

*Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

*Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 6/29/16*

*Letter To The Ephesians*

**Living Worthily**

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Scripture Portions: Ephesians 4:1-3 and 17-27

*"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>17</sup> So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup> Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. <sup>20</sup> That, however, is not the way of life you learned <sup>21</sup> when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup> You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup> to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. <sup>25</sup> Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. <sup>26</sup> "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil a foothold."*

We now come to the second half of this letter. Chapters 1 - 3 are doctrinal, and they emphasize our standing "in Christ"; chapters 4 - 6 are practical, and they emphasize our state down here in the world. What we are "in Christ" must be related to what we are in the world. Doctrine must always issue in duty; our creed must be seen in our conduct. There are two dangers which we must always seek to avoid: (1) **Teaching doctrine without relating it to duty** - this will make for a mere intellectualism and a dead formalism; (2) **Teaching duty which does not issue forth from doctrine** - this will make for error, superficiality and spurious growth.

Notice in verse 1 how the apostle commences this second half of the letter: "...I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" - for the first mark of a saved person is that his life is different. It used to be like Ephesians 2: 2-3 and 4: 17-19, but now - what a change has taken place!

## 1. The **CONSTRAINT** of a Worthy Life.

What is it that constrains us to live a worthy life? We are constrained by a tender, loving appeal, as verse 1 indicates. Paul had led these Ephesians to Christ, and now from the prison in which he languishes he writes to his spiritual children and says, "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received"; that is, that your conduct corresponds with your high calling in Christ Jesus. Behind this written appeal from Paul we hear the voice of our loving Lord beseeching us to "live worthily". Are we going to respond to His appeal? - or are we going to live a life which is dishonoring to Christ? The choice is left with us. He has loved us and given Himself for us (Galatians 2: 20). Does His love compel us to do as He commands and to live a life which pleases Him? - look up 2 Corinthians 5: 14.

## 2. The **CHARACTERISTICS** of a Worthy Life.

We read of Enoch (Genesis 5: 22-24); of Abraham (Genesis 24: 40); and in the Old Testament we find many other references to those who "walked with God." In the New Testament the same idea is conveyed in the words "behave decently" (Romans 13: 13); "live" ( 2 Corinthians 5: 7; Galatians 5: 16; Ephesians 5: 15; Colossians 2: 6); and "walk" (1 John 1: 7; and 3 John 3). All these references tell us of the marks or characteristics of the Worthy Life; but if we confine ourselves to the verses in our portion we see that:-

- **A Worthy Life is a HEAVENLY Life** (verse 1). "...the calling you have received." Our calling is a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1); a high calling (Philippians 3:14) and a holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9). We are a heavenly people living upon the earth, and to live worthily means just that - to live the heavenly life on earth!
- **A Worthy Life is a HUMBLE Life** (verse 2) The word "humble" means to be selfless, utterly lacking in self-assertiveness. Look up Matthew 11: 29; Philippians 2:3; Titus 3: 2; and James 1: 21. The root meaning of the word is "a spirit that never takes offence" - that is, humility. Therefore - 1 Peter 5: 6.
- **A Worthy Life is a HELPFUL Life** (verse 2). The word "patient" means "to endure with an unruffled temper"; yes, to do that instead of being intolerant, impatient and critical! The word "bearing" is explained in Colossians 3: 13, and it means "lovingly putting up with what we don't like in other people!" And, for all this, "love" is the motive power - as Ephesians 5: 2 makes plain.
- **A Worthy Life is a HARD Life** (verse 3). The words "make every effort..." mean "to strive with great earnestness and unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Paul speaks here of 'effort', and that means toil, striving and perseverance. It can be hard work, but we must "make every effort". God has

wonderfully united all believers in the Body of Christ (verses 4 - 6), and the Holy Spirit dwells within us to make that unity real. Our responsibility as members of the Body is to maintain that unity - look up Romans 12: 18!

- **A Worthy Life is a HOLY Life** (verse 3). The word "Spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit who indwells us and who is very easily grieved (Ephesians 4: 30), and with whom we are to be constantly filled (Ephesians 5: 18). In verses 17 - 26 we are given five injunctions which must be obeyed if we are to behave ourselves in a holy way (1 Thessalonians 2: 10):- (1) in verses 17 - 19 we must "NO LONGER..."; (2) in verse 22 we are to "PUT OFF..."; (3) in verse 24 we are to "PUT ON..."; (4) in verse 25 we are to "PUT OFF..."; (5) in verse 26 we MUST NOT...

### **3. The CONSUMMATION of a Worthy Life.**

How long does this earthly life go on, and where and how does it end? Verse 13 tells us. That will be Glory!

When He comes, our glorious King,  
All His ransomed home to bring,  
Then anew this song we'll sing:  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!