

Living a Life Worth Living

Thomas Robinson, *Ephesians – Growing Up Into Christ 13*, * June 16, 2013

Ephesians 3:20-4:6

²⁰ Now **to him** who is **able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think**,
according to his **power at work within us**,
²¹ **to him** be **glory in the church and in Messiah Jesus**
throughout **all generations** of the **age of ages**. Amen.

4:¹ I therefore, a **prisoner in the Lord**, appeal to you
to **walk** in a manner **worthy** of the **calling** by which you have been **called**,
² with all **humility of thought** and **gentleness**, with **patience**,
bearing with one another in **love**,
³ eager to maintain the unity / **oneness** of the **Spirit** in the bond of **peace**:
⁴ **One body** and **one Spirit** –
just as you were called to **the one hope that belongs to your call** –
⁵ **one Lord, one faith, one baptism**,
⁶ **one God** and **Father** of all, who is **over all** and **through all** and **in all**.

Philippians 1:27

²⁷ Only let your manner of **life be worthy of the gospel of the Messiah**, so that whether I
come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are **standing firm in one spirit**,
with one mind striving **side by side** for the **faith** of the **gospel**.”

Ephesians 1:17-18

¹⁷ I pray that ... ¹⁸ with the **eyes of your hearts enlightened**, you **may know what is the
hope to which he has called you**, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.”

Colossians 3:12-15

¹² Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, **compassionate hearts, kindness,
humility of thought, gentleness, and patience**, ¹³ **bearing with one another** and **giving grace
to each other**, if one has a complaint against another; as **the Lord has given grace to you**, so
must you too. ¹⁴ And **above all** these put on **love**, which binds everything together in perfect
harmony. ¹⁵ And let the **peace of Christ** rule in your hearts, to which indeed **you were called in
one body**. And be thankful.

I Corinthians 1:8-9

⁸ **He will strengthen you** to the end, so that you may be **blameless** the day of our Lord
Jesus Messiah. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom **you were called into the fellowship of his Son,
Jesus Messiah our Lord**.

Ephesians 5:1-2, 8

¹ Therefore be **imitators of God**, as **beloved children**. ² And **walk in love**, as Christ loved
us and gave himself up for us....

⁸ For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. **Walk as children of light**.

Ephesians 4:15

¹⁵ We are to **grow up in every way** into him who is the head, **into Christ**.

What Makes Life Worth Living?

Paul writes as a spiritual father to his children and 'grandchildren' in faith. He writes as a prisoner, a serious situation that will ultimately lead to execution. He's in dire straights. A failure? Do I want someone the state counts dangerous as my spiritual father?

Paul wants them and us to see life anew: Far more than bad or good circumstances. Yes he's in prison, but living free: He's rooted and unshakable in the vast love of Jesus. He wants us, like himself, to live fully a life that makes a real difference. It's better without chains, but we forge our worst chains. Abundant life flows from trusting the one who does far more than we ask or imagine. We can live wholeheartedly, boldly, open to love and pain, but still secure, since everything about us that truly lasts (is truly us) is in our Father's hands.

So, as a prisoner, he challenges them. They're with him 'in the Lord.' That's more important than jail, failure, wealth, accomplishment, sickness, temptation, success, or struggle.

A Walk/Life Worthy of a Remarkable Call

Note how Paul puts it: *Walk worthy of the Calling by which you were called.* Paul loves the image of life as a walk/journey. He's walked (no vehicles) through cities and countries into new lives, dangers, adventures. We too have a walk: challenges, dangers, people, relationships. It's not a fixed path, but cross-country in new territory, creating life, the future with God.

How do we find our way? Paul points not to rules but the Calling that started us on our way – what Jesus has done, the Gospel. It's God's Love embodied in Jesus' coming, his teaching, serving, crucifixion; it's the hope in his resurrection, his Spirit in us. It's beautiful, worthy, challenging. We celebrate that call, let it shine on us, for a journey that corresponds to it.

Everyday Life Shaped by the Gospel

I think, "I can't be worthy." That's missing the point. God's Spirit/grace works in us. But the call makes a real, daily difference. Paul gives four freedoms that flow from and fit the call. Humility, self-forgetfulness. Freedom from self-assertion, perfectionism, fear, defensiveness. His vast love enfolds us; we're nourished and secure in him. Knowing that, we can begin to live Jesus' teaching about trusting God.

Gentleness. Freedom from hurting others. We made ourselves God's enemies, God responded with love: I'll live and die for you, take your sin on myself, give you healing, and my own life. Jesus' gentleness shines, shows how to honor every person. Illuminates our life choices.

Patience, slow to anger. We mess up. God's Spirit stays with us, picking us up, never giving up. We learn that anger is a choice we don't have to make. Free from a bad vulnerability.

Bearing with one another, love. This is 'giving grace to each other,' learning the joy, delight, community that is the heart of God. We imitate God by walking in love, as we are loved.

A Treasured Gift of Unity and Peace

What God has done in Jesus not only heals us, it heals us together. God loves the diversity of people but wants to heal the alienation and hostility that splits us on every level. We humans are not going to achieve unity, so he gives us oneness/unity to us by giving us the same life – the Holy Spirit. He urges us eagerly to treasure and maintain that gift.

It's not easy. Make peace as hard to break as shackles or prison walls. It's worth it because that oneness fits the oneness of the God who can do more than all we ask or imagine.