

Jesus to the disciples: *If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

Matthew 16:24

God has given us the opportunity to walk together during the time between the departure of your former pastor and the arrival of your new pastor. As we walk together, I ask you to:

- Pray for God to speak to and through me.
- Rekindle your first love for our Lord Jesus.
- Ask God to guide the Pastor Search Committee.
- Yearn to honor God with your best.

Our Bible study today finds us exploring words Paul wrote to the Christians in Ephesus during his first imprisonment for sharing his faith. The text of our study comes after Paul has reminded believers that God created their community of faith, bringing together Jews and Gentiles, despite their differences. Each had been dead to God before He made them alive through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul wanted his readers to *live/walk* according to their *calling* from God.

Christians face the tendency to get comfortable in their faith and coast along. Change awakens us. How have you grown in your faith in the past year?

Ephesians 4:1-3

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

As people of “*the way*” (Acts 9:2), we are to walk with Jesus.

As believers in Jesus we made an initial commitment decision. That decision is to be followed by a lifestyle of discipleship. For Paul, the idea of walking in a manner worthy of one’s calling referred to a face-to-face journey. This journey would include accountability, intimacy and security. With every step, God’s opinion matters. In every situation, God’s opinion matters. The goal is to allow Jesus to become all He can be in our lives.

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

How does God want us to walk?

1. Put away your pride and selfishness. *Humility*
Tim Keller: Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it’s thinking of yourself less.
2. Encourage one another. *Gentleness*
Develop self-control and the *attitude of Christ Jesus*.
3. Address the influence of your own idealistic expectations. *Patient*
Patience finds the ability to endure annoyances without retaliation.
4. Choose God’s kind of compassion. *Bearing with one another*
Am I willing to know God in all my expectations and relationships?
5. Exchange your way *for the unity of the Spirit*.

3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Churches do not drift toward unity. Unity requires being sensitive to differences. The desire to develop unity helps us to listen with the intent of understanding one another. In the effort to develop unity, we are willing to put aside personal preferences and insignificant differences so that together we can submit to Jesus. Unity is every believer’s responsibility.

Unity of the Spirit

...pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.
(from *The Message*)

The reality of Paul’s message is that we come together to form the body of Christ in today’s world. Each one of us is a living sample of what God does when He enters life totally yielded to Jesus. Together we are a sample church of what God does with people who are totally submitted to Jesus.

What kind of Jesus are people sampling in your life?

