

I. Called: *Everyone is “called by God.” (v. 1)*

- a. God has called EVERYONE. Paul laid this out in the previous 3 chapters.
 - i. Ephesus was a part of Paul’s 3rd Missionary journey.
 - ii. Paul’s ministry in Ephesus was long and fruitful (Acts 19-20).
 1. Spent 3 months reasoning with Jews in the synagogue (Acts 19:8).
 2. Spent 2 years in the “school of Tyrannus” teaching the word of God to people from all over the province of Asia (Acts 19:9-10).
 3. Performed miracles: casting out demons and healing the sick (Acts 19:11-12).
 4. Because of Paul’s preaching, sorcerers repented and burned their magic books – books worth millions of dollars (Acts 19:18-20).
- b. God has prepared you for your calling. “Therefore” points to what God has done:
 - i. ADOPTION: We are adopted as children (Ephesians 1:4-5).
 - ii. INHERITANCE: We’ve been given an inheritance (Ephesians 1:11, 18).
 - iii. AUTHORITY: Christ rules our lives and the world (Ephesians 1:20-23).
 - iv. GRACE: God’s GRACE is in our lives (Ephesians 2:1-10).
 - v. UNITY: We are one with God and each other (Ephesians 2:11-3:13).
 - vi. LOVE: His incomprehensible love covers us (Ephesians 3:14-21).
- c. Important principle in God’s calling—when God calls us, He provides for us.
 - i. God called people when they were not ready: Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, the disciples...None were “prepared” when God called them.
 - ii. Our proximity and surrender to Christ is what makes us qualified.

II. Walk in your Calling – *crossing the stream.*

- a. Paul is moving us from principle to practical: how to walk this out.
- b. “Stepping-stones” to cross the stream include humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, and love:
 - i. HUMILITY (*tapeinophrosynē*): The opposite of pride. “Lowliness of mind,” considering others better than yourself (Philippians 2:3, Matthew 11:29)
 - ii. GENTLENESS: Gentleness is the application of humility. This is vital in stepping towards unity. It is the way of Christ.
 - iii. PATIENCE: This is the most difficult and takes the most time to nurture.
 - iv. TOLERANCE: “Making allowance for each other’s faults.” This is not a tolerance that ignores. Paul is not saying that we tolerate sin, evil doing, immorality, etc. It is tolerance that invites others into a process.
 - v. LOVE (*agape*): “The final stepping-stone on the path to unity is love.”¹

¹ Charles Swindoll, *NT Commentary Galatians Ephesians*, pg. 232.

1. *Eros*: The Greeks of the day celebrated Eros, erotic love.
2. *Phileō*: friendship love. Warm, noble and deep friendship.
3. *Agape*: God’s love – unconditional and selfless (John 3:16).

III. Unity is the Goal – “united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together in peace” (v. 3)

- a. This is how we walk – TOGETHER.
 - i. “How good and pleasant it is when we dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133:11).
 - ii. Everyone operating in their gifting/calling.
 - iii. “Working” together brings us together – unifies us.
 - iv. Discipleship: This flows from discipleship (growing relationship with Jesus).
- b. Unity is a sign of maturity – Ephesians 4:13.
 - i. Unity (*henotēs*) is a state of oneness (with God and each other).
 - ii. Unity requires that we are “God-focused.”
 - iii. Being “unified with Christ” enables us to have unity as believers.
 - iv. Unity brings maturity. Unity enables us to “speak the truth in love, growing in every way more like Christ” (v. 15).
- c. Unity is evidence of the presence of Christ in our lives (John 17:23). – this is one of the signs of Christ in us and evidence of His love at work in our lives.
- d. Romans 15:5-6, “May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Reflection Questions:

- Do I recognize God’s call on my life? Where do I struggle as it relates to God’s call?
- Which stepping-stone(s) am I doing well with/struggling with?
- How can I grow in walking together in unity with the Body of Christ?
- **Discipleship Questions:** What is God saying to me? How will I respond?

| WAYS TO RESPOND | | | |
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| COMMUNION | PRAY | JOURNAL | PRAYER WALLS |
| Visit stations to partake of the bread and cup. | Pray with your neighbor or one of our prayer teams. | Write out a prayer or journal a reflection. | Write prayer requests on the prayer walls. |