

Ephesians Series: What is Your Life Mission? #21
“Living Life Authentically”
Message Notes, May 14, 2023

Ephesians 4:1-3 (NIV) ¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Paul’s Heartfelt Plea

- **Urge** *parakaleo* a word used to communicate something important in a warm, personal, urgent way. Sometimes translated as “to encourage” or “to comfort.” *Para*=alongside, *kaleo*=communicate. This term is never condescending.
- Timing, when a person comes to a realization, is significant. **Ecclesiastes 3:1,6 (LB)** “There is a right time for everything...a time to search; a time to lose; a time for keeping; a time for throwing away.”
- “I waited for a long time without saying a word until you came to that point of realization.”
Stop Often and Reflect, Koichi Ohtawa
- “Live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (1): The most appropriate way to live as Christians—We who realize that we are partakers of God’s amazing grace become those who live on mission to carry out God’s great plan.

The Way of Life of the Called

- A Copernican shift in thinking is required: Humanely speaking, the ideas of **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** (Covey) come to mind, but they represent a different way of the thinking from to Bible.
- The authentic Christian way of life is to develop the qualities of *humility*, *meekness*, *longsuffering (patience)*, and *love*.
- The pitfalls of the logic of the strong: Surely, we are being changed and growing. But is it “I” becoming stronger, or is it the Lord, who has begun to dwell within me, becoming stronger?

Jesus’ Perspective

Luke 10:17-20 (NIV) ¹⁷The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” ¹⁸He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

- What does Christian growth mean? What are we aiming for and where do we find joy?
- The disciples’ greatest concern was to expand their influence (power) in the spiritual (faith) world, but Jesus teaches that the proper way to live as a Christian (healthy attitude) is to be amazed and grateful that an unclean person such as yourself is forgiven (ongoing) and being used by God.

Four Characteristics of the Christians

1. Humility *tapeinophrosyne*

- Ancient koine Greek did not have the concept of “humility” as we do today. At that time, humility was regarded not as a virtue, but as something cowardly, humiliating, and despicable. However, the influence of Christianity dramatically changed the meaning of the concept and created a new word.
- When we come to face ourselves as we truly are in the presence of God, through correct self-awareness, rather than in comparison to others, we are overcome by the immaturity of our own ugliness and self-centeredness.

Matthew 5:3-5 (NIV) ³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

- Whenever we encounter God, who stands by us who repeatedly fail, forgiving, encouraging and prompting us, we are humbled.

2. Meekness *prautes*

- In the Analects of Confucius, it is said that “moderation is the highest form of virtue,” and the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said the same thing, defining meekness as “the middle between extreme anger and not being extremely angry.”
- A person characterized by *prautes* becomes angry when it is appropriate and never gets angry when it would be inappropriate. In other words, he is angry when others are treated unfairly, but he is willing to endure and not get angry when he is suffering unjustly.
- This word also refers to a well-trained and controlled animal or a person who has complete control over every desire, instinct, emotion, and heartbreak that a human being can experience. However, a person with such complete self-control does not exist, except for the support and aid of God to help him. Only a person who is thoroughly aware of his own weakness and consciously continues to rely on God could maintain such self-control.

3. Longsuffering (patience) *anecho*

- This word represents the spirit of perseverance that will not give in, the spirit of endurance that will not give up until the end, and the spirit of winning the promises and rewards. It is the very image of the Lord God who believes in our salvation and waits on our behalf.
- Longsuffering means a spirit that has the power and ability to retaliate, but never uses it (Chrysostom). Jesus demonstrates this attitude, without regret, towards the cross he faced.

Matthew 26:52-54 (NIV) ⁵²“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”

4. Love *agape*

- The Greek words for **love** are ① *eros*, the love between a man and a woman, including sexual feelings; ② *philia*, affection fostered in extremely close and intimate relationships such as friendships; ③ *storge*, the affection family members have for each other ④ *agape*, the love of God, charity.
- Through the lens of agape love, I seek only what is best for the other person, regardless of what that person can do for me (their usefulness) or what s/he can do for me (potential). Even if that person harms or condemns me, I still feel nothing but kindness towards him/her.
- This love does not occur naturally in us; it must come from God. Only when we have been loved by God, through daily exposure to the kindness of Jesus, will we be able to treat others with a compassionate heart. This is the ultimate way of living authentically.

Conformity

- The common characteristic among these four is that they are given by God, and they require the abandonment of self-centeredness and the forgiveness and acceptance of others.
- These four characteristics produce true peace and unity, which have never needed more than we do today.
- This way of life is completely different from anything else in the world, and that is precisely why it is so appealing. This is a way of life that is definitely worthy of our calling. Paul gently reminds us that is for this purpose that we have been saved.
- As you reflect on your life from the perspective of these four characteristics, does anything come to mind or strike you?