

How To Walk Properly

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 4 and we read from the beginning.

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.

We're always told that walking is good for us and that is absolutely true. It's one of the great privileges, one of the great blessings. We're told it brings many health benefits to us.

And we do a lot more walking than we realize. We don't just, when we're outside, it's not just outside we walk. We do an amazing amount of walking in the house. People might not realize it, but often in the course of the day, the amount of walking that a person does is quite incredible.

I'm sure some people are able with, I don't know, Fitbits or whatever you have or pedometers. People sometimes at work. People who are working inside a particular building, maybe in a hospital or so, a nurse might say, I wonder how much I actually walk in a day.

[1 : 25] And they'd be absolutely amazed to see the amount of walking that we do. So walking, of course, is an essential part of our lives. But it is also an essential part of spiritual life.

And we are either walking one way or another. We're either walking in life, towards life eternal, or else we're walking in death, towards death eternal.

There are only two roads that we can walk in this world. One is broad that leads to destruction, and one is narrow that leads to eternal life.

And once we've entered in to the Lord Jesus Christ, we walk with him. That's what the scripture shows us very clearly.

So, I hope and pray at the very beginning, at the outset here, that all of us are walking in the right direction. It's an awful thing to be walking in the wrong direction.

[2 : 27] Whenever you, if you're outside and you go walking somewhere, you're walking to a particular place. There's always a destination in view. Even if you just go for a walk, you're going to walk to, even if you're going to walk all the way back.

Supposing you leave your house and you go round a block or something, you're going to come back. There's always a destination in view when you go for a walk. And the sad thing is that there's a lot of people who walk through life, and they have no destination in view.

They're just going. They're just walking, day by day. And if you say to people, where are you going? What's your ultimate goal in life?

Where are you ultimately hoping to get to? They kind of say, well, I don't know. I'm just, I'm busy with living life. I've got a lot of things to do. Yes, I know, but at the end, what's your goal then?

And it's very important that we stop and think, because we're going somewhere. And as the Bible shows us, we're either going into life eternal or into death eternal.

[3 : 34] And that's an awful concept, the death eternal. So it's imperative that at the very outset that we make sure that we're walking in life.

And that way is in and through Jesus Christ, because he is life in himself. He says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. But as we say, walking is part and partial of what the Christian does.

Beforehand, we're told in Ephesians, Paul tells us that we were once dead in trespasses and sins, and you once walked according to the course of this world.

In other words, your walking was completely and altogether taken up with this world. You weren't thinking about a world to come. You weren't thinking about God. You were just totally taken up with this world.

But he says, that's not the way it is now for you. Because once you've come into faith in Jesus Christ, you now walk with him. And you know, it's something that God has always wanted to do with his people.

[4 : 38] Right at the very, very beginning in sinless Eden. Right in the garden. That's what God did with Adam. Cool of the day, walked with Adam. But you know, that walk was broken.

They stopped walking together. Because Adam and Eve sinned. It's a question asked in the Bible. Can two walk together except they be agreed?

You don't go walking with somebody that you've fallen out with, or somebody that you don't like, or a complete stranger. If you go for a walk, it tends to be with somebody that you know. Somebody that you're comfortable with.

Somebody that you like. And that's true spiritually. And that's what happens when we come to faith in Jesus Christ. The walk has started again.

Just as in Eden. The moment we come to faith in Jesus Christ. We begin to walk with Jesus. And we walk through this world. And he's with us all the time.

[5 : 38] He tells us that even when we walk in death's dark veil. He's still with us. All the time in difference we read about how sometimes he's before us.

Sometimes he's behind us. Sometimes he's beside us. Which indicates that all the time the Lord is with us as we walk. And we're told to walk.

Walk in the spirit so that you won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We are told to walk humbly with your God. Remember how it says? To love justice. And to do what is right.

And to walk humbly with your God. God wants us to walk with him. See, Abraham. Remember when Abraham went out with the Lord.

But it's one of the beautiful pictures that we have. Where Abraham is described as a friend of God. God was with him. He said, I'm going before you, Abraham. I will be your shield.

[6 : 37] I will be your light. I'm going to walk with you. And it's a wonderful, wonderful privilege and blessing. And so we're told here in the word that we are to walk in a right way.

And you know, one of the wonderful things is that even in the book of Revelation. It highlights to us that our walking isn't simply confined to this world. The moment that you begin walking with God, you walk forever.

Because we read that we walk with him in glory. It's part of the activity of heaven. Walking with our Savior. So you make sure that you are walking with Jesus today.

Because the moment that you begin walking with him, you're walking with him forever. But Paul tells us here that we are to walk in a particular way.

And he says, Therefore, I, therefore a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy. That's what it says, of the calling to which you have been called.

[7 : 42] And this word worthy comes from a word that simply means to balance in the scales. In other words, what you have on the one side, you have on the other. And really what it is simply saying is that our daily living should match our spiritual position.

Now, before we come to actually look at the walking, we've got to realize the context that Paul is writing in. And he's writing about spiritual unity.

One of the most important things to the Lord is the unity of the church. That we are one together.

You go through all Paul's epistles. And you will find it's one of the great themes is the importance of unity. And that's why it highlights the way in which we're to walk.

In order to maintain this unity, we have to walk in a particular way. Unity is incredibly important to the Lord. And in order to maintain this unity, it's important that we walk in a particular way.

[8 : 56] You know, some Christians will say, You know, it doesn't really matter what I do. I'm not going to affect anybody else. I'm going to live in my own particular way, my own particular lifestyle.

And it's not going to affect anybody else. I'm me. I'm independent from anybody else. Yes, I know I'm part of the church. But surely it has no bearing upon anybody else.

That's not what the Lord says. You go through the Bible and you'll find over and over again that the behavior sometimes of one individual has a huge impact upon many others.

You look at Achan in the camp of Israel. And they were warned, Do not take anything from Jericho. Because this city is set for absolute destruction.

Remember how Rehob and her household were saved. But normally in war, they were allowed to take the gold, the silver, and all these things. They were told in Jericho, No, it's all going to be burnt up.

[9 : 57] But remember how Achan, it tells us, He coveted. He saw. He saw things. Saw clothing. And he saw silver. And he says, Nobody will know.

I'm going to take this home. What a waste having all this burnt up. And so we're told that Achan took it and he hid it among his stuff. And he thought nobody knew.

And then the next place that Israel were going to fight against was Ai. And remember what happened? They were chased. Some of the Israeli soldiers were killed.

And Joshua is saying to the Lord, Lord, what's happened? This is not the script. Remember what the Lord said? Israel hath sinned. He didn't say Achan has sinned.

Israel has sinned. The behavior of one man brought God's judgment down upon the whole camp. When Jonah ran away from the Lord, from doing God's will.

[10 : 57] He took the nearest boat he could get and he went in the opposite direction. And he thought, I'm not going to harm anybody. What happened? A fearful storm broke out and every ship out that night was in, every sailor was in danger of his or her life.

Because of one man's disobedience. So, let's remember that God is taking note. And, we cannot live in isolation.

We have a duty and a responsibility to the Lord and to one another. And that's what Paul is really emphasizing. He's writing, he's in prison, and he's, he's actually happy, I shouldn't say it, not happy, but he is willing to be in prison for their sake in order that they will come to understand what the Lord is actually saying to them.

And so he says, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. You see, every Christian is a person who is called.

You are called by the Lord to follow him. The moment you begin to follow the Lord, you're no longer your own. You don't belong to yourself anymore.

[12 : 21] The old me has to die. And you say, Lord, you're in control. This is my life, but it's your life. I belong to you.

And, you know, often you'll find people as they go through life, maybe you'll find young people and they go into a particular job and you speak to them and you say, how are you getting on?

Oh, man, you know this, they'll say, this is exactly what I was looking for. I have discovered, I have found my calling. Sometimes people will say that in a particular line of work and they just find that this is exactly, it's tailor-made for them.

And they say, I don't want to do anything else. I've found my calling in life. Well, every Christian has found their calling in life because they have, first of all, been called by the Lord.

You didn't one day decide it's the Lord who called you. You see, there are two calls in the Gospel. There is what we would term a general call, an outward call, and there's also an inward call.

[13 : 32] The outward call is what takes place just now. Where I quote, for instance, I'll say, the Bible says, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation.

Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. That's an invitation. Come unto me, Jesus says, all you that labor and unheaval laden, and I will give you rest.

That's the outward call of the Gospel. Whoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out. That's the call of the Gospel. And the responsibility upon you is to give in to that call and to say, yes, Lord, I'm hearing what you're saying.

But unfortunately, so often with the outward call of the Gospel, people don't listen. They don't hear. They don't respond. But then there's what we term the inward call where God's Spirit will apply that word in a way where you really hear.

You don't hear the person's voice. It's like the Lord. And what the Lord is doing is He's breaking you. And He's giving you a desire. He's giving you this desire in your heart for Himself.

[14 : 51] And you're oblivious to anything else that's going on and you're saying, Lord, I need you. I want you. What's happening? This is the inward call.

And if you've never had that before in your life where you're being drawn to Christ where, and it might be a big struggle that's going on, ask the Lord, make that happen in my life.

Lord, may I hear that inward call. Grant me an understanding of what you're doing. Help me, Lord, to come to you. Because right now I'm hearing the words, but they're not going in.

They're not touching me. I need to be touched in my heart. And so that's what we would term the inward call where God through His Spirit is working right deep within the heart.

And so here we are that we're now called to walk in a worthy way. Remember, you're representing the King in this world.

[15 : 53] As Paul tells us elsewhere, we are ambassadors for Christ. And to be an ambassador for a king or a queen is an incredible role.

You are representing that person. The country that you are in, as they look at you, if you're the ambassador, they will make an assessment and a judgment of what your king or queen is like.

And so it is for the Christian. as people look at you, they will make an assessment of what King Jesus is like. Because let's remember loads of people don't open their Bibles now.

Loads of people even in this town have no idea about anything really about Jesus Christ. And they don't know what Christianity is about, but they see you.

And that's why Paul said elsewhere, you, he said, are living epistles, living letters read by people. People are reading your life and hopefully they're seeing Jesus Christ in your life.

[17 : 00] So this is what Paul is saying, we are to walk in a particular way. And we'll just look at this very briefly, we see the first thing is with all humility. Now, for us today, that's not radical.

In Paul's day, this was a major this was unbelievably radical. Humility was looked down upon. Humility was something to be avoided.

You didn't want to be a humble person in the day that Paul wrote. Humility was something that was for whoops or whatever. You wanted to be proud, to be assertive.

Do you know, to a certain extent. It's kind of coming back that way the day that we're living in. Now, we've said it before that this word humility comes from the word humus, which is decaying organic matter.

It's the kind of stuff you put into the ground in order to make things grow. This decaying organic matter. You put it in, put it amongst the, you've thrown the, you planted the potatoes, the veg and so on, and you put in this decaying organic matter, this humus, in order to make, enable things to grow.

[18 : 13] But you know, that's a wonderful description of the Christian, isn't it? The Christian is to be a nobody. And you know, that's part of what people hate about Christianity.

Because people naturally want to be a somebody. And Jesus says, I don't want somebodies, I want nobodies. Because I want to work in and through people. And it's me, Jesus is saying, it's me that people need to see, not you.

And that's why humility is number one key in the Christian faith. Mr. Nobody. That's what we've to become. But as we said, this decaying organic matter is incredibly fertile.

It causes growth. And you know, when you find Christians, and that's the way their lives are, they are people who are full of humility.

humility, it has an impact for good upon others. It's one of the most amazing things. And you know, if you want to see what humility is like, just look at Jesus.

[19 : 20] He's a classic example. Jesus, the creator of this world, by him all things were made. He made himself of no reputation.

In other words, he became nothing. He left the realms of glory and came into this world. Born in an outhouse in Bethlehem. Had nothing.

When they needed money, when he needed money, he said, show me a coin. Didn't even carry a coin. When he rode into Jerusalem, wasn't on a beautiful horse, but on a donkey.

And when he was buried, he was buried in somebody else's grave. He had nothing. His whole life was nothing. And yet, his whole life was wonderful. Because in his nothingness, he was giving everything for us.

And that's why the apostle said, looking at the life of Jesus, he said, let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. Now that's a stopper.

[20 : 26] The Jesus who made himself nothing for the good of others, let this mind also be in you. that's what Christianity is really.

And then, moving on, there's first humility, then there's gentleness. And again, gentleness is another wonderful virtue. And remember, what is Paul talking about here?

He's talking about Christian unity. And you know, when you have humility, and you have gentleness, you're not going to have people at war, and people having blows.

Because what causes fights and frictions? Is it not pride and ego? People wanting to assert themselves, people wanting their own way. The Lord says, that's not the way the Christian walks.

It's a way of humility. It's a way of gentleness. And you see how important these virtues are for the good of the Christian cause. patience.

[21 : 31] That's another one. And that word patience here is simply showing restraint and long-suffering towards others. Now, I suppose all of us at times, we annoy one another.

We get annoyed by one another. That's the nature of it. But we've got to show restraint. And if you stop for a moment and think, who shows restraint and long-suffering more than anybody?

Surely it's the Lord. You look at your life, I look at my life. And you think of the number of times and the number of ways, in a day, that you sin against him, you provoke him, you do what is wrong, and yet he puts up with you, he's patient with you, he's long-suffering with you, and really the Lord is saying, how dare you, when I am so patient with you, that you just fly off the handle, that you become impatient with others.

So the apostle is showing the importance of this with one another. And then it says, bearing one another in love, not just getting it by, but bearing one another.

And coming back to Jesus, Jesus often didn't talk about himself or who he was, but one or two of the things that he did say about his own character, he said, I am meek and lowly in heart.

[23 : 05] Jesus didn't say, I'm the most amazing person in this world. No, he said, I am meek and lowly in heart.

That was the character that Jesus displayed in this world. You examine his life, and all through his life, this is what comes out.

Meekness, gentleness, lowliness of heart. See the way he dealt with the downtrodden, the marginalized. See the way he dealt with those who others despised.

There was a patience, there was a humility, there was a gentleness, there was a love. And if we're serious about being Christians, that is how we have to operate as well.

And if all Christians operated like that, then church unity would be a given. We would be together, there would be a togetherness that sadly isn't within the Christian communities.

[24 : 11] Moses was reckoned to be the meekest of men. And sometimes people equate meekness with weakness, not at all. There were few stronger, more robust people ever walked this world physically, mentally, than Moses.

Moses was, he was a towering character, in many ways a fearsome character. And yet he was the meekest of men.

His meekness was before God, because he had met with God. He knew God like few people did. And you know that's what happens. The more you come to know the Lord, the more like him you will become.

And the more you see of him, the more you will submit before him. And the more that you will become meek in spirit. And that's the kind of passion that the Lord is looking for in this world.

Eager to maintain the unity of spirit and the bond of peace. Notice what it says. It doesn't say make unity, but maintain unity.

[25 : 20] See the Lord at the very beginning brings unity. That's what he does. Once he unites us to himself, he is also uniting us to all the other believers.

And he says I have already created the unity. It's up to you to maintain it. Sadly so often the Christian church doesn't. But the Lord says maintain it.

And the key to maintaining it is what we were just looking at. for the Christian to be humble, for the Christian to be gentle, for the Christian to be long suffering, and forbearing one another.

These are areas and aspects of our life. We need to be asking the Lord to help us so to live. Let's pray. Lord we pray that you will bless us.

Your word places high demands upon us. And sometimes we say who is sufficient for these things. because as we look out and we look at ourselves we so often feel that we've come short.

[26 : 24] That we let other people down, we let ourselves down, but most of all we let you down. And so we pray that you will have mercy upon us and that you will do us good. We pray Lord that you will bless every single one of us here.

Bless those who can't be here today, those in hospital, those in homes, those who are sick. we ask your healing enabling hand to be upon them, restoring. And we pray that you will bless the cup of tea, coffee in the hall afterwards, and that you will part us with your blessing.

Do us good and take away our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing the last four verses of Psalm 122 in the Scottish Psalter, page 416.

Psalm 122. The middle, this is the middle of verse 4.

To Israel's testimony there, to God's name, thanks to pay. For thrones of judgment, even the thrones of David's house there stay. Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity.

[27 : 36] Let them that love thee and thy peace have still prosperity. Therefore I wish that peace may still within thy walls remain, and ever may thy palace's prosperity retain.

Now for my friends and brethren's sakes, peace be in thee, I'll say, and for the house of God, our Lord, I'll seek thy good always. 122, middle of verse 4, to Israel's Testament.

Israel's testimony are druthan to Our crones of judgment in the thrones of their rentals their sin.

Great of Jerusalem, southern Manhattan, peace and felicity.

Let them have lonely and like peace, out till prosperity.

[28 : 56] Therefore I wish that peace may still with his life was remade.

And ever may thy power's prosperity retain.

Now for my friends and brethren's sake, peace within me I'll stay.

And for the house of God our Lord, I'll seek thy good away.

Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.