

Ephesians 14-03-23b

Let's resume our study, we're in Ephesians chapter 4. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. We reviewed in some detail what this entails. What does it mean? What is the hope of our calling? We say our calling is to be a reflection of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the hope? What is the future that is attached to that? This is that we be thoroughly equipped for every good work, both now and in the ages to come. Okay, everybody's got that, right? If anyone asks you from now until the end of your natural life and into the eternal future, what is or what was your calling as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in this dispensation of grace, you know the answer, right? Anybody that does not know the answer, go back, listen to the first session this morning. There is no excuse for not knowing what our calling is.

There's no excuse now for not knowing what the hope of our calling is. Here's what we may not yet have a fix on. What's the rest of the issue here? How do I do it? How do I walk worthy of the calling with which I am called? You as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ want to fulfill your calling, yes? You want to fulfill your purpose.

Luke, this is your destiny, right? Everybody wants to fulfill their destiny, especially when it's a good destiny. There is blessing and reward and opportunity and fantastic above and beyond what you could ask or think potentials. Nobody doesn't want this destiny.

The Scriptures strain to impress upon us how wonderful these gifts and calling of God are for us. This calling, these gifts, God pleads with us. The Apostle Paul pleads with us in God's name, be worthy, walk worthy.

We say, all right, fine, I got it. I know what the calling is. I know what this tremendous potential is.

I just need to know how to do it. You told me what to do. This is like saying, this is like my mother and me.

Sitting in the same room and you walk in and you say, your task today is to make a Cherokee basket. Make a basket just like the Cherokees made it. Two people in the room, both given the same mission, me and my mother, okay? Everybody with me so far? The calling, the task is, if you make me a Cherokee basket, I will give you \$10 million.

But you got to do it today. You got to do it before the sun goes down. All the materials over here on the table, you got water, you got the straw, you got the whatever it takes to make one of these, it's all over there.

Just pick it up, weave a Cherokee basket, doesn't even have to be big, a little small basket, but it's got to be done right. Do it today, \$10 million I will give you, okay? This is my analogy. Now,

what's the problem? Of the two people in the room, only one of them knows how to make a Cherokee basket, and it's not me.

I have not got the first clue. If you hand me those materials, you're going to get maybe a placemat. I might be able to do the over and under, you know, and do the next one under and over, and make something flat.

I could no more make one of those baskets than I could transport myself to the moon. I have no idea. You could put one of them right in front of me for a pattern, I still wouldn't know how to do it.

There's a lot of skill and technique and practice involved in that. My mother makes beautiful baskets in that Native American skill set that she has acquired that I don't have. This is our problem when it comes to the walk-worthy request.

This pleading, this beseeching, walk-worthy, and I say, I would love to walk-worthy. Fulfill the hope of your calling. I would love to fulfill the hope of my calling.

Just tell me how. Are you with me? Do you want to know how to fulfill this calling? How to lay hold of this hope? Well, he tells us right here in verse 2 and following. I beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.

See in verse 2 where it says with? This is meta. And meta is not just with. It is a process that takes you from one place to another.

It tells you here's where you start and here's where you finish. The easiest way to remember this, what do you call it when a caterpillar turns into a butterfly? What do you call it? Metamorphosis. The Greek word morphos means your form, your body.

So, if you start with a caterpillar and you end up with a butterfly, the morphos changed. And how do we describe that? Metamorphosis. That's the first word in verse 2 here.

If you are going to walk worthy of the calling with which you're called, you're starting from not doing it and you're ending up doing it. You're starting out as the caterpillar that needs to get up to a high place. Well, you're never going to crawl there.

You're going to be eaten by birds long before you make it up there. But if you are a butterfly, you have wings. You've got to get from point A to point B. Meta.

This is the way you leave the mundane earthbound caterpillar stage and enter into the atmospheric flight of the butterfly. Meta. So this is our key.

This should have engaged our attention at this point. This is how to do it. With all lowliness.

Not a little bit of lowliness. Not just a spoonful of lowliness to help the medicine go down. Not just a little bit.

This is all lowliness. The word lowliness here is Taipaino Frosune. Mentioned this last week, but I have not told you much about this word.

Taipaino Frosune. Froneo is the word that means to think. This is your attitude.

This is how you function mentally. Okay. Froneo.

It's your thought processes. Taipainos means lowly. Now what do we mean by lowly? Is this aw shucks, toe in the dirt, I ain't nothing, I have no self-esteem? What does it mean? Well here's the thing.

The Lord Jesus Christ is described with this word. So it isn't a servile, puny status. This is the Lord Jesus Christ that we're talking about here.

It is genuine humility. And humility is strength under control. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

It's not the victim, it's not the helpless, it's not the lackadaisical, it's not the oh, not only is Christianity not a crutch, it's a stretcher. You know, God's just going to have to carry my limp form to heaven. Heard that one time long ago.

Christianity is not a crutch, it's a stretcher. God's just going to have to haul my limp form up there and prop me up in a corner like a rag doll. I've always been amused when I think of that.

That's not it. This is used to describe the Lord Jesus himself. And so when you have Matthew 11, 29, the Lord Jesus Christ says, take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. Take my yoke upon you was a common phrase that was used when people would come and attach themselves to a rabbi. When Paul learned at the feet of Gamaliel, this was taking the yoke of Gamaliel.

I am attending your class, I am submitting to your professorship, so to speak. This is the yoke. You will guide me in the traces, you will lead me with the reins and I will pull the plow or the cart or whatever it might be at your behest.

You're the one assigning the tasks and directing me so that I can learn, so that I can accomplish good things. Take my yoke upon you. And so Jesus uses this common phrase of the rabbis when they were talking about, hey, I'm starting a new semester of Bible class.

If you'd like to come, take my yoke upon you and learn from me. And Jesus uses that terminology. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

The Lord Jesus Christ describes himself as gentle and taipainos, lowly. Now how lowly is the Lord

Jesus when he says, take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and genuinely humble. The Lord Jesus has tremendous, virtually unlimited power, which he can access, but it's under control.

And when he is blasphemed, when he is ridiculed, when he is lied about, when he is threatened by Pharisees and by other ne'er-do-wells, he has the power to incinerate these people. But that power is under control. That's taipanos.

There are genuinely lowly people, but they do not resort to illegal means to solve their problems. They're lowly and they stay lowly, but they don't become thieves. They don't rise up and revolt.

I always love that. The Wizard of Ed, you know, the peasants are revolting. They don't revolt.

They don't rebel. They don't use illicit means to try to solve their problems. And so many people do that today.

Well, my circumstances justify breaking the rules and coloring outside the lines and doing what I need to do because, hey, my kids are hungry. Well, the reason your kids are hungry is you spent all your money on bad things and now you can't buy groceries. And now because you're in that bind, you justify going and doing further bad things.

And you say, well, you know, my kids are hungry. I've got to go do this bad thing. You created that situation.

That's not the lowliness we're talking about. Lowly means I may be in very moderate circumstances. I may be in tight circumstances, but I still maintain my integrity.

I still express my good character. I don't compromise. I don't vindicate myself.

I don't rationalize. I don't do bad things as a convenient, expedient way to solve my problems. That's Taipanos.

It is a frame of mind that says, I am who I am and circumstances don't change me. This is very difficult. Have you ever been tempted to do this or seen other people to do it where when you're with certain people, you're one way, and when you're with other people, you're another way? You know, there are people that, well, they're good when they're with good people, but you change the company, and because there's this natural instinct to blend and be a bird of the feather and so on, well, you're with rotten people.

When you're with the Christians, it's all goody-two-shoes and straight-laced, and then when you get with the other people, well, now my language starts to deteriorate, and the things I talk about start to get more racy and more tacky, and I just want to be one of the crowd and don't want to stand out, don't want to make people holier than thou, goody-two-shoes. So I'll just, you know, I'll blend. And you change.

You're like a chameleon, and when the background is nice, well, you're nice. When the background is bad, you're bad. This is not taipeinas.

Taipeinas is, I am dedicated to a thing, and I stick to it regardless of the circumstances. It is strength under control. I don't allow myself to be compromised.

Jesus describes Himself with this word. It doesn't just mean of low estate or of low esteem. It means I don't change when the chips are down.

I don't compromise when the pressure is on. Jesus says, if you want to take my yoke and learn from me, when the pulling gets hard and the plow hits some rocks, you keep pulling, and you stay straight. That's taipeinas.

It's a really powerful word. And interestingly, this word was not used, this taipeino frosune, lowly thinking, was never used in the Greek and Roman world. You know, Socrates and Plato and all these historians and poets and playwrights and things in the Greco-Roman world never used this word.

This word was coined. This combination word was created by believers, straining to express just one or two places in the Septuagint, the idea of this strong humility. I am humble, and I am strong in my humility.

I am not just pushed around. This is not doormat humility. This is, they used to put this in movies a long time ago, back in the 40s and movies that were made where somebody, you know, the Westerns, a lot of times a guy would be falsely accused or would be wrongly bad-mouthed, and he didn't run in there and see lawyer himself and say, I didn't do that, and this is all a rumor, and he would, remember the strong silent type? He would be accused of a bad thing, and he never argued with it.

Even when the woman threatens to reject him and run off with the other guy in the wagon train, he didn't vindicate himself and justify himself because it was recognized as an American value that you don't do that. You let your actions speak rather than your words, and you persevere, and you operate in good character, and in those movies, that guy was always vindicated in the end. Somebody else would say, you know the reason he does that, and the people would always hear about the hero and his actual credibility and his actual character and integrity from somebody else.

He wasn't the guy vindicating himself. This used to be part of the ethos in our country, and it is gone. It's been gone for decades, but you watch the old movies, a lot of the old westerns.

The guy in the white hat doesn't say a lot. Other people, when people start railing and throwing rocks at him, they say, look, you know the reason he's doing that. Oh, well, why didn't he tell me that? Well, he's not the self-vindicating kind.

This is typanos. You stick when the chips are down. It is strength in humble circumstances.

That's why Jesus uses the term of himself in Matthew 11, 29. In James 4, 6, which I quoted earlier, God giveth more grace. He giveth more grace.

Therefore, he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the typanos. He resists the proud. I don't want people talking bad about me.

I need to vindicate. I need to justify. I need to explain.

I've got to, you know, they would never think this and treat me this way if they only knew what a really great guy I actually am. Let me tell you how great I am. That is not typanos.

That's pride. I can't bear for anybody to think less of me than what I truly am. And I am truly great.

So if you don't think I'm great, I need to explain. I need to up your opinion of me so that you will recognize me for the wonderful specimen of humanity that I actually am. This is pride.

Self-vindication. Self-justification. I need you to understand that I'm really, really good.

It's pride. God resists the proud. I don't know about you, but I don't see any future in being resisted by God.

You want to talk about the immovable object? If God plants himself in your path and says, I am resisting you, you got any answers for that? Are you going to succeed and advance and progress if God is resisting you? Huh. Are you kidding? God resists the proud. I see no future in pride.

I try to advance myself by explanation, by vindication, by, oh, wait, wait, stop. Let me tell you the reason I am the way. Not only are people going to be immediately suspicious of anybody that gets into this loop, but God is now resisting me.

It's hopeless. Pointless. So listen to the words of scripture, James 4, 6, God resists the proud.

If you try the route of pride and self-indication, you're done. You're not going to fulfill any destiny. You're going to get nowhere.

God is resisting you. You say, gosh, I don't understand why I can't get ahead. Try James 4, 6. God gives grace to the humble.

How much grace? Is it saying in Ephesians 4, according to the measure of the gift of Christ? We live in the dispensation of grace. There's vast ocean fulls. There are sluices of grace available to us.

If we are not being resisted by God, if God is giving us of his grace, there is nobody that has more grace available to them than you and me. Name for me the person that's got more

availability of God's grace than you and I. Name them. Apostle Paul? Nope.

We've got the same grace. The Lord Jesus Christ himself in his humanity, did he have more grace of God available than you and I do? No, it's according to the measure of the gift of Christ. So if the grace is limitless, and we are not living in limitless grace, where's the problem? We have not looked at Meta in verse 2, Ephesians 4, 2. I beseech you, I plead with you, walk worthy of the calling with which you were called so that you can fulfill the hope of your calling by means of your metamorphosis, your metanoeo, change of mind.

Meta has the idea of transformation, of change, of movement. Lowliness doesn't even begin to catch Typanos. Meekness doesn't really get it.

We don't have a word for this. And Typano-phrosyne, the Greek language with all of its expressiveness, didn't have a word for this. So largely the Christian world invented this word, coined this word for this attitude.

Typano-phrosyne, strength under pressure, strength in humble circumstances, lack of compromise in your thinking. Phrosyneo, my thinking is this way, this is my attitude, this is my philosophy of life. I plow a straight furrow with the yoke of the Lord Jesus, and I don't let any stump, any rock, any hot sunshine, any calling of the herd, oh come away from the field and join us in the wild freedom of the pasture.

I pull, I plow, I put one foot in front of the other because I recognize my calling, and I know that at the end of this furrow there is promotion, there is blessing, there is accomplishment, there is the privilege of reflecting the glory of God and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is my goal, this is the destiny, this is my reason for living. So I'm going to cultivate strength under pressure, character under pressure, I'm not going to let myself be distracted, I will not be deflected. Now how do I do this? It's another how question, right? It sounds great, okay, going to pull straight, how? This is why we have the Word of God.

You remember some of our memory verses, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness, so we are people of prayer, we go to God and we acknowledge His gifts and we rely verbally to Him on His strength, the secret place, the shadow of the Almighty, He is my refuge, my fortress, my God, in Him I will trust. He will deliver you from the snare and from the perils of pestilence. His truth will shield me, His truth will protect me, will keep me in line and on course.

I must reflect, I must meditate, I must think about, this is Taipano Froneo, Taipano Frosune, it is my thinking where this power resides, it is my thinking where this attitude is expressed. I must guard my thoughts, so I want my thinking to be Taipanos, right? So how can I aid that process? Well, what do I let into the chambers in which my thinking takes place? My eyes send information into my thought chambers, right? My ears send information into my thought chambers. So if I am exposing myself by what I look at, and we've got no lack of little square screens to show us stuff

to look at, if what I listen to, whether it's the lyrics of songs, whether it is talk on television or on radio, or the plots of tawdry television shows, or the people with whom we hang.

It used to be hang out, now the out isn't there anymore, you just hang. And I think, well, yeah, if we do not hang together, we will hang separately, remember that? Yeah, the people with whom I hang, you're liable to hang. But we can help control this.

If we want to be Taipano Frosune, we want this metta to take place. Are you with me now? Is this something we want? How do I do it? How do I keep my thinking powerful and controlled and directed in the right direction? Well, pay attention to what you let into the thought chambers. This is froneo, this is thinking.

So if I'm constantly bombarding my thinking with looking at stuff that is antithetical to my goal, if I listen to stuff that is antithetical to my goal, what is going to happen to my thinking? If I'm trying to set a beautiful dining room table, because I'm expecting guests for lunch, and I open the window and back up a truck full of fertilizer and say, okay, boys, let her rip, and fertilizer comes splashing in through my dining room windows, what's going to happen to my beautiful set table? And whose fault is it for opening the windows and letting in the fertilizer? Gosh, wonder why my wonderful dining room is now a mess, in which nobody wants to enter, in which nothing good can take place. Because I opened the windows and let bad stuff in. We have the power to control our froneo.

And if you want it to be taipeino frosune, we have a responsibility to guard the gates, the eye gate, the ear gate. Do not associate with evil. Bad company corrupts good morals.

And it is time to separate. It is time to cut off that which corrupts. If you truly want to be fulfilling the calling, and walking worthy of the calling, and achieving the hope of that calling, it is a matter of thought control.

And I don't mean in the sense of hypnosis or of Kool-Aid drinking zombies. I'm talking about we take charge of what we think. Don't let the television dictate what you think.

Don't let blogs dictate what you think. Don't let the plots of television shows dictate what you think. Oh, well, look at all the modern family.

Heather has two daddies, or whatever it is now. And that's thought control. That's propagandizing.

That is brainwashing, overexposure, constantly from every different source. Oh, gay good, heterosexual bad. You're a bigot if you have any objection to perversion.

You're bigoted if you object to perversion. Seriously? But this has been so sluiced into our culture that now you feel like you're doing something wrong if you stand up and say, you know, that's

perversion. You know, in Israel, that was a death penalty offense.

Oh, there's something wrong with you. Well, this is the obvious fallacy of argument. If someone doesn't like the message, they attack the messenger.

And there's something wrong with you, because you are trying to keep your thoughts in a straight line. So we know that that's being said out in the world. You don't have to hear it a thousand times a day.

Cut those things off. Whatsoever things are good, remember our memory verse, to the extent that things are good and of good report and are beneficial, think on these things. It is a matter of directing our thoughts in productive ways.

If someone has done us wrong, you have two choices. Think about a situation close to your heart where you feel like, I really, that hurt. That hurt a lot.

I, this person did something and I just, I don't know if I'll ever get over it. Every time I think about it, the sun goes behind black clouds. This was a, this really hurt.

Okay, you got it? Here's the situation. Now, we as believers have two options. Unbelievers only have one option.

That is going to be a permanent scar, blight, cancerous tumor from now on. They have no other option. That's all it can be.

It will destroy relationships. It will drain happiness. It will corrupt and negate all kinds of things.

That's their only choice. We're believers and we have another option. The other option is stop right now and think.

Because when God looked at me, he saw the very same thing. And what did he do? He forgave me in Christ. He graced me with what I did not deserve.

And he then instructs me to forgive others in that exact same way. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And it works.

It's a perfectly symmetrical coin. I will forgive others in the way that I was forgiven. And if I do not forgive others, I myself am not forgiven.

The judgment that I inflict on others will be inflicted on me. The measure with which you measure, it will be measured out to you. And I think, look at the grace that God expressed to me.

This is something an unbeliever can't do. They haven't availed themselves of God's grace. God was so gracious.

I am a rascal. All of us are. God saved me anyway.

When I acknowledge my sins, God forgives, cleanses, and forgets. It's blotted out of the books. It's not going to come up at the judgment seat of Christ.

Glory to God. I used to have a fear that this great big cinematic drive-in movie screen was going to be up there. And I get my turn at the judgment.

And here's Sam and all of his horrendous sinfulness for the world to see. You know, what was done in secret. We shouted on the housetops.

I thought, oh, Lord God, I'm not sure it's even good to be saved if all my life is going to be splashed before everyone. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us.

And it's gone. It is separated as far as the east is from the west. It has been attached to the scapegoat and it's gone.

Not going to be on the movie screen. Praise God. Thank God.

Now, that's the measure of the grace to me. How much of that can I turn around and express to the person that has seriously, deeply, tragically, hurtfully wronged me? Remember the parable of the servant that was forgiven the great debt? He had another servant that owed him a little bit, couldn't forgive him. Remember what the master did to that unforgiving servant? Reinstated his debt.

Unforgave him. This is the risk we run on the negative side. On the positive side, lowliness and gentleness with long-suffering.

Look at the end of verse 2. This is what we're closing with this morning. This is our final thought. There are three things mentioned here.

Lowliness, gentleness, and long-suffering. Gentleness and long-suffering, that's two out of the list of the fruit of the spirit, right? So we've got a pretty good idea how to cultivate and maintain those in our soul. It starts with our decision to be typanos in our thinking.

This is how it happens. Meta, you decide. I decide.

I will be strength under control in my thinking. God the Holy Spirit is going to enable us, strengthen us, empower us to be gentle and long-suffering. That's a fruit of the spirit.

Remember that? And what is the result? Bearing with one another in love. That's the measure. If there is a single person on this planet that is in the body of Christ that you are currently not bearing with, guess what? This whole hope of the calling thing is off the table.

There is a tragic, deal-breaking, plan-stopping problem. Nobody's going anywhere if you cannot bear with another believer in love. Examine yourselves and see if you are in the faith.

If you've got an issue with anybody in the body, this one another is body of Christ. What did we see in these first three chapters? In Him we have all things. In Him we are united.

In Him there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, one body, one of everything. If you start splitting that on your own recognizance, well, they did something to me. What do you think about the Lord Jesus Christ that gathered all of us into His body? How many offenses have we committed against Him and against His Father? He forgave us and He united us.

In spite of all of that, He forgave us and cleansed it and washed it away. And we're going to dredge it back up? We're going to be the cancerous cell in the body? And start multiplying clusters of sin against a fellow believer? You have taken yourself from being hope of the calling, bright future, strength and grace, Spirit of God, Word of God. Now you're a cancer.

You're a malignancy in the body. As soon as we do this. It's not the fault of the person.

I don't care what they've done. Ran over your dog and didn't apologize, doesn't matter. We are accountable to bear with.

Do you think that all of our sins were justified? Jesus said, well, I can forgive you because I sort of understand how that... No, we're awful. And He forgave us anyway. With lowliness and gentleness, long-suffering, bearing with one another in love.

This is the measure. This is the dashboard gauge. If this red light is on, for any believer, for any reason, you are not forgiving and bearing with and being gentle and humble and long-suffering.

This whole deal is off the table. Forget chapter 1. Forget chapter 2. Forget chapter 3. And forget the hope of the calling. This is a deal-breaker in every sense of the word.

And we must stop and immediately address this and get it fixed. Or you might as well stop coming. Don't listen to the rest of the book.

It isn't going to apply and you're not going to have the power to do it. This is really important. And that's why it is at the beginning of this, Paul has already prayed two big long prayers that we would have understanding, that we could grasp what's on the line here.

And he says, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, let me tell you about the people that got me locked up in prison. Let me tell you about the people that are keeping me from fulfilling my apostolic missionary ministry. Let me tell you all the wrong things they've done.

And let me tell you what a good guy I am and how unjust and unfair it is that I should be a

prisoner at all. No, he says, look, we've got to do what the Lord Jesus did. I am meek and gentle and lowly of heart.

Jesus didn't let our offenses stop Him from fulfilling the plan and purpose of the Father. It's not worth it. Do you really want to cling to that offense and give away the hope of the calling? It's nuts.

But, you know, we're nuts because we're corrupt. And when the light of the Word of God shines on this, we have got to fix it. Go before the Lord in prayer.

Give it to God. Lord, I'm having a hard time letting go of this thing. Give me the power.

Your Spirit and Your Word give me a power that I myself do not have. I want to do this. Lord, I believe.

Help Thou mine unbelief. Right? Is there any way that God will not answer that prayer? Is there any way that God would not give us release from grudge bearing? Release from the limiting, dragging malignancy of sin that has not been let go. God has released.

That's what the word for forgiveness means in Greek is to release. Let it go. You hear these stories about people that, you know, jump off the Titanic and they've got their chest of gold.

I must have it. And they're sinking to the bottom. And you think, let go.

Are you nuts? And they'll go to the bottom because they can't let go of this precious weight. Well, this is us. If we cannot, with lowliness and gentleness, long-suffering, bear with one another.

Just look at that first word, meta. This is how. You can't do it without this.

It will never happen. This whole letter, this whole book is wasted on us if we can't do this. It's a powerful, this is part of that rebuke, correction, and instruction in righteousness that the word of God brings to us.

And there is freedom. There is release. There is peace and joy and beneficial restoration of fellowship when we let God do this in our souls.

And there is nothing but trouble if we don't. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

And thank you for its cleansing, restorative power to do things in us that we are incapable of doing. No human philosophy, no human system, no human advice can deliver us, can effect salvation for us from the power of sin. But as the hymn says, the Lord Jesus has broken the power of canceled sin and set us free.

And it is your truth that sets us free. We thank you for the truth as it is expressed here in this

letter. And we pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep us ever mindful and will convict us in a way that will produce our change of mind, our change of heart, and our forward progress and fulfillment of this great calling that you have issued to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray these things in his name. Amen.