

Ephesians 14-04-06a

This is Sunday the 6th of April 2014, 6 April 2014. We're in the book of Ephesians, letter to the church at Laodicea, carried in the same pouch with the letter to Colossae and designed to be read and exchanged in those communities. We have come in our study to chapter 4 and we are looking at verse 1 and 2. We'll follow our usual procedure and pause for a moment to give each of us an opportunity to go before the Lord and prepare ourselves for the study of God's Word.

Father we're so grateful for the many expressions of your grace and your faithfulness toward us, your compassion and your love. It is so undeserved. We are without value apart from that which comes to us through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in Him we are so privileged, we are so blessed. And we thank you for your fatherly care as you look at us through the perspective that includes all of the merit and all of the righteousness of our Savior, the Lord Jesus. We thank you for this portion of your Word.

We thank you that we have the freedom and the opportunity to spend time together in fellowship looking at it. We thank you that our government, despite many strange turns and twists, continues to guarantee our freedom to do so. We ask your blessing on those who watch over our civil rights and opportunities and we pray that as we focus on spiritual truth that you will use it in the hands of your Holy Spirit to thoroughly equip us for every good work so that we can reflect your glory and the glory of our Savior.

We ask it in His name. Amen. Ephesians chapter 4 is the place in this letter where Paul turns the corner from a theological emphasis, which sounds academic, but he lays out a lot of great truths.

He puts the foundation in place. This is the why. This is the what that's given to us in Ephesians chapter 4. He gives it to us in the first three chapters and now in chapter 4, from laying that foundation and painting that background, he gives us the application.

This is the how and this is the what. Therefore, this is how we then live. This is how we then operate.

So, you remember what is in the past. What is that foundation? In Him. In Him we have all of these things.

You remember that beautiful, I compared it to a menorah, a seven-branched candlestick in chapter 1. All of these things that we have in Christ. It's multi-layered. It's multi-faceted.

It is multi-featured. There are so many things and what's interesting to me is that in both of our studies, our Second Kings study on Friday night and the study here in Ephesians, we are being encouraged to move beyond the simplistic, to move beyond the unidimensional and think about the different parts of our faith, the different kinds of provision, the different sorts of opportunity.

We've studied the salt and the flour and the sticks, the wood, in our study on Friday night and they are applied in different circumstances.

You don't always reach for the stick. This was Moses' big mistake and I've told you that we could never cover. I started to do the doctrine of sticks and I realized I will never finish.

But you remember what happened the second time they ran out of water and it was time to speak to the rock and what did Moses grab instead and use? Stick. Not time for the stick, time for a word. He was supposed to speak to the rock but he used the stick at the wrong time.

It's not always time for the salt. It's not always time to think about the covenant. It's not always time to think about the flour and think about the previously obtained and processed word and it's not always time to think about authority and lordship and the judgment involved.

There are different times where different things are applied and this asks more of us. We are trying to come to the standard of a mature man. When you've got children in the house, you try to provide them with simple rules.

Don't run in the house. How many people have not heard as a child, don't run in the house? Can't tell you how many times I heard that as a child. Now, there is suddenly a skillet fire and the fire extinguisher is in the garage.

Run, get me the fire extinguisher. I can't run in the house. Step, step, step, step, step, step.

Rules are simple guidelines for simple thinking people to cover most situations. Why is the legal code in this country so ponderously complex that nobody, you can't even print it because it changes by the day. New legal precedent, new interpretations.

I used to support some legal firms here in town and they have a database of law precedent and cases and so on. In the old days, you'd see Perry Mason, remember the three books stacked up while they're playing the theme song, Juras, Compos Mentis or whatever it says, and it's the legal cases. They used to be able to put it in books on a shelf.

Now, they can't even keep up with it in an online database because it is just changing by the minute. It's like the internet. How could you ever catalog the internet? By the time you catalog one letter, the whole thing has changed by 15 or 20%.

In this case, we want to grow so that we operate on pump with just give me the rule. Anybody that does grammar, if you try to make a rule for grammar, well, it's I before E in English. I before E, except after C. Well, okay, but then there are exceptions to that.

Do I need to memorize all of the exceptions to the I before E rule? It's not just except after C, but there's also some others. Rules are limited because you can't make a rule that will cover every specific case. There are always exceptions.

Rule-based operation is for the immature. This will work for you. It's simple, and in most cases, it will get you by.

But we want to grow. We want to mature, right? So we want principles that will be universally applicable. There is a principle in Bible interpretation.

If you have two Greek texts, for example, and they contain two different readings, there is a canon of textual criticism. There is a hermeneutical rule of thumb that says generally the more difficult reading is to be preferred. Why? Why wouldn't we want the simpler reading? Because the tendency is for scribes who were copying these manuscripts, when they hit a difficult reading, they would say, wow, why don't I just help God out a little bit and I'll smooth out this difficulty.

I'll add a word or take out a word or change the order of words so that this reads more smoothly. This is going to confuse people. I'll helpfully change it.

And so the tendency is to correct toward a simpler reading. Well, if you're trying to get back to the original and say the guy just didn't know much, and if he'd known more, he wouldn't have tried to correct this difficult reading because the difficult reading is actually what the original says and it is to be preferred. And so you look at the tendency and you make this rule.

Well, the rule's got all kinds of exceptions. What if it's a misspelled word? That's difficult. That doesn't mean it's right.

So as we come to chapter 4 and we're turning the corner here in this letter after having reviewed and expressed and extolled and praised God for all of the provisions that He has made in Christ. And that's you and me. You think about us.

We are saved. We are delivered. We have the prospect of eternal life in the presence of God stretched out before us.

It is a sure thing. I don't know if you've thought about this lately, but you are going to be in the presence of Jesus Christ and you are going to be in the actual, literal presence of God the Father soon. In the perspective of human history, in the perspective of the time that this universe has been around, it is the blink of an eye.

However many two-digit numbers of years that are left to us, nobody listening to the sound of my voice has got three-digit years before they are face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ and in the presence of God the Father. Nobody. Nobody listening to me right now is going to have to wait a three-digit number of years.

It's at most a two-digit number of years, possibly a one-digit number of years, possibly a one-digit number of days. We just don't know. But it is soon.

The time that is left to us is given to us. It is a resource. It is like spendable cash.

You've seen that they are trying to make virtual money now. You've got Bitcoin and they want to have money that isn't even a dollar and it can work all over the world. You get on your computer and you go to a website and you accumulate and spend this virtual money.

Well, fine. It's fraught with problems as most things are when they're new, but we have a different kind of capital and it is our time. So here in chapter 4, when Paul turns the corner and says, therefore, based on chapter 1, these manifold blessings and blessings statuses and potentials that we have in Christ, based on chapter 2, where we have been united into a new people of God, where there is no distinction based on what nation are you from or who are your forebears.

We have been unified and made one. Those who were far off have been brought near. Those who were near have been brought in.

Based on chapter 3, the whole organism having been built on the foundation, verse 20, of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together, you've got these pieces which are the formerly separated Jews and Gentiles and ins and outs and nears and aways, all been brought together, glued together, unified by all of those things we saw in chapter 1. You find that summed up in chapter 3, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in, by means of, the Spirit. We have the universal outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have God the Holy Spirit permanently as a possession, as an indwelling, potentially as a filling.

He has sealed us. He has gifted us. He has baptized us into the body of Christ irrevocably.

We have been born again, regenerated through Him. You cannot change it. You can't reverse it.

You can't abnegate it. You can't cast it aside. You cannot sell it.

You can't throw it away any more than you can reverse your physical birth. It is permanent. And we thank God for that because sometimes we see relatives or friends that in their later life seem to be so far from God and say, I don't believe in God.

But we know that as a child things were different. In their early years things were different. And it is a comfort to know that God credits at any point faith.

Perseverance of the saints is a rotten doctrine. You don't have to persevere to be saved. You have to persevere to mature.

You have to persevere to inherit. You have to persevere to be useful and serve and to be anywhere near the light of the glory of God's throne in the eternal future. But you do not have to persevere to be saved.

God doesn't save you and say, you know what, it's just not working out. I'm calling the whole deal off. I'm reversing your regeneration.

I'm taking away the Holy Spirit. I'm retracting all of the things that you have as a potential in Christ. The deal is off.

Look at the nation of Israel. Nobody could screw up in more ways and be more rebellious, stiff-necked, hard-headed, recalcitrant than the nation of Israel. Has Israel never not been God's people? They are always God's people.

The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, Scripture says. So we are convinced of better things of ourselves. We're not going to go down some, you know, I am in the near darkness of the outer solar system in the kingdom of the Father waiting for a train to travel 6,000 miles to bring me some of the leaves of the tree of life.

We want to be near. We want to be close. We want the Lord Jesus to be glad that He died for us, glad that He is our Savior, glad that He can knock on the door and be invited in to sit down at our table.

Who wouldn't want to welcome the Lord Jesus Christ and to do everything we can to glorify Him and to justify His work on our behalf, to fulfill the calling with which we are called? And so when Paul gets to chapter 4 and he gives us this exhortation, I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. This isn't, well, this is a calling to the church and I'm kind of in the church and so it sort of applies. This is very personal and very direct and individual.

You walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. Then we get to verse 2 and I am so thankful for verse 2. This is really right at the center and the heart of this letter. How do I do this? I get it, it's important.

I don't want to go to the eternal future and have an embarrassing lack of anything. Get there in a rusty old halo and skinny white gown as the gospel song says. Way off in the weeds, you know, scratching because I got the cheapest old robe of righteousness that ever was.

Way off in some distant galaxy, you know, waiting for some morse code signal to indicate that yes, God is still there but it's so far off I can't see and my telescope is not powerful enough to notice the light of the throne. We don't want to be that far off. We want to be near.

We want to be involved. We want to be vital. We want to be productive.

We want to be reflecting God's glory. We want to be enjoying the warmth and the approval of His near presence, right? You'd be nuts to not want this. Well, this is how.

This is the way to get it done. This is the way to get it done today. Today, before the sun sets, we can do these things.

It's practical. It is just like a little instruction sheet. I was setting up a little deal yesterday.

It's the coolest thing. We have a side yard and we let the dogs out there at night. As soon as they get away from the porch, I don't know what they're doing.

They could be playing pinnacle in the corner of the yard. I wouldn't know it. They could be, you know, going through the fence.

They could be chewing on a dead possum. I don't know what they're doing because there's a little glow right there at the door, but they turn left and go away. It's dark.

So, got this old thing. It's a solar powered, don't have to run any wire, light with a motion sensor. You know, these things you walk past somebody's driveway, on it comes and it's like prison.

Here's the searchlight. Well, I was able to put one of these things up under the eaves in the side yard and now when Major goes in the side yard, motion sensor says, ah, something's moving. Flips on this 72 LED light and I don't have to put batteries in it.

I don't have to run wires to it. It's just self-sustaining. Sunlight charges it in the day.

It'll run at night. It's great. Well, I took it out of the box and there's a little thing here and a little wire there and I'm thinking, well, you know, I know the general principle of it, but specifically, what am I supposed to do? Well, it's got a little fold out sheet of instructions.

Here's what you do. Be sure you do this. Read all the instructions before you start.

It's a good thing I did because there's some things you have to know before you install it. This is the instruction sheet. Ephesians chapter 4. This is the instruction sheet.

I get it. Yes, I do want to be in the New Jerusalem. I want an access card that gets me through the gate.

I want to live there. I want to be close to the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, here's the instructions.

This is how to do it. We started looking at this a couple of weeks ago. With, meta, verse 2. And we have two words under this with.

Remember what the first word was? Remember the first word? Taipeino frosune. Remember that? Taipeino frosune. Taipeino frosune.

This is often translated humility. As an adjective, we find it in 1 Peter 3.8. Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tender-hearted, be courteous. Love as brothers, be tender-hearted, be courteous.

Have compassion for one another. This is Taipeino frosune. Taipeino frosune.

You see from the surrounding words what it can mean. When Paul talks to the disciples of Israel,

he says elders, in Acts chapter 20, he says, you know from the first day that I came to Asia in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews. I kept back nothing that was helpful.

You want an example of Typano Frasure? I kept back nothing that was helpful but proclaimed it to you and taught you both publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, testifying to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. By the way, when you muse on the authorship of the book of Hebrews, you remember in chapter 6, he says, let us go on to maturity, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of these two things, repentance away from dead works and faith toward God. He says, I have preached everywhere change of mind toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a similar complimentary idea. This is the attitude that we need to have and notice it is an attitude toward one another. Its direction is toward one another.

Our biggest difficulty is each other. Long years ago, 30-40 years ago, there was a little cartoon and the guy was mocking that Latin statement, you know, we have met the enemy and he is ours. And he said, we have met the enemy and he is us.

We have met the enemy and he is us. We give each other the greatest difficulties. And Typano Frasure is not holding such things against others, having humility.

Humility says, I am not going to get my back up. I am not going to get indignant and feel that I am the wronged, injured party and I have got great capital and great leverage now because somebody else is in the wrong. Typano Frasure gives all of that away, lets it go.

Humility. This is why Paul says in Philippians 2, verse 3, let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit. Selfish ambition, here is an opportunity for me to use leverage.

I am in the wrong and so I can guilt somebody. I can shame somebody. I can get retribution or justice for myself.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit. I will promote myself. I will advance myself.

I will raise myself above the stars of heaven. I will be like the Most High, the original sin. Let nothing be done with any taint of that attitude but in lowliness of mind.

Typano Frasure, let each esteem others better than himself. A higher priority than oneself is a good way of putting it. You don't have to go around with an inferiority complex.

When it says esteem others better than himself, it means prioritize others over oneself. This is not a value judgment. Oh, well I could never be as good as, they're just, I'm so, oh, boo hoo, what a weak, pathetic creature am I. None of that.

Esteeming others better means when there is a conflict of priorities, they go ahead. If it's, well, I'd love to do this but I need to help somebody with that, we help somebody with that. It is a matter of prioritization.

Love is sacrificial toward self, beneficial toward others, that's Typano Frasune, in a nutshell. Esteem others at a higher priority than oneself. Okay? This is how, how, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

He had that attitude. This is the attitude that pastors are to have. In 1 Peter 5, verses 1 through 5, the elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed, shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly, not as being lords over those entrusted to you but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. And in verse 5, likewise you younger people submit yourselves to the elders. All of you be submissive to one another and be clothed with Typano Frasune.

All of you, elders and non-elders, those who lead, those who teach, those who perform whatever function as elders, all of you be submissive to one another. Notice, submissive, what does it mean submissive to one another? Well, just tell me something to do and I'll go do it. You're the boss.

You're the boss of me. That's not it. Being submissive means prioritize the interest of others ahead of your own.

And if someone has a point, if someone needs support, that's our priority. Be clothed with humility. Why? God resists the proud.

God gives grace to the Typanos. God resists the proud. God gives grace to the Typanoi.

Typanoi Thetae here if you want the actual form. But this is those who are practicing Typanos. Frasune, you remember that's Froneo, that's the word for think.

This characterizes our thinking all the time. We think in order to bring this about. How do you become humble? You don't just wake up one morning with this attitude.

It's thought. It's thinking. Now, have you ever awakened kind of late on a Saturday morning and jumped because you thought, Oh, I'm late for school.

I'm late for work. Have you ever had that happen? You wake up or you know, you lay down to take a nap and when you wake up, it's, it's starting to get dark, but you think it's morning and you're just completely disoriented. You think I'm supposed to be somewhere and I'm not, I should be doing something and I'm not.

You know, there's a lot, there can be a moment of great stress and consternation and almost panic, right? What fixes that? It's an instinct. It's an impulse. It's like, Oh my gosh, we leap out of bed and we start looking around.

What fixes that? What, what completely eliminates it? It is realization. You look at the clock, you look at the calendar, you stop and think something, a piece of truth comes to our mind. Wait a minute.

It's Saturday. Wait a minute. This is the evening, not the morning.

I laid down for a new, a new, a new piece of information comes into our thinking and the panic and the impulse and the instinctive response is quelled. Heart rate comes down. Great sense of relief and peace floods our soul.

It's all okay because here's a fact that wasn't present in my thinking just a few seconds ago, right? Now think about this. Hold on to that illustration. When we get into a situation where we are doing the wrong thing, our impulses and our nature are causing us to want to vindicate ourselves, to do something to somebody else, to feel wronged and unjust.

What can fix that knee jerk impulsive response? It's just like waking up and saying, Oh, this needs to happen right now. I, I, how do we fix it? A piece of truth comes in and suddenly we're okay. Type Hano from net.

Oh, thinking. How do you get this type pain us? It is linked in the word with thinking. If we stop, our instinct is to look out for number one.

Our instinct is to preserve self. Our instinct is to vindicate ourselves. We don't want anybody thinking that we're in the wrong.

We don't want anybody thinking we're unimportant. We don't anybody thinking that, Hey, well, my stuff's important too. You know, you, you say you need this.

What about me? You know, the old, what about me instinct? How do we fix that? How do we get beyond that? How do we rise above that so that we can please God and glorify him? It's a new piece of information that comes in. Just like when you realize it Saturday morning, you realize, wait a minute, I'm going to glory. I've got a bright hope and a secure future.

I am in Christ. I, I have the resources available to me that the world does not that faithless believers do not, that the immature do not. I've got things.

Wait a minute. I can relax. I can back off.

My heart rate can come down. My impulsive need to act can be quelled. This is the means.

This is the how this is the way to do it. Just stop and think and add some new truth to the process. Add some additional facts because it is at, it's just as true as the fact that it's Saturday morning, right? Are we not going to glory? Is not God going to give grace to the type pain us? Well, if we put ourselves out and sacrifice on behalf of others, will God not bless us and be pleased with us and be on our side and sustain us? Of course he will.

It's Saturday. Relax. This can happen, but it's from net.

Oh, we've got to think you can't just wake up one morning and boy, you know, I notice I'm just pretty type pain us these days. I just feel selfless and altruistic and I just lay down to get people across mud puddles and I can't believe the way I am these days. It's not a reflex.

It doesn't just happen in the background. We get there by thinking and thinking operates on factual information. We've got to think new information into these situations that trip us up and cause us to sin.

And type pain us comes about through from net. Oh, and from net. Oh, involves grabbing information such as is in our memory verses, such as is in our passage.

Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus. Wait a minute. If the Lord Jesus Christ was in this situation, would he be getting his elbows up and strutting around saying, Hey, wait a minute.

What do you mean? You're going to arrest me. What do you mean? You're going to take me and bring me up on false charges. So what do you mean you're what you're going to turn me around and whip me and, and in violation of every law of Moses that pertains to justice, you're going to hand me over to the Romans.

My own people, my, my familiar friend has lifted up his heel against me. The one who shares my bread has betrayed me. Uh, the son of man is delivered into the hands of men.

He's going to be crucified. How did the Lord Jesus get through that? How did he not become indignant? How did he not re acquire and lay hold of again, his equality with God? How did he keep on letting it go? How did he remain obedient and humble and in the form of a servant to accomplish God's greatest work in history? How did he do it? He thought about the facts. This momentary light affliction is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed.

Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. He pumped new information into that horrible, unjust, unfair, wildly illegal situation. The joy that was set before him, type Pano for Sune.

If we are going to live the life and walk worthy of the calling, this is how to do it. Saturday morning. Ah, it's Saturday morning.

I can relax. Everything changes. I was pulling out of the mechanic parking lot after having my car

worked on and as I started up the little red car and I was going down a slight slope to get on the road and go home, I heard the awfulest rattling under my hood and it sounded like something had come loose.

My, my fan belt was flopping around or some piece of metal had fallen down into the workings of my engine. It was awful. And I slammed on the brakes and it got worse.

And I thought, I just got this worked on. I just paid these guys, you know, significant money and my car sounds like there's rocks in the engine. I turned it off and I was deeply concerned.

Popped the hood, raised it, looked in there, discovered to my relief and to my infinite restoration of peace and happiness that when they had done the tune up, they left my spark plugs laying up just under my windshield wipers. There's a little metal tray like area there that catches leaves and the spark plugs and one of these little magnet telescoping deals to pick up what you drop were all laying up there in that tray. And when I had bumped over the thing, they just started rolling and rattling around and it sounded like the entire car was about to disintegrate and it was just this stuff rolling around.

Instantly I felt relieved. Ah, nothing to worry about. Here's a new fact that gives me calm and gives me peace.

I collected them up, took that and the tool back to the guy and said, Hey, you guys might want to, you know, under people's hoods in the future and give them panic attacks. Uh, but a new fact, an absolute fact that I was not aware of or thinking about previously calmed me down. This is why you're in Bible class.

This is why you memorize scripture so that these things can come in and give us the peace that passes understanding, give us the ability to walk worthy of the calling with which we are called. The tricky part is, you know, there are people who don't check the calendar, who look at the clock, who get dressed, who jump in the car, who drive to work and nobody's there on a Saturday morning because they never stop and think, could there be any facts I'm not thinking of here that might explain why I'm suddenly in this panic. I know people that have absolutely done this, gone all the way to work on a Saturday because they just thought they were late.

We don't want to be this way and wind up at the judgment seat of Christ trying to explain it. Stop. Think this information in the word of God isn't just facts like what day of the week is it? This is the living and powerful word of God, which has transformational energizing power in our hearts.

It's not scientific knowledge. It's not philosophical knowledge. It's not academic knowledge.

It is the living, breathing power of God. And if we will just stop and think, the power of God comes into our lives through the ministry of God's Holy Spirit and we will have the worthy walk. It's a wonderful provision of God if we will just reach out and use it.

Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to look at the other words in this verse that give us the how. This is the instruction manual for the worthy walk.