

Title: Stand walk war

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Ephesians

- **Unveils the “mystery” of the church. Reveals God’s “secret” intention with the church:**
 - **To form a body to express Christ’s fullness on earth (1:15-23)**
 - **To do this by uniting one people among whom He dwells (2:11-3:7)**
 - **To equip, empower and mature this people to extend Christ’s victory over evil (3:10-20, 6:12-20)**
 - **Key theme: “to the praise of His glory”**
 - **“glory” occurs 8 times, refers to the exceeding excellence of God’s love, wisdom and power.**
 - **It testifies to Jesus’ commitment to build a glorious, mature, ministering church, “not having wrinkle or spot”.**
 - **My focus will be on “the how” God did and is doing it.**
 - **Ephesians unfolds the process through which God is bringing the church to its destined purpose in Christ**
 - **It explains basic steps towards the church’s appointed engagement with evil:**
 - **Before the church is called to WAR, she is taught to WALK**
 - **Before being called to WALK, the church is taught where she STANDS**

Before the church is called to WAR, she is taught to WALK

Before being called to WALK, the church is taught where she STANDS

- **Differently put, since the church is made up of individual believers:**
 - **Chapters 1-3 deals with the Believer’s Position**
 - **Chapters 4-6 deals with the Believer’s Practice**

- So let us look at these basic steps of stand, walk, war.
- Our focus today will be at *where we stand* and *how are we to walk*.

Praise God for what He has done for us Christians!

Ephesians 1:3-14 ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ ⁴ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. ⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; ⁸ Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; ⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: ¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: ¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: ¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. ¹³ In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 2:1-6 ¹ And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

Ephesians 4:1-6 ¹ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, ² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; ³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Ephesians 4: 18-19 ¹⁸ Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: ¹⁹ Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Ephesians 4:31-32 ³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 5:1-3 ¹ Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; ² And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. ³ But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

Ephesians 5:15-18 ¹⁵ See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, ¹⁶ Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Praise God for what He has done for us Christians

Eph 1:3-14 3-6 Praise be to God for giving us through Christ every possible spiritual blessing as citizens of Heaven! For consider what he Has done—before the foundation of the world He chose us to become, in Christ, His holy and blameless children living within His constant care. He planned, in His purpose of love, that we should be adopted as His own children through Jesus Christ—that we might learn to praise that glorious generosity of His which has made us welcome in the everlasting love He bears towards the Son 7-10 It is through the Son, at the cost of His own blood, that we are redeemed, freely forgiven through that full and generous grace which has overflowed into our lives and opened our eyes to the truth. For God had allowed us to know the secret of His plan, and it is this: He purposes in His sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfilment in Him. 11-14 And here is the staggering thing—in Christ we have been given an inheritance (since we were long ago destined for this by the One who achieves His purposes by His sovereign will), so that we, as the first to put our confidence in Christ, may bring praise to His glory! And you too trusted Him, when you heard the message of truth, the Gospel of your salvation. And after you gave your confidence to Him you were, so to speak, stamped with the promised Holy Spirit as a guarantee of purchase, a guarantee of that inheritance, until the day when God completes the redemption of what He has paid for as his own; and that will again be to the praise of His glory.

We were all dead: God gave us life through Christ

Eph 2:1-6 1-3 To you, who were spiritually dead all the time that you drifted along on the stream of this world's ideas of living, and obeyed its unseen ruler (who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God), to you Christ has given life! We all lived like that in the past, and followed the impulses and imaginations of our lower nature, being in fact under the wrath of God by nature, like everyone else.

4-10 But even though we were dead in our sins God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, gave us life together with Christ and has lifted us right out of the old life to take our place with him in Christ in the Heavens—it is, remember, by grace and not by achievement that you are saved.

Christians should be at one, as God is one

Eph 4:1-6 ¹ As God's prisoner, then, I beg you to live lives worthy of your high calling. Accept life with humility and patience, making allowances for each other because you love each other. Make it your aim to be at one in the Spirit, and you will inevitably be at peace with one another. You all belong to one body, of which there is one Spirit, just as you all experienced one calling to one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father of us all, who is the One over all, the One working through all and the One living in all.

18-19 Do not live any longer the futile lives of gentiles. For they live in a world of shadows, and are cut off from the life of God through their deliberate ignorance of mind and sheer hardness of heart.

31-32 Let there be no more resentment, no more anger or temper, no more violent self-assertiveness, no more slander and no more malicious remarks. Be kind to each other, be understanding. Be as ready to forgive others as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

Eph 5:1-2 ¹ 1-2 As children copy their fathers you, as God's children, are to copy Him. Live your lives in love—the same sort of love which Christ gives us and which He perfectly expressed when he gave himself up for us in sacrifice to God.

You know the truth—let your life show it!

Eph 5:15-18 ¹⁵ Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the evils of these days. Don't be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of God.

From the Scriptures

- Where the church stands
- How we are to walk
- What does this mean for us?

Where the church stands

- **Recurring theme in Chapter 1 is “in Christ”. Blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places:**
 - Chosen to be holy and without blame (1:4)
 - Predestined (pre-planned) to be adopted as children (1:5)
 - Accepted by his grace (1:6)
 - Redeemed through His blood (1:7)
 - Forgiven according to the riches of his grace (1:7)
- **He did this according to His good pleasure (1:5,9)**

He did to the praise to the glory of His grace (1:6)

- For us, but also for others. God's plan was to unite all things in Christ, under Christ's authority
 - Because of being united with Christ, we received an inheritance/we became God's inheritance (1:11)
 - He gave us the Holy Spirit when we believed (1:13)
 - Holy Spirit became the seal/guarantee (1:14a)
 - that we will receive the inheritance and
 - that He purchased us
- He did all to the praise of His glory (1:14b)
- Important that we understand that in doing what He did, God
 - Awakened us from spiritual death and made us alive together with Christ (2:1-5)
 - Seated us in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (2:6)
 - That in ages to come He might point to us and show the riches of His grace and His kindness (2:7)
- But we are reminded: by grace we have been saved through faith. (2:8-9)
 - Not by our earning
 - We cannot boast
 - It is a gift from God
- Through all this we are in a position where we:
 - can dedicate our lives to the good works he planned for us when he created us (2:10)
 - have peace with God, in Christ (2:14)
 - are one, Jews and Gentiles (2:15-16)
 - through Christ by one Spirit, have access to the Father (2:18)
 - would live as members of His one family and (2:19)
 - be built in a holy temple where He lives by His Spirit (2:20-22)

From stand to walk

- Having said all that, Paul makes this profound statement: through all this, God's "secret", held for ages, is hidden no longer. The "mystery" is known. (3:1-9)
- God's "manifold wisdom" is now to be demonstrated by, in, and through the church (3:10)
 - What a thought, what a responsibility
- However, the church cannot approach this without practical understanding of how this is to affect everyday living

How we are to walk

- Chapters 4 to 6 deals with much details of everyday life and Christian living. Too much for this morning
- I want to group it in six themes, and pause a moment at each

How we are to walk

1. Walk in unity (4:1-6)

- Worthy of the call / “of the staggering privileges”
- With lowliness and gentleness / humility and patience... bearing one another in love
- Remembering there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father
- Knowing there are different gifts within this unity, given (4:7-16)

2. Walk as new people (4:17-24)

- Without our understanding darkened and without blindness of heart
- Being renewed in the spirit of our mind / “letting the Spirit renew our thoughts and attitudes”

3. Walk with care to not grieve the Holy Spirit (4:25-32)

- Speaking the truth (not lie) with our neighbors
- Making an honest living and living generously
- Avoiding foul language but speaking what is good and helpful and encouraging
- Ridding ourselves of anger, bitterness, harsh words and slander
- But rather being kind, compassionate and forgiving towards each other

4. Walk in Love (5:1-7)

- Imitators of God (who gave Himself for us)
- Sexually pure
- God-honouring conversation

- Keeping in mind that certain things can disqualify us from our inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God

5. Walk in Light (5:8-14)

- Remembering that once we were also full of darkness but knowing that now we have light from the Lord
- Having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather exposing those

6. Walk in Wisdom (5:15-21)

- Circumspectly, not like fools
- Redeeming the time / making the most of every opportunity
- Understanding what the Lord's will is
- Careful of seeking our stimulus from the boosters of the day/world (drink, social media, people's acceptance, promotions at work, business success) but seeking the filling of the Spirit
- Edifying each other, including with psalms & hymns and more
- Giving thanks to the Father in the name of Jesus

What does this mean for us?

- As we look ourselves in the mirror (*which includes when we look at each other here on a Sunday, on a Wednesday at small group or at any point in our daily lives where we represent this community of believers*),
 - We may ponder on where we came from...
 - We might think about the transition we went through...
 - We might think about the new season we have entered...
- But let us not stare ourselves blind against those, against our view on things, against our narrow experience.
- Let us remember that we, our congregation, form a valuable member of the body, of the church.

- Let us be clear on the fact that “the church” was God’s idea, in fact, it was God’s great “secret”, a “mystery” for ages, planned by God to demonstrate His glorious wisdom and grace.
- Let us remember the “high calling”, the “staggering privileges” of the place where we stand in Christ, together with the rest of the body:
 - Chosen, Predestined to be adopted, Accepted, Redeemed, Forgiven and made spiritually alive
- Let us have a clear practical understanding as to how this position in Christ is to affect our everyday living. Let us therefore walk:
 - In unity
 - As new people
 - With care to not grieve the Spirit
 - In Love
 - In Light
 - In Wisdom

You know the truth—let your life show it!

Eph 5:15-8 ¹⁸ Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days. Don’t be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of God.