

QUEEN OF THE EPISTLES 6 - LIVE A LIFE THAT'S WORTHY
PSALM 19 / EPHESIANS 4:1-6
2026-02-08

In Ephesians Paul emphasized **the unity of all humanity** in Christ **and God's purpose for the world** through the church. We've spoken about how the church scattered because persecution broke out against Christians. As a result Christianity moved to neighbouring Gentiles very quickly.

Paul says **WE WERE CHOSEN BY GOD** before the beginning of the world. We've been in God's plans forever. And, that **God's Plan** for us **was to adopt us as his children** through Jesus, so as believers we find ourselves participating in God's eternal plan. Central in that plan, Jesus came to wipe out all divisions. All history is a working out of this, working out the will of God.

God accomplishes this by grace. God infused us; we did nothing. Grace: all God. He airlifted us from death to life. Grace—undeserved, unattainable favour of God. This precious gift. Some how we slide into His will and are the benefactors of the faith He gives. We just accept it.

Before Christ, Gentiles had no hope of a Messiah. With Christ's coming, Gentiles entered a "new" view of history, that humanity was always on the way to God. **After Christ's earthly walk, we've** never had to be without hope.

The ancient world had its barriers. In any Christless society there can be nothing but barriers. But Paul says that **in Christ these barriers are down.**

Paul pictured each of us as a stone built into the church. And, of the whole church, **Jesus is the cornerstone.** All other stones are set in reference to it, thus determining the position of the entire structure. For Christians, there's only one cornerstone and only one name on the cornerstone—Jesus. Each stone is fitted into Christ. The building is a unity. That **comes from Jesus.**

Paul referred to himself as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ. Indeed, we always have a double life and a double address. Paul was a prisoner of Rome. But he never thought that way; he always thought of himself as the prisoner of Christ. How about you. Who're you serving? Who are you indebted to? Do you see yourself as a victim of bad earthly stuff or as a champion for Jesus?

The great secret of God **was revealed to Paul**—the love, mercy and grace of God weren't just for Jews but for all humanity: "to open their eyes so they'd turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and receive forgiveness—a completely new discovery. No one dreamed God's privileges were for all people. Paul became the transmitter of grace. Do you

think of yourself that way? To speak for God, to visit the poor and distressed for God, to give of our talent and time and our substance for God is a great privilege. So too, is suffering for Him. F.R. Maltby said “Jesus promised His disciples three things: they’d be absurdly happy, completely fearless, and in constant trouble.” The knights of the Round Table asked for dangers to face and dragons to conquer. To share in Christ’s sufferings is an opportunity to show our loyalty to Him. It’s wrong to think of God only helping us only in the great moments of life; God’s gifts come to us so regularly we can forget they’re gifts. Not only our salvation, but life and breath and movement are His ongoing gifts.

Paul prayed for **strength in our inner being**. That comes when Christ takes up permanent residence in us. He’ll gladly come into our life, but will never force it; He awaits our invitation. He prayed we’d grasp the breadth, depth, length and height of Christ’s love—limitless in every direction and every way. Think of the pointing of the cross—it includes heaven, the spirits in hell, even those wandering away from Him. The **breadth** includes everyone in every time; the **length** to which Christ would go (the cross); the depth it went to experience even death; and the height in heaven where He intercede for us. No one’s outside Christ’s love; no place exceeds His reach. God can do more for us than we can ask or imagine and does it through Christ. The world’s not what it’s meant to be. It’s torn by opposing force, by hatred and strife; nation against nation, person against person. Within each of us a fight rages between evil and good. It’s God’s design that all people and all nations should become one in Christ. To achieve this Christ is depending on us to go and tell of His love and mercy. To do that we must experience together the limitless love of Jesus Christ.

At this point (verse 1-3) Paul turns from the great truths of the Christian faith and the functions of the Church in God’s plan to what each Church member must be if he’s to take its part in the plan. So on to Christian character. Paul starts chapter 4 just like chapter 3 began: “As the prisoner of the Lord”. But here the focus shifts, “*urging you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*” Are you living a life worthy of the calling—that God has called you to from the beginning of time, worthy of His adopting you, worthy of the great privilege He’s given you? Are you living a life worthy of that calling or are you ignoring it or wasting it away? How shall we live?

“*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*” A brief but compelling list. Before the time of Christ, humility was not considered a virtue at all. The ancient world looked on humility as a thing to be despised. Humility was looked on as cowering, cringing, servile, ignoble (see Philippians 2:5-6). Yet Christians bring it to the very forefront of the virtues. For Christians, humility comes from self knowledge, that is, becoming aware of our own unworthiness. To face oneself is the most humiliating thing in the world. True humility comes when we face ourselves and see our weakness, our selfishness, our failure in work and personal relationships and achievements, Christian humility comes from setting our life beside the life of Christ and in the light of the demands of God, God who is perfection. Against that standard there’s no room for pride. We are in absolute dependence on God. For the creature there is nothing but humility in the presence of the Creator, in the realization of God.

The second virtue here is meekness/gentleness. In Greek, it's the perfect middle ground—the one who is always angry at the right time (indignant at the wrongs of others) but never angry at the wrong time (at the wrongs and insults borne personally), under perfect self-control.

The third great quality of the Christian is patience, long-suffering. From the Greek it has two meanings. First it describes a spirit which will never give in and so endures to the end to reap the reward. Second, not related really to the first, it is the spirit that has the power to take revenge but never does so—refusing to retaliate. Stated in the practical, it's the spirit which can suffer unpleasant people with graciousness without irritation. The New Testament repeatedly uses this word of God. God's patience with us is perfect—patience of waiting in the time of Noah, patient till more may come to salvation (2 Peter 3:15). Humanly speaking, if God were like us, He would have wiped out the world for its disobedience. We must have patience toward others as God has toward us.

The fourth great Christian quality is love. Christian love was something so new that writers had to invent a new word, or at least use a very unusual Greek word—*agape*. The real meaning is unconquerable benevolence. Nothing another person can do will make us seek anything but his/her highest good. In spite of injury or insult, we will never feel anything but kindness toward him. So Christian love isn't an emotional thing. *Agape* isn't only of the emotions, but also of the will. It is retaining unconquerable good will to the unlovely and the unlovable, towards those who don't love us and even towards those whom we do not like. It compels us to never feel any bitterness or desire for revenge, but always seeks the highest good of every person no matter what.

Paul then, reverts to unity: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Peace is the right relationship between people. This oneness, this peace, these right relationships can be preserved in only one way. Every one of the four great Christian virtues depends on the obliteration of self. As long as self is at the centre, oneness can never fully exist. In a society where self predominates, people can only be a collection of individualistic and warring units. But when self dies, and Christ springs to life in our hearts, then comes peace, oneness, unity.

There is one body. Christ is the head and we, the Church, are the body. As with the human body, unless there's a coordinated oneness in the body, the designs of the head are frustrated. The oneness of the Church is essential for the work of Christ—a oneness founded on a common love of Christ and of every part for the other. I emphasize here that Christ doesn't need anything from anyone at any time, but God chose us to partner with Him in His work. How amazing!

There is one Spirit. The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma*. It is also the usual word for breath. Without breath in the body, it is dead. So too, the vitalizing breath of the body of the Church is the Spirit of Christ. There is no Church without the Spirit and no receiving the Spirit without prayerful waiting on Him

There is one hope. All of us are heading towards the same goal. This is the great secret of the unity of Christians. Our organization, even some of our beliefs may be different but our unanimous goal is a word redeemed in Christ.

There is one Lord. The creed of the early Church was “Jesus is Lord”. *Kurios* is master in contrast to servant or slave. We are all in the possession of one Master and are all servants to Him.

There is one faith—the complete commitment of Christians to Jesus Christ. So we are all bound together because of a common act of complete surrender to the love of Jesus.

There is one baptism. This is important. In the early Church, baptism was usually adult baptism—because men and women were coming direct from heathenism into the Christian faith. Before anything else, baptism was a public confession of faith. It’s important to not equate baptism with salvation. Remember the thief on the cross—no baptism, but paradise promised. To lock baptism in with salvation makes it a work of ours and we know salvation is 100% God’s gift. That said, it is a public confession of Jesus Christ. So, baptisms aren’t intended to be private.

There is one God. With the Trinity, this is a sticking point for Jews (Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one) and with Muslims who insist God has no Son. But Paul describes God as the Father of all, enshrined in which is the love of God. The greatest thing about the Christian God isn’t that He’s king, not that He’s judge, but that He’s Father. Our idea of God begins in love. In Isaiah 9:2, one of Jesus’ titles is “Everlasting Father”. This one God is above all, enshrined in which is the control of God. No matter what things may look like, God is in control. It’s easy to forget that and to think otherwise. There may be floods but “The Lord sits enthroned over the flood (Psalm 29:10). He is through all, enshrined in which is the providence of God. God did not create the world to send it on its own, unattended. God is all through His world, guiding, sustaining, loving. He is in all, enshrined in which is the presence of God in all life. In everything there is God. This is completely different from and needs to be distinguished from what new-agers believe when they talk about God is in everything. Our belief is that we live in a God created, God controlled, God-sustained, God-filled world.

One. We are one. Can you see the intricate oneness we are in Christ, purposed to go and declare His love for each and every one. Work on your oneness this week and share Christ’s love with others as He gives you opportunity.