

The Debt of the Free: Walk Worthy

By Jeremy Lucas

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To those who seek after the grace of God,

May these words find you in His peace and gentle comfort. So many of you have been a blessing to me as gifts of our glorious Lord. For while we do indeed await a future glory, a future hope, and a future blessing, the treasure of sharing fellowship with the Body in this life is an ever-present reminder that such a future is elevated by the joy of your company.

You'll find this to be both brief and limited by comparison to things that are often written by my hand. It's not as though I desire to short you of academic, intellectual, or doctrinal thoughts or considerations, but that I further desire (right now) for you to be reminded of something very simple, and yet so often forgotten.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" Ephesians 4:1-2

Most of our "grace" perceptions fuel us toward consistent reminders that we are "saved by grace through faith." We focus nearly all of our attention on a message that steers 180 degrees away from that which might imply a "works" based salvation. To have placed our confidence in this belief is certainly not vain or devoid of truth, but it steals us away from the application of grace.

In observance of Ephesians chapter four, can you set aside all the standard inclinations you may have to look at it solely on the basis of doctrine. Look at the man writing. Stop and see his beaten body limp in a corner of the prison cell. Paul was not, after years of service to the Lord, a strong and powerfully appearing man of stature. He was, in fact, a feeble individual who often surprised his readers at the onset of a visual. Can you see him? Struggling to write from worn eyes, do you see the challenge he faces in putting down on paper the inspiration of God? A beaten body, worn eyes, and a dirty scrap with which to convey the gospel.

Now go back to verse one...

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you..."

To "beseech" is to "beg." It digs deeper than simply "urging" or "imploring." By this, Paul is stating not only where he is, what he is enduring, and the great obstacles that immediately face him in writing, but THROUGH this struggle of his own life, he manages to appear the beggar who resides on his knees. Were

you to be standing next to the man who plans to take the life of your children, you'd likely catch a glimpse of Paul's heartbeat. This is not a man who intends to write carelessly or with disdain. No. This is a man whose heart, mind, body, soul, spirit, feet, eyes, lips, fingers, and hands have only one desire... that the Body of Christ might be all that they can be for He that gave of Himself.

"...that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called..."

Is there anything that we owe God? Is there anything that He needs from us? Is there ANY debt for the free?

How many of us would be quick to say, "no?" Why would this be our response? Is it because to imagine debt is to contradict the undeserved grace of God that we understand? Is it because the thought of owing God gives us a larger responsibility than simply being good stewards of the message?

On his knees, through his imprisoned cell, Paul literally BEGS his readers to "walk worthy" of the call. That they consider their responsibility. That they consider their place in Christ. That they consider the call. That they count the cost.

Early on in my life as a "grace believer," it often became a familiar teaching among those around me to never refer to the "walk." For to them, it seemed that "the walk" might imply a larger task. Perhaps a greater debt than they believed was needed. In many expressions, I saw teachings that vaguely expressed, "We are saved by grace through faith, not by works, so if we DO any good works, it means that we truly don't understand grace."

The result of this mentality leads to severe judgment upon those who often give of humble service and tremendous working toward the calling by which they were set apart. Rather than each of us remembering to "walk worthy," we use these precious moments to tear one another down on assumptions that those WORKING do not truly understand the grace of God. How dare we!

Certainly it would be conjecture, but it's not far from character to imagine Paul's drained heart at the time of having written this reminder. Maybe he was strong. Maybe he was unbreakable. But maybe, just maybe, he cried as he wrote.

We have a debt. By all means, we have the receipt of our salvation to show the cost! How much more must we comprehend, believe, or understand before it dawns upon our deepest heartbeat that this debt is the debt of the free.

Recall the depiction one last time as this letter concludes. A man beaten. A man dirty. A man curled up in the corner of a cell. A man whose most precious blessing in the world is the hope of Christ for those he loves. See this man as gracious. See this man as giving. See this man as a representative and "imitation" of what we ought not forget.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" Ephesians 4:1-2

Giving up all arrogance. Enduring every weakness. Suffering each trouble.

As it is the debt of the free... walk worthy, my friends, walk worthy.