

“Walk the Talk”
“Grow Up Series, Part 4”

I heard a pastor share an interesting story about a couple in Tennessee that found a two headed lizard. Technically it was a skink, and the animal had a head on one end of its body and a head on the other end. When the animal was spooked it tried to run in opposite directions. The pastor said that it resembled many believers who live double minded and do not walk out the calling of God on their life. I tried to verify the story but unfortunately, I couldn't find it anywhere. But I did find a North Carolina couple that found a two headed lizard. They took this lizard into the vet and an x-ray was done on the animal. They came to find out that the animal had two heads but only one brain. I like this analogy so much better. You and I are citizens of heaven, but we live physically in this fallen world. Our minds can be set on things of this earth or things of heaven. Scripture speaks about a double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Today, we are going to see from Ephesians chapter 4 an encouragement to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. I have titled this message today “Walk the Talk.” We are leaving the doctrine aspect of Ephesians and moving into the duty aspect. Sound doctrine is so important because you will behave out of what you believe. It is the foundation of how we are to live. In other words, we want to bring our practice to our position. Our behavior to our identity in Christ.

Today we are continuing our series through the book of Ephesians. Chapters 1-3 were all about good theolog and doctrine. Last week we walked through the prayer Paul offered to the saints and how this doxology transitioned the letter from theology to now practicing this theology. Paul proved to us that theology is practical. In my opinion, Paul focuses on three areas in chapter four. The three areas are in our unity, our maturity, and our victory. I want to look at these three elements beginning with point number one. Please fill out point one in your notes:

POINT #1 – Grow in Unity.

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. – Ephesians 4:1-6 NASB1995

Here Paul once again addresses himself as a prisoner of the Lord. We saw last week that this word is more of a servant deacon than it is a criminal. Paul was a prisoner in the sense that he faced all kinds of persecution and trials because he was an apostle and preacher of the Gospel. Next, Paul literally begs believers to walk in their calling. The word here for implore is like a person getting on their knees and begging. It also means to exhort and encourage. He is asking these saints to not be hypocrites but behave as they have believed. When I think about “walking with the Lord” my first thought is when God would walk with Adam in the garden of Eden. God is good because it also says God walked with Adam in the cool of the day. Adam walked with God with no sin, shame, sickness, or sorrow. It was a picture of heaven on earth. It's still God's will for us today. The word here for worthy is much like a balancing scale. If you want to weight the cost of gold in old times you would put the gold on one side of the scale and a weight on the

other and see how much weight it takes for the two to be balance. Paul is calling us to do all we need to do to be balance with God. That we may walk with Him in fellowship and intimacy every day.

The word “calling” is super cool, it means an invitation and privilege of the Gospel. It is the same word used in **Romans 11:29** where it says, “The call of God is irrevocable.” The word tolerance here is a hot topic in our culture today. People are wanting to live however they want and demand that the word respects it. I am sorry but I will not respect sin. If someone I knew was a heroin addict, I would not say, “I respect your belief that heroin is your true identity.” No, it’s poison and it will kill you and I will not pretend that it is fine. Many in our culture are calling for tolerance but what they are really asking for is agreement. Tolerance and agreement are not the same thing. Jesus shared meals with sinners but He wasn’t a sinner nor was He shy about preaching against sin. Plus, if we are honest here, who is Paul referring to. Is he saying have tolerance with sinners or with fellow saints. In context, it seems he is talking about having tolerance with fellow believes.

Paul speaks about unity. I attend a Baptist university even though I am a Pentecostal Foursquare pastor. There are so many times when I am studying a textbook, and it speaks about men only in church leadership. As a foursquare minister I strongly believe women can serve in leadership. Do I get all upset and argue my point? No, I eat the meat and spit out the bones. I am not sure what kind of differences were going on with the Ephesians, but Paul was set on explaining that they must all walk in unity. I understand “one Lord, one faith, etc.” but when it gets to the part about one baptism this is pretty interesting. There were many baptisms in the New Testament. There was a baptism for converting to Judaism, John’s baptism of water, baptism in water that follows salvation, and baptism in the Holy Spirit. Paul is saying here that there is “one” because we all serve the same Lord. There’s no baptism for Buddha or Mohammad in the Bible. It is only unto the Lord Jesus.

Let’s scroll past a few verses here and look at verse 11. Paul is explaining what many call the five-fold ministry.

POINT #2 – Grow in Maturity.

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
– Ephesians 4:11-16 NASB1995

This is such an interesting passage. The word “pastor” is only used twice in the New Testament. Yet in almost 100% of Christian churches, the main leader is called “pastor.” If you go to a church and the main leader is called “Apostle so and so” or “Prophet so and so” it will typically be a very apostolic and charismatic church. Sometimes a little weird. Most believers are fine with the titles, “Pastor, teacher, and evangelist” but because of the abuses in church, “apostle and prophet” are looked at as weird. The reality is that any believer can walk in these gifts. Any person in this house of God right now can prophesy, teach, pastor, evangelism, etc. I say this often but our pastoral team walks in 4/5 of the five-fold ministry. I operate in the prophetic gifting as I bring vision, prophetic leading, and direction. Pastor Wally and Lana Gail operate in the pastoral calling as they visit the flock, administer communion, support the ministry and so much more. Jonathan operates in the teaching role and Pastor Randy operates in the apostle role. Apostle means sent one. Pastor Randy is our executive pastor and helps with my vision to strategize in everything from Foursquare policy, to finances, and legal matters. He helps with the structure. The reason we aim to have a five-fold ministry at South Gate is one, it is commanded in Scripture right here in Ephesians and two because of the purpose of the five-fold. Paul here says that the purpose is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and the building of the body of Christ. Church is all about God and our aim is to attract the presence of God, but the ministry and the preaching is about you. It’s to build you up and equip you to walk out your calling. Let me just say here that every believer can teach, prophesy, evangelize. Some are called to the “office of.” Someone who is called to the office of prophet, etc. should be teaching others who desire to walk in that calling.

Paul then goes on to speak about the title of this teaching series. He says that we are to grow up in all aspects of Christ. We are not to be pulled along by all kinds of different heresies etc. I was watching a video from a podcast the other day and a United Methodist Senior Pastor was announcing to his church that he was transitioning into a woman. Many of these churches believe there is nothing wrong with a senior Christian pastor living as a woman. When I was in youth ministry at 15 I remember a guest speaker coming to our church and he used a prop in his teaching. He brought out a plate of brownies. He asked the kids if they wanted a brownie. Of course all the kids raised their hands and wanted one. But then the pastor said, “I have to tell you one thing though. I added just a pinch, just a little pinch of dog poop in the mix. It’s only like 1 percent of the brownies and you won’t even taste it so it will be fine.” Then he said, “Now who wanted a brownie again?” Of course, no one wanting one then. But you see, that’s how many believers live their lives. It’s only 1% sin in my life. Its only one show, it’s only one you fill in the blank.” In reality it is one open door for the influence of the enemy.

If you want to grow in Christ it is going to happen when you get serious about the little things in your life. If you want to grow your muscles, you need to spend a little time in the gym and eat good amounts of protein not junk. If you want to grow your muscles but change nothing in your life, you cannot expect to grow your muscles. If you want to grow in Christ, how can you if nothing changes in your current life? You need to seek the Lord and say like the Psalmist in Psalm 139 “Search my heart oh Lord and know my anxious thoughts, see if there is any unclean way in me.”

POINT #3 – Grow in Victory.

21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. – Ephesians 4:21-32 NASB1995

Notice how many times the Apostle Paul speaks of truth. Grow in truth, know the truth, and be renewed in the truth. I love verse 23 as it mirrors **Romans 12:2** to not be conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Paul goes into a little more detail here than in Romans. He contrasts the old way of life with the new. When you became a Christian, you transformed from a dead person into a resurrected believer and walk in the new man. Too many Christians are trying to disciple their old nature when we are called to let it go and walk in the new man.

I preach here often about the power of the renewed mind. You and I should not have a thought in our mind that is not in the mind of God. If the thoughts we are thinking is contrary to the Word of God we need to immediately reject it and replace it with truth. But Paul goes a little deeper here which I absolutely love. He says, “be angry and do not sin” and he also says, “Lay aside falsehood.” Why is this so important? Because you and I are emotional beings. God is an emotional Being. If we do not have emotional intelligence, we will find ourselves in trouble because we go beyond just thinking a bad thought, we start to entertain it. You don’t go from walking in truth to immediately sinning just like that. If you find yourself sinning with someone, it is typically because you have been entertaining that thought for quite some time. You have been nursing a worry, caring for a temptation, and then eventually you fold and fall into the temptation. Not only do we need to stop entertaining falsehood, but we must become emotionally intelligent (recommend book). I told our prayer group this past Wednesday that I have been lost in the Psalms during my personal time with God. A few days ago I was in **Psalm 142** and came across a verse from King David. He said, “Save my soul from prison oh Lord, so that I might give thanks to Your Name.” If you read the Psalms long enough you might think David was a little emo. He was a little negative. Overly dramatic much David? But here’s the thing, David pours out anger, sadness, fear, depression, and so many other emotions in the psalms. But in all the time he is pouring out his heart, he is pouring it out to God. I want to do a study in the Bible for very long time it says, “So that.” Here David says, “get my soul out of prison SO THAT I can give you thanks.” Be real with your emotions but be real to God about those emotions. Bring them to the Lord and let Him speak to you about the matter.

Paul winds down this chapter saying, “don’t let any unwholesome word proceed from your mouth.” Another way of saying this is, “Make sure your heart is pure so that when you speak, the natural overflow of your heart is wholesome.” If you work on your heart and grow up in faith, you won’t have to worry about your words. I am never fearful that one day I am going to accidentally say, “Man I love the Kansas City Chiefs.” Because there is not an ounce of love for the Chiefs in my heart it will never come out.

Paul concludes this portion saying that we are to do all these things because Jesus first did it for us. Behaving from the belief that we have the victory in Jesus is so vital. Having a *it is finished* mentality is life transforming. You need to consistently remind yourself of what you have. Let me say it even stronger, you need fresh testimonies in your life from the finished work of the cross.

In 2011 there was an Israeli woman named Anant. Her daughter wanted to do something nice for her mom who worked so hard so she began looking around and thinking what she could do for her mom. She noticed that her mom had slept on the same mattress for decades and thought it would be nice to surprise her mom with a brand-new mattress and bed set. While the mom was away the daughter set up delivery and removal of the old mattress. When the mother saw what the daughter had done, she was completely undone and sad. She told her daughter, “You didn’t know this but all of my life’s savings was in that mattress. We are talking to the tune of a million dollars. The delivery guys took the old mattress and sadly the mattress was never recovered or found. This poor mom had to live the rest of her life without the million dollars she had worked her whole life for. Sadly, many believers continue to face life’s difficulties without apply the authority Jesus died to give us. Many of us forfeit our peace, joy, and power because we fail to walk in our victory and instead dwell in our sufferings.