

Living In Resurrection Power
(Week 5)
Ephesians 4:1-6
“The Power of ONE”

Introduction

“Therefore I, the prisoner in The LORD, urge you to live worthy of the calling you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of The Spirit through the bond of peace.”
Ephesians 4:1-3

In the first three chapters of *Ephesians*, Paul describes for us the “wealth” that we have in Christ. In **Chapters 4-6**, he lays out for us the “walk” that we must have in Christ. This is very typical of Paul’s letters. First he gives doctrine, then he explains what to do with the doctrine. Christianity is not simply a mere belief in Christ. It is a calling to live out what we believe. We must have sound doctrinal teaching in order to live up to our calling. Jesus plainly tells us that if we love Him, then we will obey His commands (**John 14:15**). Therefore, it is imperative that we know exactly what those commands are.

Last week in **Chapter three**, we learned that in order for us to access the incredible power that we have as part of our inheritance, then we must be completely filled with The Spirit of God. This means that we are letting Christ fully “settle down” in our hearts, as it were, as we are yielding up all that we are to His control. As we commit ourselves to prayer and the disciplined study of His Word, we become less “self-aware” and more aware of Christ’s presence. Or as He tells us in **John 14**:

“The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal Myself to him.”
John 14:21

So you see, it is by this commitment to follow Christ and be fully surrendered to Him in all things, that He reveals Himself to us, and we are given access to the power of our promised inheritance. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is within everyone who truly believes in Him. It is the power of The Holy Spirit of God living in us!

In **Ephesians Chapter 4**, Paul explains that if we have truly been made “one” with The Spirit, then we all should bear a striking spiritual resemblance to one another. After all, it makes perfect sense that if we are all under The Spirit’s control, then we should all behave in a similar fashion, does it not? When we are “one” with Christ, then we should also be “one” with each other. This is how you can tell if you are attending a “spirit filled church” by the way. The members will all be on the same page. God is not a God of division, but of unity of spirit and purpose. In the first section of **Ephesians 4**, Paul reminds us of just how much oneness of spirit that we should have in Christ, and in the last section, he explains how such oneness can be comprised of such wondrous diversity! For the sake of today’s study, we will focus on just the things that we have in common.

Paul admonishes the Church of Ephesus to “live worthy of the calling that they have received” by the grace of God (**verse 1**). The word that he uses for “worthy” is actually a word that speaks of equal weights being placed upon balancing scales. He is reminding them that because they have been granted such marvelous grace in Christ, that they should live accordingly. In *The Old Testament*, the command from The LORD was “Obey Me and I will bless you”. But in *The New Testament*, the directive is “I have already blessed you, so now obey Me”. As believer’s in Christ, we should have a deep desire to live in such a way as to be pleasing to The LORD (**2 Corinthians 5:9**). Show me a believer who has no desire to please God, and I will show you a non-believer who is merely fooling himself. It is impossible to have God’s Spirit within us and no desire to live for Christ, its just as simple as that.

Paul gives us a detailed description of just how a Spirit-filled believer will operate. In **verses 1-3**, he tells us that when Christ is in control then, quite frankly, we are no longer in control. Two cannot sit upon the throne of our lives. There is only room for one. The heart that is controlled by the Spirit will be

Humble, Gentle, Patient, Forbearing, Loving, Striving for Unity and Peace. These are the identifying markers of the personality of Christ living within us.

Humble

In order to describe the primary characteristic of a person who is controlled by The Spirit of God, the Apostle Paul literally had to make up a word in the Greek! "*Tapeinophrosune*" (pronounced tuh-pay-no-fro-soo'-nay) is the combination of two Greek words. The first word means low and the second means mind. Therefore, the person who is controlled by The Spirit will be "lowly of mind", thinking less of themselves and more of others. You see, in Greco-Roman culture, there was no word for "humility". The notion that a person would not be self promoting was considered weak and disgusting by the people in Paul's day. They were proponents of elevating one's self to the highest status. After all, they believed it was only by advancing ones own agenda, that a person could ever hope to find joy in this life. This way of thinking was the very opposite of Christ however,

"Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when He had come as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death — even to death on a cross."

Philippians 2:6-8

Without humility, no one will ever be able to obtain the grace of God. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus gives a step by step process of just how a person can become a child of God. It all begins with humility.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." **Matthew 5:3**

True humility is the result of seeing God for Who He is, and then, seeing ourselves and who we are in the light of His Glory. A person who has never been humbled has never seen The LORD, make no mistake. If you want to know if a person has truly been born again, just check out their humility level. If Christ lives in you, then you have abdicated the throne of your life! Churches today are filled with people, who believe that they are "something". But The Church of Jesus Christ is made up of those who know that they are nothing apart from Him (**John 15:5**). Are you "low-minded"? The funny thing about humility is that if you think you have it, then that is a definite sign that you do not! If Christ has been allowed to "settle down" in our hearts, we think about Him more and ourselves less. The real secret to having joy in your life is spelled J.O.Y.; Jesus, others, and yourself... in that order.

All of us struggle with selfishness. Don't believe me? Can you remember the last time someone took your picture in a group photo? When you saw the picture, who did you look for first? Kinda says it all doesn't it? To be filled with Christ is to have no room in you for self. Or as Paul would say:

"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in The Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Galatians 2:20

Gentle

The word that Paul uses here translated "gentleness" (*praiotes*, pronounced prah-ot'-ace in the Greek), actually means "meekness". Jesus also uses this description of a believer in His sermon on the mount. The word literally means "*strength under control*" and is used to describe a horse, who is completely under the control of his rider. The word does not mean weakness, as many believe, for a horse that is broken is no less strong than it was when it was wild. It has merely yielded over its strength to the control of another.

Our strength, under His control, is exactly what it means to be "Spirit-filled". When we allow Christ to "settle down" in our hearts, we give Him full control over us. Our strength has been given over to the One Who created us in the first place! Who better to have full reign over our lives? We can only

become what He has predestined for us, by allowing Him to decide what is best for us in our everyday decision making. To be under the control of Christ is the only way that we can ever access the power of The Spirit in within us. In our own strength we can do nothing (**John 15:5**).

Patient

The third characteristic of the Spirit-filled believer is that of patience. The word literally means “*suffers long*”. The best way to describe someone who is controlled by the Spirit is that instead of having a “*short fuse*” (quick temper), they will have a long fuse. They can maintain their “cool”, as it were, in the face of adversity. Just this morning I was at the breakfast bar at Shoney’s, when I saw a young self absorbed child cut in front of an older gentleman at the buffet. She literally grabbed the tongs that he was reaching for and helped herself to the piece of bacon that he was about to get (Kid’s these days). What was even more disturbing was that the girl’s mother was standing right there witnessing the whole thing and never said a word!

I was sitting quietly at my table pondering this week’s message (for some reason a big breakfast seems to help my thought process... but I digress), and I watched to see how this elderly gentleman would handle the situation. I think he must have been a believer, for he patiently waited as the rude little girl piled the bacon on her plate. He didn’t grimace or say a single word. He just calmly waited as she was able to get what she wanted (which seemed to take her forever by the way), and then he simply resumed filling his plate. It seemed to me on the surface that the child’s rude behavior had not affected him in the least. Now, I couldn’t see what was in the man’s heart obviously, but on the surface you certainly could not see that he was perturbed at all. It was a live demonstration of patience.

Now, I do not want to be overly ridiculous by using a “breakfast bar incident” as an example of true patience here. We all know that life can throw some really tough things at us that we have to endure, and in the scheme of things, waiting an extra minute for some bacon seems of little significance. But, one thing that I have learned, if you are an impatient person, the “little stuff” seems to get to you as bad (or even worse) as the big stuff! You are either patient or you are not, in my humble opinion. One thing is for certain, a person who is filled with the Spirit of God, who has put self to death in favor of exalting Christ and others, will be patient in every circumstance! After all, impatience is yet another way of expressing selfishness is it not? It requires being more concerned that others might get to “the bacon” before I do. Wouldn’t you agree?

Forbearing

The word that Paul uses here literally means that those who are filled with God’s Holy Spirit are more than willing to “put up with one another”. I cannot tell you how many times that I have “counseled” with someone who was leaving the church, because they were upset with someone else. Good grief! Christ died so that we could all be one, so in the immortal words of Rodney King, “Can’t we all just get along?” Some of the “splits” that I have seen in churches over the years have been over the most ridiculous stuff imaginable! I shudder to think how often we break our Father’s heart, when we cannot simply “put up” with one another. To be able to do so is one of the marks of a Spirit filled believer. You don’t get to just quit on other people any time you like. We have been called to FORBEAR with one another... in **LOVE**. Just remember, that Jesus has never even once quit on you. That in and of itself should make you think twice before simply walking away from a fellowship. Whatever happened to... **“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”**?

Loving

The reason that we are supernaturally empowered to “put up” with one another in Christ is because we have agape love for one another, thanks to The Spirit that lives within us. It is for this reason that no one can love as The Church loves. We have been made family in the body of Christ, and it is this supernatural agape love that holds His body together! Jesus tells us that it is by this agape that people will know that we genuinely belong to Him (**John 13:35**). We are held together, come what may... by love.

Striving for Unity

“...making every effort to keep the unity of The Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:3)

Because we are filled with The Spirit of God, we strive to remain as one; one with God and one with each other. There can be no division within the body. A house divided against itself shall not stand (**Mark 3:25**). If Christ has truly been given complete control to “settle down” within our hearts, then He will always lead us to a spirit of unity. It all starts and ends with walking in the power of The Spirit. If He is in control, then He will also keep us together.

This doesn't mean that we forsake right doctrine in order to “just get along” with everyone. No, unity in The Spirit will cause us not only to love as one, but to believe as one. Now, I know what you are thinking, “Not all Christians will ever totally agree on every single doctrine”. And you would be correct! However, there are many so called “churches” out there, who are willing to compromise on the vital truths of scripture in order to be more inclusive. This is not at all what Paul is talking about when he tells us to strive for unity of The Spirit.

You see, if we are truly filled with The Spirit of God, then He will lead us to a complete understanding of all spiritual doctrine. We may not always agree on some portions of non-essential Biblical teaching, but we must absolutely agree on the essential ones in order to have complete spiritual fellowship. For instance, a person cannot believe that Jesus was simply a good moral man, or even a great prophet, and be a Spirit-filled believer at the same time. No, in order to become a functioning part of The Body of Christ, you must first be able to settle the question once and for all;

“Who do you say that I AM?”

Mark 8:29

If you cannot accept that Jesus is God, that He lived a sinless life, died on the cross to pay for sin, rose from the dead, and is coming back again for His Church... if you cannot accept each of these as absolute truth, then my friend you shall never have unity of The Spirit in the Body of Christ. Oh, there are things that we still may disagree on, but eventually, The Spirit will bring us to unity on these as well. But make no mistake, apart from seeing Jesus for Who He is and believing in His Name, unity of The Spirit is impossible.

And Peace

And lastly, as we strive for unity of The Spirit, we will find peace; peace with God and peace with one another. As Christ tells us in His sermon on the mount.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God.” Matthew 5:9

Being filled with The Spirit will always lead to the seeking of peace. Christians long for reconciliation. They long to see bothers and sisters restored to each other. They long to see sinners restored to relationship with The Father. They long to make disciples and bringing a lost world into the everlasting peace with God! Division breaks the Father's heart, and it will break the heart of those who are filled with His Spirit as well. He longs to make us all one, fully at peace.

“There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope at your calling — one LORD, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all and through all and in all.” Ephesians 4:4-6

Seven times in this passage the Apostle Paul uses the word “one” to describe what God intends for us to be in Christ. Seven is the number of completeness. Kind of says it all doesn't it? There is no such thing as “partial unity”. We have within us the power... of The ONE GOD.

And let ALL of God's people, who have been made one in Christ, say... **TRUTH!!!**