

How Is Your Walk?

Ephesians 4:1 Sunday AM, August 13, 2023

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 3:13-4:1(NASB95) Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory. ¹³For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁴from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁵that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. ¹ Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

¹³ Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory. Why would other believers lose heart at any struggles Paul endured living and giving the gospel? Perhaps in part because they didn't see WHY Paul would have such trouble if he was a faithful servant of God. They lost sight that fellowship with God includes a mission which must NOT be shrugged off because of hardship or other priorities. Paul said, I was made a minister of the gospel—the good news of reconciliation with God which included even those formerly seen as outside the promises of God—I was called to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things. Amid the joys of living, the stewardship of work, and the brokenness resulting from sin, God's redemptive plan is revealed in God's perfect eternal timing. And right at the heart of that plan to save people who live in rebellion to Him is God's power to transform them to look like His children WHILE He uses them to spread the news of His great love and willingness to save. Is God your King? Then publish abroad His wonderful name!

*Hymn #17: Ye Servants of God

Has the message of the gospel lost its zing? Have you thought about the gospel this week—pondered it, been amazed, HAD to work it into conversation with others either to treasure it together OR to whet an appetite for the glory of God? Because of the many distractions pulling attention from the glory of God and His calling, Paul prays God would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Contemplating and living inside this great love, Paul responds to this prayer with praise. ²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Not quite there? Struggle to see the power of God toward you, to be rooted in the love of God for you, struggling with the mission? Then study the God of the gospel.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): Come to Jesus (Rest in Him)

***Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Scripture: Matthew 21:18–46** (NASB95) Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. ¹⁷ Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered. ²⁰ Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?" ²¹ And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. ²² "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." ²³ When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ "The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?" And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' ²⁶ "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷ And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁸ "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' ²⁹ "And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he regretted it and went. ³⁰ "The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, 'I will, sir'; but he did not go. ³¹ "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. ³² "For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him. ³³ "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. ³⁴ "When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. ³⁵ "The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ "Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. ³⁷ "But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹ "They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" ⁴¹ They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?" ⁴³ "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴ "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." ⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.

Offering: *Doxology:

If God is so great and powerful, doing more than we can ask or think, then what is our place before Him? We are under, not worthy to be compared to Him let alone be His beloved children and representatives on earth. Hence Paul sees Himself as a prisoner of the Lord. The love Paul prayed these believers would know was meant to give security, but not to make you live true to yourself. You were given a new identity, made a recipient of God's love to tell others of His greatness, so you could do the works which He prepared beforehand for you to do. If your mission under God seems foggy, if you find yourself discontent focusing more on what you are against and irritated about, focus on the glories of our God and King, the triumphs of His grace.

*Hymn #76: O For a Thousand Tongues

You may be seated. From Paul's perspective as a willing prisoner of the Lord, this great One whose love overflowed toward Him and whose power enabled him to serve, Paul implores them to walk worthy of the calling with which they have been called. Those made alive through Christ WILL bear fruit—not bearing fruit or giving the appearance of life from Christ but not bearing His fruit as He intended is not okay—hence the parable of the fig tree. Jesus cursed the tree because it had leaves but no figs—like the religious leaders asking questions seemingly to test whether Jesus was truly God, but like the parable of the landowner, showed they rejected God's right to inspect the fruit of their work. They were more like the son who said he would go into the field but didn't then the one who at first said NO, but then did the will of his father. Walk worthy. It's simple—look to Christ, know the love of God through Christ in calling you to Himself, and from a heart full of receiving the goodness of God, follow His instructions on how to follow Him. How well do you follow Christ? As pastor prepares to preach, pray, Lord, YOU are the good shepherd--teach me to follow.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): Good Shepherd of My Soul

Message: How Is Your Walk? Ephesians 4:1 *Hymn #349: Trust & Obey *Prayer