

Ephesians 14-04-27a

This is Sunday, the 27th of April, 2014. We're in the book of Ephesians, chapter 4, and we resume in verse 6, briefly. Then we're going to be in verse 7, and then we're going to be in verse 8. More or less a sequential trip.

Maybe somewhat unexpected, but there is going to be an unexpected element, and we'll be in 8 pretty quickly. But we'll begin in verse 6. Let's take a moment to dedicate our time and our concentration to the Lord by going to Him in prayer. Father, we thank You for this day.

We thank You for Your provision and Your blessing. We thank You for the challenges that You bring to us that give us opportunities to practice what we learn, to reinforce it, to make it become epinosis in our souls so that we can fulfill the earnest prayer of the Apostle Paul in the first chapter of this letter, that we might come to know the greatness of Your power that works within us. We thank You for these truths.

We thank You for how clear You have made them for us and how beautifully they have been illustrated and communicated. And we ask that God the Holy Spirit will cause them to flame and to live in our hearts, to remind us of our identity and the tremendous opportunities that we have in Christ and the love that we can express to one another as an expression of our love for You as we prepare ourselves for the future in this age, in the next age, and in all of the ages to come. We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified, and we ask it in His name.

Amen. Ephesians chapter 4, read along with me silently. Verse 1 of chapter 4, I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.

Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. There is a calling. There is a mission.

There is something to be accomplished. God has issued, for those of you with a military background, a five-paragraph order. It has an objective.

There is support. There is communication. There is coordination.

There are all of the elements for a successful mission to be accomplished. This has been communicated to us, and we are exhorted. Paul is pleading with us to live accordingly, to walk is to live.

Live worthy of the calling. It's a high calling. It's a great calling.

It is in Christ Jesus. It could be nothing else. It is divinely originated.

It is divinely purposed, and it is divinely provided for. We don't do it in our strength. We don't have to grit our teeth.

We don't have to exert ourselves in trying to come up with the human endurance or the human angst, wear a hair shirt, and beat ourselves about the head and shoulders with some kind of a whip, and punish ourselves trying to be holy enough to do it. The enablement is already given to us. The gas is already in the tank.

The engine is primed and tuned. The vehicle is fully capable of running powerfully and at the designated speed. It just takes us to turn the key, hold on to the steering wheel, operate the controls, and get the thing down the road in a safe and effective manner.

That's our job. The power isn't from us. This is not the Fred Flintstone car.

This is a car that is divinely powered. Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. Jesus said to the paralyzed man on his mat, Arise, take up your bed, and walk.

He had no ability to walk on his own. The Lord Jesus gave him not just strengthened legs, not just straightened limbs. He immediately learned what it takes us several months to accomplish, balance, muscle control in the feet, the swinging of arms.

The guy stood up. He walked. He leaped.

He had instantly not just the physical strength. His aged parents didn't sit and watch him struggle to get across the room and fall, and, oh, come on, Ahab, stand up and try it again. He instantly had everything he needed to walk.

That's what's given to us. But it is up to us to respond to the exhortation. Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.

I beseech you. Please. How? Meta, by means of, with.

In the sphere of lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering, and bearing with toward one another. Those four things. We've studied them all in detail.

In love. And in love is the bridge between verse 2 and verse 3. We are to do these four things in love, and we are to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace in love, by means of love. Love is the backbone of the book.

The front flap is these four things toward one another. The back flap is the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. Together it makes a complete and integrated whole.

Endeavoring, striving in an athletic sense, pushing, straining every skill, every muscle, through training and building up of endurance. We practice this. We try to get better at it.

We improve. I jumped so high, I think I can jump a little higher. I jumped so far, I think I can jump a little further.

I ran this fast, I think I can run faster next time. Spudadzo has the idea of improving and performing to a maximum through training and repetition. It's a goal.

We are spiritually like Olympic athletes. We are looking ahead. They look ahead as much as four years to the upcoming Olympics or to the World Championship or to whatever it is where they are going to compete.

And every day when they wake up, they think, one less day until the competition, one less day until the evaluation, one less day until the judges will look at me and evaluate my performance. And for us, it is the judgment seat of Christ. It is one day closer today than it was yesterday.

We've got one day less to make our mark, to walk worthy of our calling. The days are short and getting shorter. Every single one of us, no matter how old we are, we've got less time right this moment than we've ever had to do whatever it is we are going to do before the Lord Jesus returns.

You know how it is when you've been in school and you have a certain number of grades and there's only this many left. And every time you turn in a grade, if it's a C- or a C or a C+, and you're trying to get your average up, you realize in the time that's left, I've got to really do well because my average is here. And if I'm going to pull it up, I've really got to nail these last few assignments.

I've really got to hit it and get up in the A range on my test in the time that remains because I've already got an average that I can't change. Is there any extra credit? Is there something else I can do? You know, they've kind of almost done away with extra credit. It's not fair because if the other guy chooses not to do extra credit, and you do, well, now you've got... I don't understand it.

The world does not operate according to logic. It honestly doesn't. It's the post-modern ethos and you just need to get used to it.

Don't expect things to make sense. Options that make sense will not be selected because people don't operate in a general sense. The trend is away from picking an option because it makes sense.

Options are chosen and policies are followed. Rules are established. Things are implemented.

Not because it makes sense. And as the generation turns, you've got to get away from rationalism. Rationalism is on the wane.

There are other isms that are taking over. But don't expect people in the world to be... You think, how is this even possible? This is so obviously logical and rational. And so obviously the choice... And people don't argue with the logic.

They don't argue with the reason. They don't question the facts. They don't question the

conclusion.

They just don't choose it. Because reason and logic no longer compel. People are compelled by other things.

Well, it just doesn't feel right. It just flies in the face of what has been established by common consent to be correct. This is politically correct.

Political correctness doesn't make rational sense. It makes emotional sense. So just get used to it.

And remember that God is a God of reason. God is a God of fact. God is a God of truth.

Thy word is truth. The Lord Jesus is the embodiment of truth. And we, thank God, are delivered out of this world as we dwell in the truth.

God's word makes sense. And don't let anybody tell you it doesn't. The world cannot fathom the sense that God's word makes.

Don't expect them to. And even if they did, they would reject it. So they're twice condemned.

Twice lost. Twice dead. As it says.

But we're here in Ephesians chapter 4 where we endeavor, we spudazzo, we strive, we bend every available energy to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The sundesmos. The combining together.

Now notice it says the bond of peace. Why is there a bond? I was working on a sprinkler timer yesterday. And it's a real expensive thing because it's got multiple options and multiple modules.

And you can do all kinds of things. You can hook up four different hoses to one source and they'll all time out and come on and off. It's a big deal.

Well, it broke. Because out of all of this sophistication and all of this computer programming inside, the dial that you use to select your options just came right off. Well, and, of course, it's a unique dial.

Nothing else is the same size. I've got a jar of knobs and dials that I've saved over the years off of radios and devices and other sprinkler timers. And I just save knobs.

You know, they all have that little hole in the back that's shaped like a D. It's round and it's got a flat side, sometimes with a metal spring. And you can slip it over a post and you can operate it. Rebecca broke her, I didn't say she broke it.

I did, but I didn't mean to. The knob broke in her car that controlled part of her air conditioning

system. The thing snapped off.

It was old, you know, and it broke. Well, I got a radio knob out of my jar and put it on there. And until the new one came in the mail that looks nice, she had a little cheap, chrome deal with an arrow on it drawn in with a Sharpie.

This is what you, it worked great. It worked, didn't it? Because those knobs. What else can you say? So I'm trying to work on the sprinkler.

None of the knobs will fit. So what did I have to do? I have a mechanism with a post which, for waterproofing purposes, is inside a cylinder. It does not protrude.

It's in there. So you've got to have something that's not too small and not too large and that has the D-shaped hole. It has to be exactly right.

It has to be a sufficient depth to go in. Well, nothing will work unless you want to compromise the watertight integrity, which makes it pointless to use for a sprinkler system. So what do I have to do? I had to take it completely apart.

I had to slip a cylinder of my own making over it, pin it, have it protrude, pull it back out, take the dial, drill a hole in it, slip it over my thing, splay these little flange things that I cut with a Dremel, and then pin those to the knob, slather it all with glue. What did I do? I took two things, the mechanism itself and the dial, which are separate and distinct and not linked in any way, and I soon desmosed them. I bonded them together.

They are not the same thing, incapable of being the same thing, incapable of simply joining to themselves. They are now bonded, soon desmosed. Desmosed means a bond, right? Soon desmosed means I have taken two things.

Soon means with, bond with. I've got this thing and this thing. I bond them.

That thing is held together with all kinds of artifices now. It's ugly, but it works, which is pretty much the description of all my fixes. They're ugly, but they work.

Soon desmosed, endeavoring to keep the unity of spirit in the bond. Now, pay attention. This is important.

Soon desmosed tells us the things that are bonded together are not like. This is the Roman centurion and the apostle Paul, chained together. Is the centurion an apostle? Is he a Jew? Is he bald and hook-nosed with a high, squeaky voice? Probably not.

Is Paul the apostle a Roman centurion? Is he able to come and go and be relieved when his watch is over? They are completely unlike, but they were chained together. And what does this say? Endeavoring to keep the unity of spirit when you are chained to something that is potentially

very unlike. This is why there is such a thing as a worthy walk.

It's not, well, birds of a feather flock together. This ought to be easy. This ought to be my desmos here.

We're joined together by our mutual interests and our common goals and our like-mindedness and our shared opinions. And we all have the same opinion about the government. We have the same opinion about world events.

We have the same opinion about the neighbors and about this. We're just naturally glommed together. This is what I think is bogus science.

And I could be wrong because I am not a card-carrying professional scientist. But what annoys me is they went up in space. They're in zero gravity.

And the guy took granular salt or sugar. I think it was salt. And he put it in water.

And he noticed that instead of distributing itself evenly and uniformly, the particles sort of stuck together. And now this is as big as the Miller-Urey, I made amino acids by striking a bottle full of cheap chemicals with sparks. And look, that's how life began.

I made an amino acid by sparking a happy combination of chemicals. Problem solved. This is how life began.

Are you kidding me? Well, what they say is these particles, because they sort of clumped, well, this is how the universe began. Problem solved. The big bang, everything is scattered out.

And just like these little, it's the same. My little jar of salt water is just like the vast continuum of space-time. And see, things just clump.

I mean, it's so, the age of reason is over. Did you ever think about the nature of water? Do you know why there's a skin over it? Do you know what happens when you put something inside water? There is an internal skin, just like there's a skin on top. Did you ever think that in the same way that water clings to your finger, and bugs can land on top of it because there is an interface there between what is water and what isn't water, that that might have something to do with something bumping together? Oh, no, we've solved the problem of the big bang with these particles.

I mean, it's insane. It's not even scientific. But you read about it.

It's everywhere. We now know how the galaxies formed, just like the salt and the water. I mean, there's no surface tension in the fabric, at least not that they know of.

Anyway, I digress. The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The bond is for unlike things.

That's why it's a sun desmos. And it's supernatural. We have been given the power to walk the worthy walk.

And walking the worthy walk is doing what can't be done in human strength and in human philosophy. And by means of human, you can't just have a focus group. You can't put it on Oprah.

You can't get Dr. Phil to write a book about it. Because they can say all of these wonderful things, but the power to do it is lacking. Well, just think a happy thought.

You know, turn that smile, turn that frown upside down. You know, it's truisms and aphorisms and happy little sayings. But the power to do it when you're under duress, when you're under pressure, isn't there.

This is the power. It is the unity of the Spirit. Spirit, capital S. That's where the unity comes from.

Now, what is the application of this observation? We are going to be faced with things that annoy, disturb, great, repel, cause us to want to divide and to separate within the realm of our Christian fellowship. In the realm of our one anotherhood. It is inevitable.

God has planned for it. God is counting on it. God is counting on us being different.

We're going to see it further down in this chapter. Just look at the rest of this. There is verse 4, Ephesians 4. There is one body and one spirit.

You were called in one hope of your calling. There's that double emphasis on the calling. There is a mission.

You were called in one hope. Everybody's got the same mission. And I'm here to tell you it is not evangelism.

Evangelism is a wonderful thing. As is preaching. As is ministering to the saints.

As is administration. As is hospitality. As is encouragement.

As is prayer. As is faith. As are many of the other gifts.

But that's not the one hope of the calling. I hope the world is evangelized by the year 2000. There was a huge push, which you hear nothing about anymore.

I forget all the details. They had different little rhyming things and different little numerical things. You know, 2000 languages by the year 2000 or whatever it was.

That's not the hope. One hope of your calling. What is the one hope? Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful in a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. To be faithful.

To walk worthy of the calling. We have been called with one objective of that calling. And that is to fulfill God's purpose.

To please God. To make God glad in a human sense that He saved us. You think there are people that God says, you know, you're saved, but I am so disappointed.

Of course there are. Think about Revelation chapter 3. I wish you were cold. I wish you were hot.

You're lukewarm and I will spit you out of my mouth. I am not pleased. You're water, but you're not hot water and you're not cold water.

And because you are not hot or cold, I do not want this reaction at the judgment. And I hope you don't either. But that's what's going to happen if we don't walk worthy of our calling.

And to walk worthy is to pay attention to how we treat one another. And it is to learn to live with one another and be soon desmosed with one another by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. It is not natural.

It is not within our capability. Our reaction, our natural response is, boo on you and your brother too. Boo on you and the horse you rode in on.

Get away from me. You're in the wrong. You beat yourself with the wrong stick.

You took wrong pills. You're in the wrong place at the wrong time. You're singing the wrong song to the wrong tune and the wrong key.

Everything is wrong. Get away from me. That is not soon desmos.

Paul could have said, oh Lord, please send an angel and separate me from this praetorian guardsman. He's uncircumcised. He's unwashed.

He's unclean. He's a gentile. And I've been talking to him about the gospel and he doesn't accept it.

I want to treat him like a heathen and a tax collector, but I can't get away. I'm bound to him. And God says, my grace is sufficient for you.

Paul says, I've got a thorn in my side. This is inconveniencing me and slowing me down. It's preventing me from doing all the things that in my mind I think I ought to be doing for you, oh Lord.

And God says, my grace is sufficient for you. It is the unity of the spirit and the binding together of unlike things and there's peace. Have you ever seen a bad marriage up close? Be a commanding

officer sometime and have guys coming in and all kinds of repercussions and after effects in the performance of their military duties because their marriage is a hostile war.

It's everything but gunplay. This is a bond of peace. You take these wildly disparate, in some cases, things and there's peace.

There is harmony. How is that possible? Well, many times it is completely one-sided because the spirit is operating on one side. How do you think God becomes man? How do you think God can exist on this earth? The people who purify and holify God theologically would make it impossible for the Lord Jesus to ever come to earth.

How can God come in contact with that which is common and unclean? How could Jesus ever touch anybody? How could He ever eat any food? How could He ever breathe any air that had germs in it because of His holiness? And they make God so wholly other that it would be theologically impossible for God to have any contact with us whatsoever. But God does it. How does He do it? It is the unity of the spirit.

It is the bond of peace. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of this principle. God has forever bound Himself to humanity.

And in the touching of the dead corpse, in the touching of the leper, the Lord Jesus sanctifies the leper, heals the leper, and raises the dead. The contact does not defile Him. Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world.

And when Jesus comes into the world, He is able to create the bond of peace. Now, we have to look at each other this way. Yes, we are going to make mistakes.

Yes, we are going to fail. Yes, people are going to fall short. Any guy that is in the arena is going to err and come short again and again.

He is going to strive and fail, and He is going to hurt others in the process. We strive. We push.

We train. We do it again. We missed it? Do it again.

Missed it? Do it again. Do you ever practice the piano? I'll hit it this next time. If I do this enough, I'll get it.

I'm still trying to learn the prelude in C minor. I don't think I'll ever get that thing. My ability to learn a song on the piano is almost completely evaporated.

So, I'm just banging my head against the music rack. I sit down, and I play it. I play it.

I think, in the past, I'd play through a couple of times. I didn't need the music anymore. I had the notes all in my head.

That's gone. That's something fell off the truck when I went over a bump. And now, if I don't have the music in front of me, I can't even get my fingers on the first chord.

It's a simple chord. It's C minor. How hard is that? Put your thumb on a G and make an octave with your left hand.

It's not that hard. Strive. Try it again.

You failed. Try it again. Oh, that's a B natural.

Look, it's got a little funny pound sign. It's a B natural. Put your finger on the right key.

Try it again. Do it again. But I'm disgusting myself.

I'm tired of this. It's no fun. Do it again.

Do it again. Spudazzo. Hear me.

Listen carefully. This is the worthy walk. Do you want to be approved at the judgment? It's not a matter of, oh, God, just think how much I appreciated you.

I thought a deep thought and I just was transported to realms of glory. The measure is how we treat each other. That's what's being written in the book.

It is whether or not we are lowly enough to not get on a high horse when we see a failure or we perceive a wrong. It is whether or not we are gentle when things are not ideal. It is whether or not we can suffer long and bear with and bear up under and un-echo something.

Hold it again. Shore it up again. Hold it up.

Keep it from falling. To bear with. To endure.

We have macro thumia for endurance. We have bearing up. We have bearing with.

We have that un-echo idea. You have typeno for sune. You have all of these concepts that we studied in detail.

This is it. This is the life. This is where we succeed or fail.

This is the calling. Walk worthy of it. It is the unity of the spirit.

We preserve it. We enhance it. We maintain it.

We enjoy it through the supernatural presence and power of God's Holy Spirit. And it is a bond of peace. We are bonded together, like it or not.

So the measure is, does that sune desmos reflect, is it characterized by, does it show forth peace? There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. But to those who by faith and patience inherit, my peace I give you. Peace I leave with you.

Not as the world gives, Jesus says, this is a supernatural peace. You can't get this from Dr. Phil. You can't get this from a program.

You can't get this from some earthly, worldly source. It is Holy Spirit peace. And it's not a sense of calm.

It is a lack of conflict. It is the elimination of opposition. I don't see you as a threat.

I don't see you as an enemy. I don't see you as an obstacle. We're at peace.

We're cool. We're fine. I got no beef.

You got no beef. We're bonded together. And there's no strife.

There's no bitterness. There's no rancor. There's no grudge.

There's no lasting sense of one of these days you're going to get it. You just wait until dad gets home. None of that.

Well, we're going to pause here and take our break. Verse 5 and 6 is an affirmation and confirmation of what this unity of the Spirit is. When we are having a hard time sticking to this ideal that has just been described, what does the Holy Spirit use to supernaturally enable us? If you've got AVG on your computer and you reboot and it says, did you notice that? Your PC booted 47% faster because AVG is on here.

Did you notice that? And we don't just suddenly feel, wow, I just feel really peaceful. Did you notice that? God the Holy Spirit, you're 47% more patient than you used to be. It's not some background behind the scenes.

Did you feel that? Wow. There's a way that He does it. And that's what's in verse 5 and 6, and that's what we'll see when we come back from the break.