

Walking Worthy of the Gospel

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Preacher: Sam Bunnell

[0:01] Thank you for that special from our Christmas program. They do a wonderful job. How many of y'all like seeing the young people up there with them in the choir? Isn't that awesome? Yeah. Let's make that a regular thing.

That is great. Ephesians, we are continuing on in our series. We will break next Sunday for Christmas Eve and do a more Christmas-themed sermon next Sunday.

But we are continuing on in our series in Ephesians chapter 4. All right. And this is a big Sunday in our series in Ephesians. We go from part 1 to part 2.

All right. So the first chapter, the first three chapters of Ephesians talks about who we are in Christ, our identity in Christ as believers. And then we get practical. We go from the theology to the practicality.

All right. Understanding our standing in God in that first section and then moving on to how should we then live. So much of our study and teaching from this series comes from the Christ-centered exposition series on Ephesians.

[1:09] And Tony Merida is the author of that particular volume. The background of the book of Ephesians written by the Apostle Paul around the date 8 AD 62.

The setting was his Roman imprisonment. He was under house arrest in Rome. And so they had to deliver this letter from Paul all the way back to the church in Ephesus. Would be a few weeks journey probably.

And he was very familiar with this church. He had been their pastor for three years himself before he had left someone else there in his place to pastor them. You can read all about that in Acts chapter 19.

So that's the background, the breakdown of the book. Again, first three chapters, who we are in Christ. And then beginning in chapter 4 through chapter 6, how we live for Christ.

So that's what we're doing today. We're talking about how we then live for Christ. The very first part of Ephesians chapter 4. Would you mind standing with me if you're able to? And let's read the word of God together.

[2:06] Ephesians chapter 4. I want to welcome once again all of those joining with us this morning. Whether you're a member, a regular attender, or visiting with us this morning. Or if you're joining us online. We know there's some that weekly have to tune in online and join us that way.

And there's some who maybe would ordinarily be there, but due to health reasons or other things they're having to watch online right now, I want to make sure they know that we're grateful for their attendance with us this morning. Let's look at Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 1.

Therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord. You know, when we see the word therefore, what does that mean to us? We want to know what it's there for, right?

So you go back and you read Ephesians 1, 2, and 3, and you see what it's there for. So therefore, because of our standing in Christ, because of our identity in Christ, because we have learned who Christ sees us as, therefore, Paul writes, I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to live worthy of the calling you have received.

Live worthy of the calling you have received. With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

[3 : 23] Verse 4. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope at your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Now, grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. For it says, here's a quote from the Old Testament, when he ascended on high, he took the captives captive, but he gave and gave gifts to people.

But what does he ascended mean except that he also descended to the lower parts of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens to fill all things.

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, equipping the saints for the work of the ministry to build up the body of Christ.

Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness, then we will no longer be little children.

[4 : 37] Tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness and the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ.

From him, the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

Thanks for standing. You may be seated. God, I pray that you would speak to us through your word. Give us your eyes of understanding. Reveal your truth to us, Lord. Help us to learn how we can walk worthy of your gospel, worthy of you.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So, our theme for today is walking worthy of the gospel. We take this directly from this passage right here in Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 1.

Live worthy of the calling you have received. So, number one. Taking notes this morning, we've got some blanks for you to fill out in the bulletin. gospel unity.

[5 : 51] Gospel unity. That is our first principle that I hope we can take away that will enable us to walk worthy of our God, walk worthy of the gospel that we have received and in which we have placed our faith, and walk worthy of the calling that God has given to us.

Gospel unity. What do we mean by this? Go over to Matthew. You can look on the screen if you'd like. Matthew chapter 11, verse 28. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

What are we talking about? I thought we were talking about unity. Well, let's look back at Ephesians 4 and understand why we're tying in this passage with what we're reading about a call to unity in Ephesians 4.

So he says in, Paul writes in Ephesians 4, 1, I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to live worthy of the calling you have received. How do we do that?

[7 : 01] With all humility and gentleness. With patience. Bearing with one another in love. Verse 3, watch this, ready?

Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Then he goes on and talks about how there's one body, there's one Spirit, there's one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope, one God, and one Father of all through and in us all.

So the theme of how to achieve unity is through meekness, through gentleness, through bearing with one another in love, humility, making every effort to keep this unity.

Well, how do we achieve that? How do you and I set aside, number one, set aside ourselves, the big number one, and instead prioritize or prefer one another?

Well, Jesus gives us a picture of that. He says, be like me. Live how I lived. I gave you the ingredients to make this recipe for life here.

[8 : 19] He said, come to me, all who are weary and burdened. I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me. I am lowly.

Watch that word. I am lowly and humble in heart. And then you'll find rest for your souls. Jesus is not proud.

Jesus does not lord himself over us, even though he is the Lord. Jesus does not brag and boast about all his greatness, even though he has more than any of us could ever hope to achieve by which to brag.

And so we see that Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart. A man named Dane Ortlund wrote this book that you see a picture of here called Gentle and Lowly several years ago, and it kind of took Christianity by storm.

And I'm really glad it did, because the entire emphasis of this book, and people asked him, why did you write this book in particular at this moment?

[9 : 27] And he said, it's because in this era, this age of American Christianity, where we look around us and we see a country constantly pitted at each other's throats, like few times in our nation's history, we are at odds with each other.

There's one side against the other side. Regardless of what the issue is, more than likely, we're pitted fiercely against each other. He said, in the midst of this day, in the midst of this moment, we must interject the true spirit of Jesus Christ.

And if we read in the Bible, we read all kinds of attributes of God. He is mighty. He is powerful. He is all-knowing. He is all-seeing.

He is everywhere. He is the creator of all that is. There are so many amazing, incredible attributes of God of which we stand in awe.

However, when Jesus described himself, he said, I am gentle and lowly in heart.

[10 : 38] He could have used so many other descriptors, but that's what he wanted us to focus on. That's his true nature.

We have a quote from Dan Ortlund in this book. He says, in the one place in the Bible, Matthew 11, 28 through 30, where the Son of God pulls back the veil and lets us peer way down into the core of who he is, we are not told that he is austere and demanding in heart.

We're not told that he is exalted and dignified in heart. We're not even told that he is joyful and generous in heart, though we know that he is. Letting Jesus set the tone, his surprising claim is that he is gentle and lowly in heart.

So, before we move on, how like Jesus are you and I?

Are we gentle and lowly? That's the question I've got to look in the mirror and ask myself. Am I gentle and lowly?

[11 : 50] Or do I much prefer some of the attributes, some of the other attributes of God to model myself after? God is God and we must let God be God.

But when he says, come and be like me, learn from me, Matthew 11, we read specifically what we are supposed to learn from him.

And that is that he is gentle and lowly. What do we mean by that? We're gentle in our interactions with each other. We're gentle in our dealings with each other. Whether someone agrees with us or someone disagrees with us, I must be gentle in my dealings with others.

Man, that's a learning curve. That's a work in progress. That's not natural to us. Many of us, you know, your type A personalities, your alphas in the room, we're not talking about generation alpha, that's the little kids.

But your, you know, alpha personalities and take the lead, I'm the main guy, you need to listen to what I say. We don't want to be gentle. And we sure don't want to be lowly.

[12 : 58] We don't want to debase ourselves. We want to be ranked at the top. We want to strive for the top. You know, I didn't get valedictorian in my graduating class in seminary, but I did have a pretty good GPA, all right?

And I'm pretty happy about it. And if you knew me in undergraduate school, you'd be amazed at the GPA that I had in graduate school. We want to strive to be best.

We want to strive, come out ranked on top. But Jesus says, be lowly. It doesn't mean don't do your best. In fact, the Bible says if you're going to do something, do it with all your might.

Do it with all your heart. Do it to the glory of God. But did you catch that last part? Do it to the glory of God, not the glory of me. That's where the difference comes in.

He must increase. Some of you were tracking with me. Harlan's right there. That's right.

[14 : 03] But I must decrease. Harlan taught all the BBS kids that back this summer. He would say, what time is it? And then they would have to say, kids, you're with me?

What time is it? There you go. We got a few of them. John 3.30. He must increase. I must decrease. Isn't that great? That is a truth that will help us be lowly in heart.

Just like Jesus. If we keep that spirit that as we, as he increases, we decrease. So then it doesn't matter my opinion.

It doesn't matter if I win. It doesn't matter if I get the credit. None of those things matter as long as God is glorified. Then he increases as I decrease.

And then I am gentle and I am lowly like Jesus. So gospel unity, that's how we achieve it. That's how we achieve gospel unity. We are gentle with one another. We are lowly in heart.

[15 : 07] And then according to Ephesians 4, we can remember that we are all with one body. We're all with one spirit. We're all serving the same God. The same God is working through us patiently, step by step, reforming us into his image.

And so then we can be unified. And as we are unified together, we recognize that we are different. There is gospel diversity. Why do we call it gospel diversity?

Why do we call it gospel unity? Because the gospel is what unifies us. There is one Lord. There is one faith. There is salvation. So that brings us together with a common bond.

So what is gospel diversity? It means that God just didn't all save one type of person. He saved all kinds of people with all kinds of backgrounds and all kinds of strengths and all kinds of weaknesses.

And so the unity must come first. The gentleness and the lowliness must come first. Otherwise, this diversity will cause problems. Otherwise, we won't like the differences among our body of believers.

[16 : 15] Otherwise, we won't like how somebody else thinks something ought to be done differently than we do. So gospel diversity can actually help unify us.

Galatians chapter 3 teaches this principle. There is no Jew. There is no Greek. No slave or free. No male and female since you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Do you see that? The world teaches us this principle of intersectionality. Anybody know what intersectionality is? Yeah. Yeah.

I didn't either until I had to study it out. But intersectionality is the highlighting the differences between us. Whether it's a race gender.

Whether it's, I'm sorry, race or gender or background or financial condition. Whatever it is, the differences between us. Now, it kind of builds on the concept that there is a mainstream of each category.

[17 : 13] There is a majority of each category. And so they are kind of at the top. And then there's all these other underprivileged sectors of each one of those categories.

Whether it's race or gender or background or, you know, the country you're born in or whatever it is. Whether you have one parent at home or two parents or et cetera, et cetera. So there's all these different categories that we like to disunify ourselves, right?

Separate ourselves into all these different categories. And this intersectionality teaches that the more underprivileged categories you're in, the more they intersect and make you, you know, living a hard life and in need of help.

So just because you're Hispanic and you're female and you came from a single parent home, then you're at a disadvantage and you should be helped.

Now, there is certainly some truth in some of those things that oftentimes, because of different backgrounds, et cetera, it can help set you up for disadvantages. But you know what the interesting thing is?

[18 : 20] God can overcome anything. The cross is the one unifier. The cross is the one X factor that man can't understand.

The power of Jesus Christ is the one thing that can overcome all the failings of the world, all the failures of the world, all the disadvantages that we find ourselves with.

You know, if you were born in America, then you're part of that majority, you know, ruling class, so to speak. And if you're born in another, maybe third world country, then there's another intersection of underprivileged, et cetera.

But God is saying, look, you give all that up in Jesus. There is no Jew or Greek. There is no slave or free, male and female. All these identifiers that separate us, God says, look, none of that matters anymore, because now we are all one in Christ Jesus.

So, though we are diverse, we are together. But we don't ignore the diversity. We highlight the diversity and say, wow, God has done something special in bringing all these different people from different backgrounds who would probably never hang out in any other setting, right?

[19 : 36] I know we would all just totally get along if there was no church and we all just lived around the same area, right? We'd all be over at each other's houses all the time. Probably not, right? We probably wouldn't.

But we all gather together weekly. Why? Because we love God. We have the same God. We have the same faith. And so even though we share this common bond, we recognize that God has equipped us with different, diverse abilities.

how God has uniquely equipped me for life and ministry. We celebrate that. If everyone had my giftings from God, that'd be a weird church, wouldn't it?

We just got a bunch of pastors and everybody wants to preach on Sunday and everybody wants to visit and study the Bible and do the sermon preparation and help lead the church, etc.

If everyone was gifted in that way, well, what good would that church be? But instead, so many people in this room have different gifts than the rest of us.

[20 : 47] And we thank God for that. He has uniquely equipped you and then uniquely equipped me for life and ministry. And then he gives us responsibilities. Because of our diverse abilities, he gives us diverse responsibilities.

So we're not all called to do the same thing. Because he's equipped us to do different things, he calls us to different things at different points in our lives. So when you were 25, God probably had a different calling for you then than when you're 65.

Maybe there was a translate that, you know, that could translate from one stage of life to the other. But more than likely, your calling from God has changed as you go through life. Because he has equipped you differently for different stages of your life.

But each work that God calls you to is a worthy work. Whether it's singing in the choir, or rocking the babies in the nursery, or working in the children's church, or cooking the meals, or helping out in the kindness ministries, we try to show the love of Christ around town, or praying for those who are in desperate need of prayer throughout each week, or preaching the sermon, or leading the music, or playing the piano, or whatever it is, whatever it is, it is a worthy work.

And God has uniquely called you to that. So that's what they're teaching us, Paul is teaching us here in Ephesians. Would you turn with me over to 1 Corinthians chapter 12?

[22 : 16] We'll spend just a couple of minutes here. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Excuse me. Beginning in verse 4.

1 Corinthians 12 and verse 4. Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord. I want to read this passage to you because the Bible generally says it a whole lot better than I do.

So you can hear it straight from God. It's the same principle. Verse 6. There are different activities, but the same God produces each gift in each person. A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good.

To one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit. To another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit. To another, faith by the same Spirit. To another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit. To another, the performing of miracles.

To another, prophecy. To another, distinguishing between spirits. To another, different kinds of tongues. To another, interpretation of tongues. One and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each person as he wills.

[23 : 24] Don't get caught up in the listing of gifts here. Get caught up in the understanding that God equips each of us differently. He gives each of us different gifts. The gifts of the Spirit are too numerous to list in this passage.

So this isn't an exhaustive listing of the gifts of the Spirit, but what it is, is a point that Paul is making to the church in Corinth that says, each one of you is going to be gifted differently from the Spirit, but they're all valuable.

They're all unique. They're all a worthy work. So verse 12, for just as the body is one and has many parts and all the parts of that body, though many are still one body, so also is Christ.

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, we were all given one Spirit to drink. Indeed, the body is not one part, but many.

We know that. If the foot should say, because I'm not a hand, I don't belong to the body, it's not for that reason any less a part of the body. If the ear says, I'm not an eye, so I don't belong to the body, it's not for that reason any less a part of the body.

[24 : 31] If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God has arranged each one of the parts in the body just as He wanted.

If they were all the same parts, where would the whole body be? So, many parts, one body. Verse 21.

One, the eye can't say to the hand, I don't need you. The hand can't say to the feet, I don't need you. On the contrary, those parts of the body that are weaker or smaller, more fragile, they're indispensable.

Can't do away with those. The parts of the body that we consider less honorable, we clothe these with greater honor. Our unrespectable parts are treated with greater respect, which our respectable parts don't need.

Instead, God put the body together, giving greater honor to the less honorable. Verse 25. Watch this. Ready? Last one. So that there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same concern for each other.

[25 : 38] Don't miss this. Don't miss this. That there would be no division in the body. God's design is diversity.

Satan's distraction is division. God designed differences. He designed a diverse group so we would be complete when we're together.

Satan wants to take God's design and distort it into this horrible, destructive concept of division.

He wants to divide us. He wants to take this diversity and get us worked up about it. He wants to take this diversity and sow seeds of strife, seeds of discord, and divide this body that God wants to unite.

Don't let that happen. The holidays should be a great time. Christmas should be a great time to come together as a church, to unite around our faith in Christ, around the celebration of Jesus and His nativity, on the celebration of Jesus that He came, was sent down by the Father to be our Redeemer, to save us.

[27 : 03] to be the sacrifice for the penalty for our sin that we committed. He could be our salvation. So all those years ago, we celebrate that baby.

We celebrate the gospel story that you and I are sinners in need of a Savior. And Jesus willingly became that Savior. That should unite us. That He hung on the cross.

That He bled and died. And three days later, He arose from the grave. And He is alive today. And He says, if you call on Me, if you put your faith in Me, and say, God, forgive me of my sins, cleanse me, make me your child, then He will do that.

And He will save you from the penalty of your sin. That should be what unites us. And my friend, if you have not done that this morning, if there's not been a time in your life when you've prayed that prayer to Jesus for the forgiveness of your sin, to put all your faith in Him, turn from your sin, repent of it, and turn to Jesus, then please don't leave this house today without doing that.

Please don't walk out of this building without making that one most important decision. That is what unites us together. But man, Satan wants to get in there and mess it up. He wants to say, yeah, but what about how he dresses?

[28 : 20] What about his job? He makes more money than you. What about how he has this boat and you always wanted a boat and how come he got one before you did? We can get mad about the silliest things sometimes.

You know, there might come a day in the next several months of building and grounds and business meetings and talking about maybe doing something with the carpet and trying to update that. You know, there's a great opportunity to divide the church.

Well, I think it ought to be this color. I think it ought to be this kind of carpet. And God's sitting here thinking, what in the world? Be thankful you have a building, right? And come together remembering that gentle and lowly spirit that can unite us.

Don't let Satan distract with division. And then thirdly, gospel maturity. Quickly, our last point here, gospel maturity. Look down at verse 13.

Back in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 13. Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son.

[29 : 24] So remember, He equipped us differently. He calls us to unity. And then He says, let's grow in gospel maturity.

Understanding that the gospel of Jesus, the message that saved you from your sins, is not the end of its effectiveness. The gospel is there to propel us through this life.

The gospel is there to help us wake up and meet each new day. And the more familiar we get with the gospel and the more we apply the gospel directly to our days, we grow in maturity as a believer.

This doesn't mean length of being a follower of Jesus. There are people who are decades long followers of Jesus.

who are still immature in their understanding and application of the gospel. Coming to church for a long time, maybe a Sunday school teacher, maybe a deacon, doesn't matter what role they play or how long they've been coming to church, it matters how much you've internalized the gospel of Jesus and made it an actual, real part of your life.

[30 : 46] So, gospel maturity is what we're talking about back in verse 13. We reach this unity and faith and knowledge of God's Son growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.

Man, the fullness of God is what we measure ourselves against. Well, we're never going to measure up, are we? We're never going to totally measure up to the fullness of God. But my goodness, God wants to take us a little bit closer to Him, a little bit more like Him every day.

And sometimes we jump five steps ahead and sometimes we'll slide back a little bit. But every day is another step in that journey with Jesus in this maturing process.

So don't get distracted. Don't get off the path. So you've got to get back and keep walking with the Lord as He calls us to maturity.

I love this quote by Warren Wearsby. If you find something written by Warren Wearsby, take a chance and read it because it's probably pretty good. Truth without love is brutality and love without truth is hypocrisy.

[31 : 52] So becoming mature as a believer is learning how to balance this truth and love. How do we know that? Well, Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4, we left off in verse 13.

So pick it up in 14. Then we will no longer, when we grow in maturity, into this stature measured by Christfulness, then we will no longer be little children. How many little children Christians do you know?

I know a few. We're not pointing fingers, y'all. You can raise your hand. It's okay. How many little children Christians do you know? Anybody know some? I do. Absolutely. I know some little children Christians.

Doesn't mean they're little children in age. It means they haven't developed into maturity as a follower of Jesus. So, it says, then we won't be little children any longer, tossed around by the waves and every wind of teaching, human cunning and cleverness and techniques of deceit.

Man, just a reminder, the devil is out there trying to mess you up. He will use whatever it takes. He'll use the internet. He'll use other people. He'll use your own flesh.

[33 : 01] He'll use your own mind against you. The devil will use whatever it takes to mess you up. There is real spiritual warfare happening. And that's why the Holy Spirit of God is already the victor.

He's already won. We can already be firmly planted on the winning side with Jesus. But, it takes walking with Him.

It takes growing past that little children's stage into maturity. So, verse 15. Here's the big concept and we'll be done. Speaking the truth in love.

This is how we're not little children anymore as Christians. How we grow in maturity. Speaking the truth in love. Let us grow in every way into Him who is the head.

Christ. Okay? Speaking the truth in love. So, that's why I like that Warren Wears. the quote. Truth without love is brutal. Love without truth is deceit.

[34 : 12] False. You've got to have a balance of truth and love. Another way to put it. Another, one of my favorite writers, John Stott.

Ruth, truth without love is too hard. Love without truth is too soft. Maybe just a little simpler, right? A little easier to understand. Truth without love is too hard.

Love without truth is too soft. What do we mean by that? Gospel maturity. So, back in verse 15. Listen, I don't go to the Greek very much, but I just graduated with my master's degree.

So, in celebration of that, we're going to bust out a Greek word this morning, okay? Alephuontis. Alephuontis. It literally means, we got that from Ephesians 4, verse 15.

Speaking the truth. Speaking the truth literally means truthing. I didn't know that was a thing. I don't think it is. But in the Greek, it was, okay?

[35 : 11] So, when they wrote this in the original languages, Alephuontis, Alephuontis, Alephuontis is the root verb. It means, to truth. We don't have a word like that in English, right?

Let me, let me truth you for a minute. So, when you add on this on test, it's like the progressive, you know, participle at the end here.

It says, truthing. So, truthing in love. We do need to truth with one another. We need to be truthful. We need to speak the truth.

But we gotta do it in love. So, do you find yourself more often truthing harshly or truthing lovingly?

There's a question that you and I gotta ask ourselves. When you correct someone, when you point out their wrong, point out their wrongdoing, point out their failures, do you truth lovingly or do you truth harshly?

[36 : 17] When you deal with your kids, parents, do we truth lovingly or harshly with our kids? We've got to be a people who are regularly truthing in love.

All right? John 1, 14, the word became flesh. Notice that capitalize on the capitalization on the word there. That's how we know it's talking about Jesus. The living word of God.

The word became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld his glory. The glory is of the only begotten of the Father. Of course, it's Jesus. Full of grace and truth.

Jesus lived that balance. He was that balance of truth and love. He wasn't too far over one way. And you just tell everybody it's okay.

God loves you. Your sin's not a big deal. Well, that's hypocrisy, isn't it? That's deceit. Sin is a big deal. It separates us from God. But he wasn't so far the other way into truth that he spoke it without any love.

[37 : 18] He wasn't saying, you're all a bunch of evil, wicked sinners and you're going to hell and rightfully so. And that's the end of the story. I've heard preachers preach like that before. I don't know what Bible they're preaching from because that's not who Jesus was.

Jesus spoke the truth in love. He was full of both truth and grace. 2 John in verse 3 Grace, mercy and peace will be with us from God the Father from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father in truth and love.

This is what Christianity looks like. The more that you and I balance truth and love the more we are like Jesus and the more effective our witness is.

The more effective our church will be. The more effective our ministry will be. The more we balance truth and love. Usually Christians get a bad rap because we're out of balance one way or another.

Many churches across church history have been guilty of going too far toward love and away from truth or going too far toward truth and away from love.

[38 : 34] But when we strike that balance God can use it. God can bless it because that's who he is. He is gentle and lowly in heart. So here's our takeaway for today.

When we walk worthy before God we apply the gospel directly. You and I can walk worthy of God by applying the gospel directly. What does that look like?

How do we apply the gospel directly to our lives? Maybe for you it means putting your faith in Jesus for salvation. Maybe you need to do that today. Maybe you've been putting off for a long time and you need to do that before you walk out these doors today.

We'll pray in a moment and you'll have an opportunity. I'll give you one before we leave today. Maybe it means you need to ask these questions. One, am I gentle and lowly in heart? Am I gentle and lowly in heart?

Or am I self-absorbed? Am I harsh? How am I in my heart? Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Number two, do I embrace differences in our church?

[39 : 37] Do I embrace the differences in our church or do I resist it? Do I buck against it? Do I only go and socialize with those who are kind of like me and ignore everybody else in our church because I don't really like them all that much?

Do I embrace the differences that God has brought together in this gospel diversity?

That's how we apply the gospel directly in our days, in our lives. And then finally, do I find myself truthing, cut off the end of it there, that's my bad, do I find myself truthing in love?

Truthing in love. I guarantee you, this week, some spouse, you know, husband and wife are going to be going at it with each other, and then the wife is going to say, or the husband might say, sweetie, you're not truthing in love right now.

And you know what the Greek says, it says, we need the truth in love. It's true, y'all, we really do. We've got the truth in love. The community around us, Henrietta, Clay County, even the folks up in Wichita, okay, we need to love them too.

We need the truth in love, speak the truth, but do it like Jesus did, with that gentle and lowly heart, embracing the differences that we're going to encounter, asking God to exhibit his spirit in us so that people will see Jesus, and we can walk worthy of his gospel.

[41 : 08] Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we thank you so much for your gospel. Man, it changes us. It changes us from separated from you to united with you for all of eternity.

It changes us from sinful to righteous. it changes us from lost to found, from darkness to light.

And God, it can keep doing that every moment of every day. The more we revisit it, the more we internalize it, the more we celebrate gospel unity, gospel diversity, and we try to grow in gospel maturity.

God, help us to give up to you and say, I'm going to stop running from you, I'm going to stop fighting from you, I'm going to stop bucking against your Holy Spirit, I'm going to say, God, work through me, change me, let me walk worthy of you by the Holy Spirit's power, and it's in Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Church, before we begin our invitation, let me ask you this, if you'd like to come forward and talk about becoming a child of God for the first time, please meet me right down here. If you'd like to come forward and talk about joining this church and putting your membership here, please meet me right down here.

[42 : 18] If you'd like to come forward for prayer about anything, something in the message this morning or something God's been working with you about, please take a moment and meet me right down here. Let's pray together. Would you stand and join Brother Greg as he leads us?