

Eph 4.1-3 An Appeal to Keep Unity

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[0 : 0 0] In the Baptist Catechism, question number six, the answer that it gives is that the Holy Scriptures chiefly contain what man ought to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

The Christian life is both theoretical and practical. Ephesians 1-3 speaks about orthodoxy, that is, what we ought to believe or right knowledge.

And Ephesians 4-6 speaks of orthopraxy or what we ought to do or right practice. And when we think of theology, what is the purpose of theology?

What is the goal of theology? Well, theology itself is divine wisdom or it is the knowledge of God and the things that pertain to God. And the primary goal of theology is the glory of God.

The secondary goal of theology is man's salvation. And man's salvation can be understood in two ways, living blessedly in this life and the life which is to come. Now, of course, we think of salvation and life to come of being saved from the punishment of sin.

[1 : 1 6] But then there's also living blessedly in this life, by salvation, being saved from the power of sin. And as such, being called out of darkness into marvelous light, living a life contemplating the goodness of God, his excellencies, his wondrous works, and living a life which he has set us apart and called us to.

So again, Ephesians 1 to 3 focuses on the contemplation of right knowledge, what man ought to believe. And right knowledge should lead us to the practice of piety, that is, living to God through Christ, which we see in Ephesians 4 to 6.

So if you'll take your copies of the Word of God, chapter 4 of the book of Ephesians, and we'll read all of Ephesians chapter 4.

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called, and one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

[2 : 4 5] But to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, he says, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.

Now this, he ascended, what does it mean but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the working of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men and the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

This I say, therefore, in testifying the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness to work all uncleanness with greediness.

[4 : 37] But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, that you put off concerning your former conduct the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

And that you put on the new man which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor.

For we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole, steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands, what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God and Christ forgave you.

[6 : 03] Lord, again, we thank you for this Lord's Day and for this time we have to sit out of the ministry of your word. We thank you that you have given us supernatural revelation. We pray, Lord, that through the preaching of your word, that you would be at work by your almighty power in those whom hear your word.

We pray, Lord, that you would edify the saints, that you would be building your church. We pray that you would advance your kingdom. We pray, Lord, that as such, you would illuminate your word to us and help us to have right understanding of truth.

I pray, Lord, that you would use even me in preaching your word this morning, that it would be for your glory, for the edification of all who hear. Lord, again, we pray that you would forgive us of all of our sins.

And we thank you for the shed blood of Christ through which there is forgiveness of sins. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So our text this morning in chapter 4 of the book of Ephesians is verses 1 to 3.

And in verses 1 to 3, the apostle, in his appeal to right conduct, begins with an exhortation to maintain unity.

[7 : 19] So in Ephesians 1 to 3, the apostle speaks of right belief. And in chapters 4 to 6, it speaks of right conduct.

And the apostles' appeal to right conduct of chapters 4 to 6, here begins with an exhortation to maintain unity. So as such, we will see from the text, the worthy walk, bearing in love, and endeavoring to keep unity.

So when you first look at chapter 4, you'll see three particular words that I want to draw your attention to. There's the word therefore, the word prisoner, and the word beseech.

And there's three points to be made about these three words to call to mind before we read what follows. Now obviously, when something starts with the word therefore, it recalls to mind the context that precedes it.

So what is the context that precedes the word therefore that he then speaks on from? So recall to mind specifically the utility of the church.

[8 : 34] As such, Paul's stewardship for Gentile inclusion in the people of God as a unified new creation, as a habitation of God, a spiritual temple.

So the preceding chapters and verses which speak to this calls then to mind what is important of what follows.

So the context of Paul's stewardship. Second of all, Paul's imprisonment. Paul's imprisonment is, which as he states when he says, do not lose heart, he says, because his imprisonment, which is your glory.

So first of all, utility of the church. Second of all, Paul's imprisonment, which is your glory. And third of all, Paul's affection. And Paul's affection actually draws on these other three points.

Now Paul, when he starts off here, he says he beseeches. He says, I beseech you. Notice the posture and the tenor of his language. Paul's not embittered towards him because we're remembering those other two points because of Paul's stewardship for the Gentiles.

[9 : 46] He is imprisoned. He's being persecuted because of his stewardship for the Gentiles. But yet it doesn't cause him to be bitter against them. So it shows his pastoral heart in seeing the providence of God in his persecution and in his stewardship for the Gentiles as being for their good, for their consolation, for their encouragement, and for their salvation, and for the utility of the church.

So recalling this to mind shows us Paul's affection for the saints as he now transitions in verse four to right conduct.

Paul's not bitter. He could, by way of the flesh, be saying, if only I hadn't have done it this way. If only I hadn't have been so concerned about the Gentiles.

If only I hadn't taken on this ministry of the stewardship of the Gentiles. If only I hadn't taken the Ephesian Gentile to the temple. He could be saying, if only. But he believes in the sovereignty of God and has affection for the church of God and for the saints and sees the sovereignty of God in his persecution for the stewardship of the inclusion of Gentiles in to the people of God as a habitation of God as being for their good, for their glory.

And he has affection for them. So, therefore, utility of the church, Paul's a prisoner, which is for your glory, and Paul's affection as he beseeches them as the words which follow.

[11 : 15] So, what does follow? I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. So those two words, walk worthy, before we unpack what they mean, first of all, what does it not mean?

To walk worthy does not mean that our walking rightly makes us worthy. Rather, that we walk in a manner that is worthy of that which we are called.

That is, Christ's kingdom of glory is worthy of our walking as its citizens who are called out of the world, called out of darkness, into marvelous light. It is exhortation to live a life that is in harmony with being reconciled to God and reconciled to a fellow man.

Therefore, to walk unworthily would be to walk worldly-mindedly, or to walk in worldly-mindedness.

But, we see a parallel passage in Colossians 1.10. Notice the parallels in Colossians 1.10 to that which we see in Ephesians, in terms of that which we ought to believe, and the duty which God requires of man.

[12 : 34] Colossians 1.10 says that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Notice he says that you may walk worthy. It's not that he puts duty in front of knowledge and understanding, but having a right biblical knowledge and understanding that your walk might be right.

Fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Also, in Philippians 1.2, it says, let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Now, I've heard this verse used in a way that was wrenched out of context to say that being of one spirit and one mind is to be of complete disagreement, but yet to suppress biblical doctrine for the facade of thinking that there's unity to hide the fact that there's disunity.

But it says, stand fast in one spirit, with one mind. And as we work through the rest of chapter 4, you will see how that point is really driven home and further worked out.

[14 : 14] But to walk worthy is to walk as one who has been called out of darkness. We are called out of darkness into marvelous light, therefore no longer walking in darkness.

In this verse, John Trapp, in his commentary on the text, says, let men remember their high call, sorry, let men remember their high and heavenly calling and do nothing unworthy of it.

Now, in Ephesians chapters 1 to 3, we've worked through so far, Ephesians chapter 1 to 3, having spoken about what we ought to believe, the apostle now turns to speak about what we ought to do.

That is, right living, or orthopraxy, or right practice, or Christian living, or doctrine according to godliness, or to walk worthy of the calling.

So this walk is the Christian duty of a heavenly manner of life. When you consider the implicit negative consequences, then, of the text, so if to walk worthy is the Christian duty of a heavenly manner of life, then what is the implicit negative consequences?

[15 : 27] If we profess a right orthodoxy, what we ought to believe, if we profess a right orthodoxy, that we were dead in our sin, and by nature children of wrath, that God, by the exceeding greatness of his power, made us alive, united us to Christ in his death and resurrection, reconciled us to God and fellow man, and sealed us with the Spirit who is effectively, who is affecting the almighty power of God.

So if we profess right orthodoxy, if we profess Ephesians chapters 1 to 3, how much do we slander our professed orthodoxy when we walk in a way that exemplifies worldliness, sin, darkness, sluggishness, and carnal security?

So let's make distinctions, and in those distinctions, work through them. Some people, so again, those who profess right orthodoxy, some people walk more worthy of hell, condemnation, sin, hatred, selfishness, and piety.

Some people's walk is characterized by a consuming devotion to the things of the world, wealth, self-sufficiency, autonomy, honor, vain glory, desires of the flesh.

Some others walk neither godly nor ungodly, neither pious nor impious, neither heavenly nor hellish, but suspended between the two, participating in both, like the hypocrites.

[17 : 09] And some walk as one that finds no delight in biblical knowledge, understanding, and doxology, a walk that does not delight in the contemplation of God, a walk that does not enjoy God.

Some walk as more representative of the before picture in Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 3. If you remember, And you were dead in the trespasses of your sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Or, so, separate category, is your walk in a manner of one who, by the powerful, effective working of God, has been called out of darkness into marvelous light?

One whose walk is heavenly-minded, and whose soul, life, hope, and treasures are not in this world, but in Christ. One who walks as a pilgrim in this world, and considers the loss of this world as no consequence.

And Galatians 6.14 says, The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. And when it comes to the Christian pilgrimage, it's not, when in Rome, do as the Romans do, but when in Rome, walk worthy of your heavenly calling.

[18 : 40] So, of the categories, of the distinctions we've made of those who profess a right orthodoxy, it is the latter category.

The latter category is the walk that is here urged, or that is beseeched by the Apostle Paul in our text. Is your walk representative of one who prefers God, and walking with him, over any benefits of this world.

Now, a right knowledge that leads to right conduct, sorry, right knowledge that leads to right conduct, that is, to walk worthy, involves also our posture to one another.

So, bearing in love. Now, in the context of being frequent in the contemplation of that which we ought to believe, Petrus van Maastricht, a Dutch Puritan reformer, writes, let us become accustomed to what is heavenly, and to the heavenly way of life.

Let us become accustomed to contemplation, divine glorification, the heavenly Sabbath, and so forth, so that we may forget the world and worldly things.

[20 : 05] Let us embrace heavenly fellowship, the sort we will possess in heaven in the future, so that by its help we may be built up and shaped in a heavenly life and manner of life.

So, back to our text, this walk, to the worthy walk, this walk is subsequently expressed as behaving in a worthy manner by four virtues. So, if you see from your text, if you have it in front of you, there's one, with all lowliness, two, gentleness, three, long-suffering, and four, bearing with one another.

So, first of all, with all lowliness or humility, with all lowliness or humility, this is not proud, arrogant, it is not in submission, it is not contention and dissension, but it is humility, in humility, considering others more significant than yourself.

second, we have gentleness or mildness, which is not angry or inclined to inflict injury, whether physical or verbal.

Third, we see long-suffering or patience, which is not impatient in adversity. And fourth, is bearing with one another or supporting one another, which is being not quick to pass judgment on everything or failing to wait for the right time and place to speak the truth in love.

[21 : 37] It is bearing with one another's defects out of love. First Corinthians 13, 7 says love bears all things. So, this is not to tolerate failure, nor is it negligence stemming from familiarity or carnality, but rather it's charity to bear with one another to support one another in love.

So, right knowledge that leads to right conduct to walk worthy also involves endeavoring to keep unity. So, endeavoring to keep unity.

If you notice in your text, it says endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. Now, after three very rich chapters of what we are to believe or of right knowledge, the apostle now turns to right behavior and he begins it by expressing the importance of unity.

Paul doesn't pit unity and right knowledge against each other, but they are inseparably connected. You probably have heard people say, well, doctrine divides and it's typically used probably in more liberal churches or it's used to try to reduce doctrine because the argument is that doctrine divides in order to be people of unity.

So if doctrine divides, therefore we then have to reduce doctrine or set it aside or push it far from us in order to have this perceived idea of unity or of peace.

[23 : 14] But what is doctrine? Doctrine is the teaching of the Bible. Does the teaching of the Bible divide? Yes, it divides truth from error. And the church is to be the pillar and the ground of the truth.

The church, what does a pillar do? A pillar upholds something. The church is to uphold truth, not to lower it, not to put it away, but to uphold truth.

Now, unity is twofold. First of all, unity is based on union with Christ as one body. unity. So, primarily, unity must be based on union with Christ.

We'll loop back around to this. But secondly, unity is also unity of agreement or a consensus of truth. So, some would argue that unity and peace are the same thing and therefore we must all get along at all costs and consequently anything that causes disagreement is unpeaceful and therefore against unity.

people disagree on doctrine so then doctrine is reduced so as not to foster disagreement in a spirit of peace and this unbiblical idea of, and I use air quotes, unity, at the cost of truth.

[24 : 32] Those who assert this idea err greatly. Such as the ecumenical movement, linking arms with the Pope and other such unregenerate people who are not in union with Christ.

Christ. We know that to assert a different gospel, a gospel of works or a head of the church other than Christ is a usurpation of Christ and that the Bible says that they are condemned.

To preach a different gospel is not to be in union with being followers of Christ. Unity is not seeing how many people we can link arms with.

Unity is union with Christ and unity of agreement. Unity, however, is unity of agreement or unanimity, which Ephesians chapter 4 really speaks about.

We're just looking at verses 1 to 3 today, but the whole of chapter 4 draws this out, which we'll see in much more detail as we work through it. To say that agreement on truth or to hold fast to the truth is a hindrance to unity is a serious error.

[25 : 47] In John 14, Jesus says that he is the truth. Jesus is the very embodiment of truth. If having a right knowledge of truth is not important, then that is to say that knowledge of Christ is not important, or knowledge of life is not important.

God is not a God of confusion or chaos or disorder, but a God of truth. To say that knowledge of the embodiment of truth in Christ is a hindrance from this so-called unity, is not a unity at all, nor is it love, nor charitable, because it is a hindrance to eternal life.

Remember the context of our text. What does it start off with saying? Therefore, it's I therefore. The apostle puts doctrine before unity.

Chapters one to three are of doctrine, and as he speaks of conduct, he begins it with unity. So chapter four starts with unity, one to three is doctrine.

The apostle doesn't put unity before doctrine, but doctrine before unity. And this we see also in Acts 2.42. They devoted themselves to the apostle's doctrine, and then fellowship. Doctrine comes before fellowship.

[27 : 02] therefore emphasizes that unity follows as a consequence of doctrine, a consequence of right knowledge.

That is unity because of doctrine. Unity is fitting of right knowledge. Now, if you've heard of the Synod of Dort, there was the teachings of the remonstrants that were spreading teachings that were inconsistent with that which was historic orthodoxy.

So as such, the Synod of Dort came together to examine these teachings against scripture to see if they were true.

They determined them to be unscriptural and also responded with the response to these things, which from the Synod of Dort in the early 1600s we would have the response being that mankind is depraved, that in our sin we do not seek after God, we are lost, we are dead in our sins, and that in our depravity, in our inability to do what pleases God or to be in a right relationship with God, that God chooses dead sinners and as such calls them out of their darkness, out of their death.

God's choosing and eternity is the elect or the redeemed, so being the redeemed, Christ's definite atonement purchases those people and Christ's definite atonement for those people, the Spirit effectually calls into salvation and effectually calling depraved dead sinners into life, which we see in Ephesians 2, the Spirit effectually applies the work of redemption to them and as such being the work of God, God by his power preserves them or perseveres them.

[29 : 09] So the Synod of Dort fortified orthodox teaching and then following the Synod of Dort, the orthodoxy of the church was further fortified in the university of Leiden, Leiden University.

In Leiden University following Synod of Dort, they had various professors who wrote 52 disputations and those disputations were to be read in a public hearing where somebody would read and defend the disputation and then in a debate format answer any questions against it to fortify the orthodoxy and then following this the professors who wrote these dispensations or the disputations or the theses then wrote essentially a chapter on these disputations and these were collected together in a document which was to serve as a type of a textbook for the purpose of fortifying orthodoxy what you ought to believe so this document is referred to as the synopsis of pure theology so in their fortifying of what you ought to believe and their fortifying of right orthodoxy their fortifying of right knowledge listen to what's written in the preface to it this is this is very good so to demonstrate their single mindedness and their sharing of a consensus the preface to the synopsis of pure theology is written the prophet

Zechariah when he exhorts us to love truth and peace gives pride to the place to the truth as she is leader and mistress and he rightly grants the next place to peace as she is her attendant for by its very nature the truth is always fair and just acceptable to God and salutary to all who profess her but peace if she should deviate from the pathway of truth should become unfair offensive to God and destructive to everyone who walks in her ways hence when the apostle Paul exhorts each and every Christian to dwell in peace with all fellow humans you and if it is possible that is on the condition that the truth be professed another example in church history where we see the church holding fast to a biblical understanding of unity following after this following the

Synod of Dort following the Leiden University's synopsis of pure theology we find ourselves in the time of the Puritans where in England there was a king and there was parliament and the church of England was under the monarchy so it was a national church under the king and as such parliament was consisting of parliament Puritans was called to write the Westminster Confession of Faith for the purpose of the reformation of the national church so the church of England under monarchy so parliament Puritans write this confession of faith a very robust confession of faith that systematically outlines theological doctrines as as scripture lays it out but in a systematic way after the draft after the writing of the

Westminster Confession of Faith there were unbiblical practices being forced on all churches by the king so king monarchy parliament Parliament's called to write what is orthodox what the church ought to believe and as it has done so the king then starts trying to force the churches of England to follow these unbiblical practices fast forward a little bit it's a longer story than we have time for but fast forward a little bit the king commits treason high treason multiple times he is tried and convicted and executed for high treason now with the king executed parliament now has national authority so the church of England a national church being directed by monarchy monarchy has now been replaced by parliament parliament now if it desires to has the opportunity to force all of

[34 : 28] England to follow their convictions they did just draft a document a robust document on what we ought to believe for the reformation of the church of England that's the setting now during this time you probably heard of the Puritan John Owen John Owen was the chaplain of parliament so he preached to the parliament Puritans and as such he has the opportunity if he desired to push for all England to follow his convictions or to follow parliament convictions so what will happen to the national church will it be forced religion or toleration but John Owen at this time what do you think were his primary appeals do you think his primary appeals were for his beliefs John Owen one of John Owen's primary appeals was for liberty of conscience that is for toleration here he has the opportunity for the relief of persecution for standing for reformed orthodoxy and his appeal is for liberty of conscience for toleration so if this is

John Owen's appeal if it's John Owen's if what is forefront in his mind does this mean did this mean reducing agreement of truth for the sake of peace no it does not because John Owen was a co-author of the Savoy Declaration so remember at that time the the the the the puritan parliament puritans were under a national church we think of the now the Westminster confession of faith of the Presbyterians by the time it was under the national church and John Owen was convicted convinced of congregationalism that the state does not have authority over the church so as such himself and other puritans who were also authors of the Westminster confession of faith convinced that the state does not control the church drafted the

Savoy declaration and as such the platform of church polity of congregationalism so his appeal was for toleration but that did not mean the suppression of doctrine as he was one of the co-authors of the Savoy declaration which was 90% of the Westminster confession of faith so what does that say they're saying we're of agreement here is our unity we are 90% of unity this is our convictions of church polity but it's a statement to demonstrate unity same as our confession of faith the second line of baptism is one which says we're of unity of the parliament puritans so it demonstrates unity unity of agreement of truth and if you're interested in how throughout church history others have labored for a biblical understanding of unity against essentially an ecumenical movement of trying to link arms with unregenerate if this interests you highly recommend further reading in church history

Ian Murray's biography of J.C. Ryle called Prepared to Stand Alone as well as Ian Murray's biography of Martin Lloyd Jones which are excellent accounts through church history of defending a biblical unity and the same is true today it was true when Paul wrote to the saints in Ephesus it was true during the Synod of Dort it was true during the time of the parliament Puritans it was true during the time of J.C.

Ryle it was true during the time of Martin Lloyd Jones and it is true today the same is true today to walk worthy! to have your that is doctrine according to godliness furthermore in our text notice it says endeavor endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace we are to endeavor because be sure that Satan is certainly endeavoring for his dominion through division to seek unity of agreement of truth by the use of the sword so by force is not in the bond of peace nor is it in love and therefore it is not of the spirit remember the fruit of the spirit is love and peace and this attitude of forceful consensus is also contrary to the historic essence of the reformation and of our confession of faith this is also a distrust of the effective power of the

[39 : 38] Holy Spirit illuminating the word and the inner man so in conclusion the text says endeavor to keep so to keep is to not build it is not to create but it is to keep or to maintain the unity is already existent in existence it's not to start or create a unity that does not exist it is to maintain the unity which is already in existence endeavor to stay within the unity God has inaugurated in Christ by the spirit purpose by the father accomplished by the son applied by the spirit so if we endeavor to keep or to stay within how is unity severed well what is the opposite of keeping or maintaining unity is a spirit of arrogance falsehood pride a spirit of selfish insistence we see throughout all of history false teachers find their teaching outside of historic orthodoxy so we'll flesh this out much more in the rest of

Ephesians 4 but if it was just today when truth is declared to be relevant it's like well they have their belief and they have their belief and they have their belief and who's to say who's right so I have my belief but when we look through time there's a pattern of historic orthodoxy and there's outside of that pattern ideas that pop up they're addressed there's synods the synod of dort there's other councils and creeds and through such these ideas are disproved and orthodoxy remains as the church holds fast to the word of God throughout history so we have the benefit of church history which we'll see in Ephesians 4 to compare these ideas that pop up that seem to be outside of orthodoxy so these false teachers find their teachings outside of that historic orthodoxy so in order to persuade of these ideas that are outside of historic orthodoxy in order to darken the church's understanding to get away with their unorthodoxy how do they do it well they argue against the importance of right knowledge and a unity of agreement of right doctrine they argue that right doctrine they are maybe not in those words but their argument in a roundabout way is against unity agreement of right doctrine so that if there's not a need for unity agreement of right doctrine then there's fertile grounds for these new ideas or new doctrines furthermore what about in a confessional church so obviously in a confessional church a confession is very robust on what we ought to believe so what about peace and unity in a confessional church

Sam Waldron explains it very well in speaking in the context of speaking about confessional subscription and church membership so the church's subscription to the confession and the responsibility of the members of the church he says members don't need to agree on every point of doctrine but they need to accept that it is the standard for doctrine and practice and to submit sweetly respond teachably and live peaceably I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called with all lowliness and gentleness with long suffering bearing with one another in love endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace let's pray Lord again we thank you for your word we pray that you would help us to have a right understanding of your word that you would illuminate to us and not just in the immediate hearing of your word but also

Lord that you would cause us to contemplate things of your word the implications of it and the necessary consequences that flow from your word and that we would meditate on your word and seek to grow in what we ought to believe and having a right knowledge of truth and that having a right knowledge of truth that that would influence our conduct and that we would seek to be renewed in our minds through your word that we might walk in a way that is worthy of the glorious kingdom of Christ pray these things in Jesus name amen