



Sermon – April 28, 2019
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Verses Covered

Ephesians 4:1

John 6:44

John 16:7 - 8

So *Oun*. That's the word today. It's the Greek word in Ephesians 4:1 that is the pivotal word in the verse; verse 1. Translation for you is therefore. That little particle is going to make a fundamental shift in the book of Ephesians. We fit the first 3 chapters discussing, Paul does, your position in Christ. That is, who He is in you and who you are in Him. That is discussed in a lot of number of ways. Now, then he's going to say, therefore. And now, chapters 4 through 6 are the perfect response to that. And that is your condition. How your life backs up visibly a position that is invisible. No one can see your forgiveness. No one can see the Holy Spirit in you. There's no mark that occurs on you when you become a Christian. So the only visibility of the invisible position you live in is the condition which is your life response to your position. Now Paul is going to detail for you in chapters 4 through 6 what that's going to look like in your life. But the position is very clear. You don't have anything to do with it. That's the very first thing he said. Ephesians 1:3 through 14, God the Father chose to redeem you. God the Son bled out on the cross, accomplished that redemption. And God the Spirit brings that knowledge to you. And that's critical in a moment. He brings that knowledge to you and convicts you about that truth that you put your faith in. And then you are positioned in Christ. Now there are aspects in this, these first three chapters that you have to have to enact your condition. Can't have the proper condition if you haven't been positioned. For example, he prays two things. If you'll remember, when we walked through those early on, he prays. And one of the things he prays for, in the first prayer, he uses four different Greek words for power. So he prays for you to understand God's power in your position that's now in your life as a result of who you are in Christ. We ended with him praying and he used an agricultural metaphor and a construction metaphor. He said I want you rooted and I want the slab of your foundation on the fact that God loves you. I want that to be the centerpiece for you. So he locks those down. Now the reason those two are critical is because for your condition to be altered, there are promises in the Bible that you're going to have to believe. And the only way you can believe and trust the promise is if you know two things. If you know God can enact the promise and He will enact the promise. If I understand His power working through me, I know there's not a promise He cannot enact in my life. And if I understand how much He loves me and I'm rooted in that, I know there's not a promise He won't enact in my life. So the

position in all the things we learned in the first three chapters, are critical to the condition. So now we're going to walk into the visibility of what is invisible. Your condition will do two things. It will prove your position and it will make visible who you are in Christ.

Now listen to what he writes. Verse 1.

¹I beseech you,

Now that's most of your translations. The Greek word really means I call you alongside. So here's what he's saying. OK. He says, I'm asking, I'm walking toward Christ and I want you to join me in that walk. I want you to be visible in who you are. I'm visible. Even though I'm in jail people know who I am. So I want you to be visible in that. So I want you to join me. Now before he takes you any further he gives you a little warning. He says, I, Paul, I beseech you. Not I, Paul.

¹I beseech you, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord

Now before he takes you and before he really tells you what this is going to mean, he says, "Look if you walk with me where people see in your life the position you hold in Christ, if you do that, it may not work out well for you." Now he's in his probably fourth year of prison. He's been 2 years in Caesarea by the Sea, now he's 2 years in Rome. In Rome he's having to finance, he's in a house, but he's financing his meals and his clothing and everything else. He's having to pay for everything, probably including the Roman guard. So this guy is just worn out. And so he says, "Look I want you to understand. If you allow your condition to surface, it may not be good." Now let's be honest, OK. 15 years ago that wouldn't be true in America. I mean, 15 years ago, being a Christian in America and living out, actually living out the position visibly would generally bring honor to you. It would help on your job applications. I remember we had a guy whose wife attended here and he never did. And then when he ran for office we saw him every Sunday and he lost we didn't see him anymore. But he came here, because it looked good to say, he did say on his little resume out there, member, which he wasn't, of Central Baptist. Because in that day it was a benefit that you showed off a condition that reflected your position. Those days are going away. There was a guy in New Zealand a couple months ago. Right wing nut case who killed all these Muslims. One of our congress ladies had 14 tweets about how horrible that was. These terrible right wing conservative fundamentals and how they hate Muslims. Easter. Several churches in Sri Lanka bombed. How many tweets came out from her? Zero. Because Christians being killed just don't really bother her like Muslims being killed. That's where we are today. There's a bias against us. Now listen. If you, out of your position, stand in the condition God has laid out for you, you will, now listen, your stance of condition, hopefully not you but your condition, will enrage your culture. God, for example, has been very clear in the Bible. No matter what anybody says. God is absolutely clear about physical intimacy inside the Bible. It's in a box. It's between a man and a woman who are defined as man and woman by their biological gender. It is only between a man and a woman. Never between a man and a man or a woman and a woman. Once you, and that box is only authorized, physical intimacy, the only thing with a time limit on it. Once you enact a covenant with your spouse where you say, "I'm yours until we die." And as a man, you're the only woman I'm going to touch or look at. When you enact that covenant, it's until death separates you. You can't enact physical intimacy before the covenant. You cannot enact physical intimacy breaking the covenant. So the Bible, God's book, puts a physical intimacy

inside a very clear box. Now If you live that and you espouse that, you will enrage a culture today where we have moms allowing doctors to perform gender change surgery on 7-year-olds. We're in a day when the holiness and sanctity of a marriage is no longer valued, no longer accepted. And the fact is, that people are not getting married because they think, "What if we quit loving each other in 20 years. Let's just not create any legal entanglements. And so when you take the condition that God lays down in that word and to reflect your position, and you show off the visibility of who you are in Christ, listen, it will enrage this culture today. You must not enrage them with your tongue or your mouth. But your condition will enrage them. So when Paul writes and he says, I beseech you, I want you to come along side me, therefore, but know I've been a prisoner for 4 years because I'm a prisoner in the Lord. You, in the Lord, today in America will enrage a culture that despises who and what you are. So you've got to understand that.

Now, I want to be careful here, and I don't want to offend you. It's not my heart. But I do want to speak straight today. I want you to listen carefully.

I beseech you therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you've been called,

Now he's not referencing my call to preach or your call to be an attorney or your call to be a doctor. That's not what he's referencing. He's referencing the general call that every single one of us, actually I think every single person in the world gets. Listen to John chapter 6, verse 44. Listen to what he rights. Sorry, listen to what Jesus says.

⁴⁴Not even one person is able to come to Me unless the Father who sent Me pulls him to Me; and I shall raise Him in the last day.

Now He says, now there's your calling. OK. Your calling is that at some point in your life, the Holy Spirit of God is going to come and He's going to pull you toward Christ. Now you can say, "Don't want it." You're going to live with the consequences of that, but the Holy Spirit is going to pull you toward Christ. So you have to live worthily of the calling with which you've been called. Now that does that mean? Go to John 16. 16th chapter of John. Now here it is. Look in verse 7.

⁷But I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I should go away; if I don't go away, the Paraclete, whom I shall send to you, shall not come to you. But if I do go away, I shall send Him to you. ⁸That one,

Now listen. Because here's the definition of your calling.

⁸That one, when He comes, shall convict the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment;

The Holy Spirit's job is to convict you about that cross. Because on that cross, all those things are addressed. Now listen. You're to walk worthily of the calling to the cross by which you have been called. Again, please don't take me wrong today. I am not trying to be offensive, but I do think we need to understand. There are a lot of you that came in today or tomorrow when you get

up will put on a cross. Which is fine as long as you understand what you're doing. In Texas, we still execute people. Which I'm fine with, by the way. I think the Bible's fine with it. We've come to a place, though, in America obviously where we execute carefully. Chemicals in, we don't want anybody to have a bad day when they die. I don't know any other way to say that. I'm sorry. We used to execute with an electric chair which was violent. I've never seen anybody, and I'm not being humorous here. I've never seen anybody put a necklace with an electric chair on it. Because our response would be, "What's wrong with you? It's creepy. It's gruesome. Why would you walk around with an electric chair on your chain?" That is way worse than an electric chair. You were dead in seconds on the electric chair. It would sometimes take days for you to die on that cross. You wear around your neck a far more gruesome death tool of execution than the electric chair in Huntsville could ever have been. So why do you wear a cross when you would never wear an electric chair? And again, I don't mind if you do it, as long as you do it worthily of your calling.

Now listen to me. He said there were three things that you're going to be called to. One, is judgement. First thing you're called to in the cross is that your judgement is gone. And when I die, I put my faith in what the Holy Spirit tells me about the cross. When I die and I stand before the Father, I'm brought in, no questions asked. I'm forgiven. So let's just be clear here. If you walk out of these doors and you still are eaten up with guilt over something you did 25 years ago, then you don't understand the cross. You are forgiven. Locked down. No sin. Gone. There's the first thing. If I'm eaten up with guilt, I have no right to wear the cross.

Now, he says two other things. He's going to convict you about sin. He's going to tell you there are things you've done that caused Christ to be executed on the cross. There are things you've done. You have violated His character in ways in your rebellion that have caused Him to go to the cross. And He's going to convict you about that. So if I walk worthily of my calling, I will not want in my life anything that put Him on the cross. Having a glass of wine before dinner did not put Him on the cross. Getting drunk put Him on the cross. Struggling with your emotions did not put Him on the cross. Hating somebody and going after them with vengeance put Him on the cross. So what I have to look at; what put Him on there. And if I walk in this new condition worthily of the calling of the Holy Spirit of me to that cross, then I understand I'm forgiven and I don't want in my life what put Him on there. The problem with a lot of us is the only thing we live by is forgiveness. When you sit there and you look at yourself in the mirror and you go, "You know, I know I shouldn't do that, but God will forgive me." You have misunderstood and you are not worthy to wear a cross. Because if you walk worthily, you will not only understand you're forgiven, but you will not use, listen, you will not use your escape from judgement to legitimize violating His character still. You cannot do that and walk worthily of the calling with which you have been called. You come to a place where you say, "You know what, God, I don't care what Baptists think. I don't care what Lutheran's think. I just want to know whatever I did that nailed You to that tree, I don't want it in my life.

Thirdly, righteousness. The reason Jesus was able to take my sin is because He was perfectly holy and out of that holiness that was so good, God was able to dump all my sin on Him. So the third thing that I understand if I'm called to that cross, and I walk worthily, is that I not only understand I'm forgiven, I not only go, "God I don't want in my life what put You on there. And I do want in my life what qualified You to die. I want that in." That's the third way you walk worthily of

the cross and the calling. First thing He said on the cross, right, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." So when I walk in a condition that enrages my culture and they come at me, I will offer them forgiveness because they don't know what they're doing. Because I want His righteousness in my soul. I will carry His passion. Twice cleaned out the temple. Quote of the Old Testament, zeal for Your house has consumed me. I will be consumed by what consumes the heartbeat of the Father. Not what consumes my heartbeat; His heartbeat. I will become a person who if I'm like Jesus, will value broken people over celebrities. There were celebrities in the Bible: Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, the Priests were all celebrities. Not the tax collectors. Hated them. And so Jesus told a story. There was a tax collector and a Pharisee standing next to each other in church sort of. And the Pharisee looked up and said, "You know, God, thank You that I'm not like this sorry piece of dirt next to me. Thank You." The Republican, the tax collector, wept on the ground, "God, I am empty." I will never wear the jersey of an Alabama or A&M football player who does not reflect the condition of my Lord. I don't care what he plays. It's not about celebrities; it's about the character of men and women who are broken and who have knelt at the cross and said, "I'm empty. I need Your fullness, Jesus." So Paul says, tell you who you are in Christ and before He gets you into what that means in your life, he says, 'I want you to come with me and visibly show off your position by being walking in a way that you're proud of the calling that you've been called to.' You leave here today, you wear that cross as a visible statement, but only if you know you're forgiven, if you hate sin, and you love holiness. If those are your heart, then you wear it. But if they're not, put it in the drawer until they are.

Father, do not let us trivialize Your place of execution. Let us remember the gravity of those six hours. Don't let us think about it on Easter. Father, let there not be a day that the seriousness and the gravity and the depth of our calling doesn't stir us in the depths of our soul. I ask You that for Your glory and in the name of Your Son.

s been in to talk with me. Talked with his parents. Telling you that he's asked Christ into his heart. And because of that, I baptize him, our brother, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.