so that glorious image that the old testament believers couldn't quite understand it's speaking about you church look at what he says in verse 7 through 10 paul says grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of christ's gift so he's saying that christ holds the gift of grace and he's going to give his gift to every true believer but it's christ so it opens up some questions how does christ have this as his to give it out to dispense it and he answers this with something we would have never come up with but the holy spirit causing paul to meditate on the psalms and now apply it in the light of christ's work through the church he says this in verse 8 quoting psalm 68 which we read when he ascended on high he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men now that's the quote from psalm 8 psalm 9 and 10 he clarifies a bit he says in saying he ascended what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions on earth verse 10 he who descended is the one who also ascended far above the heavens that he might fill all things well the imagery in psalm 68 is of a king who just came back from battle and he's got this triumphal procession behind him paul loves to use this image to the church and in psalm 8 we heard that the enemy vanquishes like smoke and melts like wax and all the other mountains surrounding it even bashan which has the highest peaks a mountain represents a kingdom all these other kingdoms look and they say why this little hill of zion why through jerusalem would the king come that all the other empires would run away from in fear and paul's saying he ascended and he gives gifts that's because god himself descended he took on the form of a man he became man being fully god and he did that to ransom all those described in psalm 68 they were described as captives as weak as fatherless as lowly and he ransoms his people and now he leads this procession and he's writing to ephesus a city in rome the romans would do this triumphal procession as well they would have a servant be in the chariot with the general who came back from war and that servant's job was to tell the general repeating over and over omo est omo est that means you are but a man because as he would parade through the cities the praise was so great he would think he was a god he had to be reminded you're not a god and so paul is tapping into this roman imagery he's taking this fulfillment of psalm 68 and he's showing this great general who comes back victorious it is jesus christ he descended he accomplished his work through his active and passive obedience now he rules from on high and he's giving gifts out to his church the victory of christ death and resurrection gave christ all the great spoils of the war against satan and christ sets the fruit of his victory on display in his church so he says every gift that you

see being used in the church we can say when we're serving when we're setting up chairs sweeping preparing a meal teaching the kids these are gifts of christ conquering he is giving this to display his glory in his church like a great general sinclair ferguson helped me with this as well he pointed out how pentecost was the triumph day of christ his victory was publicly celebrated by an outpouring of gifts on the citizens of his kingdom and the soldiers of his army that he has conquered and he now reigns and he gives the signs of the victory through his church to the whole world that all could see his glory through a widespread distribution of gifts everything a church will need it is christ's glory his work being put on display in a simple gathering of simple people all glory be to christ christ already possesses the fullness of grace with which he will fill his church as you walk with him so think about that there are more graces more gifts god will bring about in you and through you for his church that he's already prepared in advance don't you want to be part of that don't you want to grow into that which he's already ordained you would do how do you do that then will you walk one step at a time with christ with his church and you watch him do that in your life maybe you have a desire but you feel like the gifts are lacking walk one step at a time with christ with his church and just let him put those gifts in your hand they come from him and him alone like the hymn says he is the high king of heaven he has won our victory and our prayer as we walk with him is to reach heaven's joys following our bright heaven sun well i had set out to go all the way through verse 16 but i did not plan this as well as i should have but i just want to summarize he talks he talks from verses 11 through 15 about the ministry of the word through the apostles and prophets he gave the word prophets of the old testament the apostles through the new testament through the evangelists who at the time worked to help the apostles he ministered the word he ministers the word now to do the work of an evangelist cast the seed of the gospel through his word teach the church build up the church equip the church through the ministry of the word and everybody has a part in that it anchors us so that we're not tossed back and forth so we do know the truth from the word every single one of us and look at the part that we all have every day verse 15 we are to speak the truth in love as we grow up in every way into him who is the head Jesus

Christ we minister the word to one another and we do it in a loving way for the glory of God so the last application I want to give you is this that as we walk with God he promises to fill his church that's what all this builds toward he builds his church up in love that he may fill his church with all that his church needs we feel our our lack of energy we feel our lack of resources we feel maybe our lack of space Christ is the one who fills all in all as we walk with him I was reading about how sheep are highly emotionally intelligent and sheep can read facial expressions of other sheep I didn't know that the good news for sheep is that when they when they do display anxiety or fear it's the the emotions of the shepherd that are transmitted to the sheep as well so when the shepherd is calm and his sheep are agitated just by talking to them he soothes them and the and the emotions of the shepherd they're transmitted and they settle in the entire flock think of our

[41 : 19] Lord Jesus Christ through the ministry of his word through each one who's speaking the truth and love it's the voice of Christ comforting consoling settling in the the sheep that belong to him that know his voice if we have peace if we have joy it's because it oozes onto us from our Lord Jesus our good shepherd as we walk following him so I ask you initially what makes a good walk one step at a time someone said that's good walking I ask you to reflect on what is that one step the Lord is calling you to take today walk with your shepherd one step one baby lamb step following your shepherd's voice that's good walking Christ loves you and his Holy Spirit's mission is to prepare your soul for eternity with God and he knows the best way to prepare your soul for eternity with him and it's for you to follow him your good shepherd walk in a manner worthy of

Christ worthy of Christ calling on you he called you by name that's the best thing for your soul to stay on this long walk it's good following our shepherd with his family his church would you pray with me father we we depend on your energy we depend on you Lord showing us your loveliness growing our gratitude our thanks for you and as we do take one step at a time father we pray that you will teach us to live as you lived as you taught Paul to live like he said in Acts 20 to not count our lives as anything of any worth for itself you're the one Lord who laid down your life for your sheep help us to be joyfully poured out in gratitude to Christ and help us to finish the course and the ministry that you have given to each one who is following you may we testify to the gospel of the grace of God with every step we take with you for your glory in

Christ sakes we pray amen God bless you so much to■■■ må amen