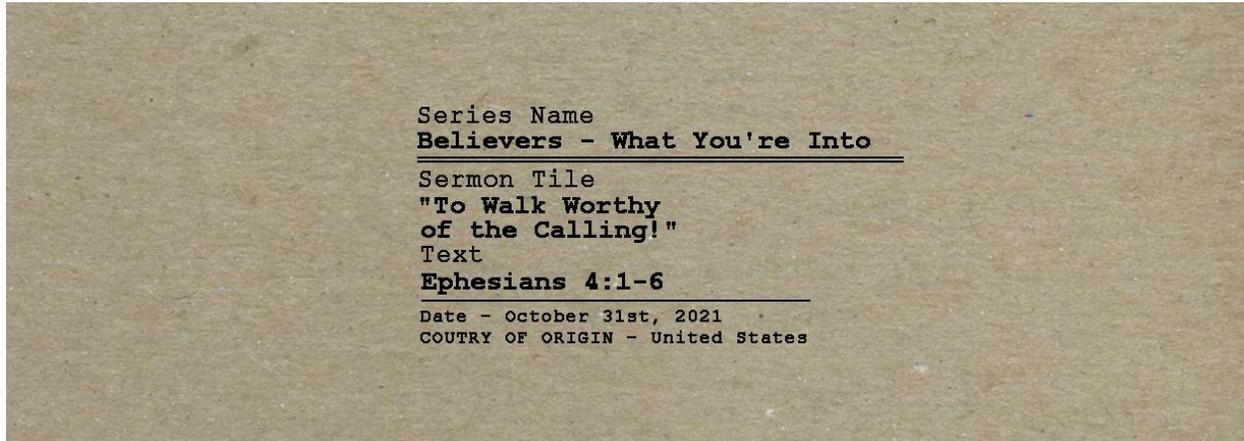


# "To Walk Worthy of the Calling!"



Ephesians 4:1-6

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Sermon slides are available [HERE](#).

Video of sermon avl here: <https://youtu.be/lIMnW6wAROU>

Transcription:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

It's great to have you here on this day. Let's see, October 31, so what is today anyway? Halloween. Is it anything else? All Saints Day Eve. Yes and what else? It's Reformation Sunday. You see, on this day, October 31 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 thesis to the doors of the church in Wittenberg, Germany and started the Reformation. And, yep, it's Halloween, too. Halloween has an interesting background too. Matter of fact, I looked it up just so I would be accurate with this. October 31, Halloween was originally in the ancient Celtic culture, a festival of Samhain. And it was when people lit bonfires, wore costumes to ward off ghosts. That was the background of it. In the 18th century, Pope Gregory III of the Roman Catholic Church designated November 1 as All Saints Day, a time to honor all saints. So October 31 was known as All Hallows Eve or Halloween, and they picked up some of the Celtic traditions. So that's the background to Halloween. It was in the 1500s, Reformation Sunday. And it became in the 1800's, Halloween. It's very interesting.

Today we are having our annual Harvest Celebration. And the day that we are going to do a memorial, that we didn't have opportunity to do a year ago due to Covid, for Joan

Futrell, our sister in Christ, who has gone on to be with the Lord. We're also going to be looking at a grand demonstration of how to walk worthy of the calling from Christ. And to get us thinking about that this morning, I'd like you to see this clip.

Video Clip: <https://youtu.be/RUji LnUbUs>

It's a joy to see this isn't it. And the grand demonstration. Joan has gone on as of October 30, 2020, she finished the course, she ran the race, she kept the faith. She has departed from us, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And the grand demonstration that we're talking about here is not Joan, though she is a demonstration. She is a demonstration of what the Apostle Paul urges us all to be, and to take to heart. Turn in your Bible to Ephesians chapter four. We have presented to us a challenge that the Apostle Paul urges on us. If you remember, we're in a series called Believers/ What You're Into. This is what the believers are into. And we've kind of developed this, they're online, we've gone through the first three chapters in Ephesians. And here, in Ephesians chapter four, the Apostle Paul wrote with emphasis, because the first words that he wrote were, "I urge you." That doesn't come out in our English translation. The English translation says it like this, Ephesians 4:1, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." That's what, in the lesser demonstration of that short film clip, was demonstrated for us. There's a greater demonstration, a grand demonstration that we're going to talk about this morning, but Joan picked up on this urging and she expressed the lesser demonstration of walking in a manner fitting, suitable, appropriate, worthy of the calling to which you have been called. Which includes this, verses 2-3, "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And then he states these reasons why it's only reasonable. Because, verses 4-6, "there is one body and one Spirit-just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

This morning, we're going to take some time to talk about this grand demonstration. The grand demonstration is this, "God demonstrated His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.", Romans 5:8. That's the grand demonstration. Christ is the grand demonstration of the life that's worthy. Christ is the grand demonstration to us of God's love. Christ is the grand demonstration of what God is like. No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten son, who is in the very closest possible relationship with the Father, he's revealed him. John 1:18 tells us. He, the book of Hebrews says, is the radiance of God's glory. And he is the exact imprint, the exact representation to us, of God's nature. We see God in the person of Christ, the grand demonstration. And Jesus even said that, He who has seen me, Jesus said, has seen the Father. That's what Jesus said, You've seen the Father. That's the grand demonstration of God and His love towards us, in while we were yet sinners, Christ died, paying for our sins, that was buried and rose again to demonstrate beyond a shadow of a doubt, this is valid, this is true. So having said that, Paul urges us, in light of that grand demonstration, to walk worthy of the calling to which you and I have been called. To walk worthy doesn't mean that what you live is equal to what Jesus did. It doesn't mean that you are exactly on par with how much God has done on our behalf. It just means

that you respond in a way that fits what God has done. It's suitable to what God has done. It's appropriate to what God has done in his love.

Now, we're going to transition into some time of sharing, what you remember, what you'd like to mention about Joan. So we have some film clips that folks have sent in to express what they remember, thoughts that they wanted to express and were willing to convey about Joan, about the manner of life that she lived. That video we watched said a lot, didn't it, concerning her school. You see, Joan was a teacher and reflecting God's love, she just invested that way, in people's lives. And I'm going to start this, I'm going to share some things that I recall, and then we're going to open it up to others to share. Okay, now first off, I would say there were two things that I remember about Joan that was such an encouragement to me. One, she was very diligent, even the kids that she was working with, very, very diligent, working on this need that the kids had. As a matter of fact, we had two from our family who went to Aslan, Joan's school. We got guardian ship of a child and needed some help with schooling and we found out about Aslan School. And we sent our newly adopted family member there. And also one of our daughters in laws went there as a young girl. And we got to know the diligence of Joan through that. I just want to give you this note on diligence, you know, there came a point in time when, Aslan couldn't be maintained, she was 78 years old and it got to a point in time where she couldn't maintain it. And we talked about other ministries for her to be involved in. Now did you notice she had a heart for kids? Did you see that? She had a heart for kids. And we worked on some of the ministries here at church for her to be involved with with kids and things just weren't going and she got a little uptight with me about this. Being diligent, she wanted me to get something together on this. And yet we did direct her energies in a way that became so meaningful to the church body. This week, we laid Sis to rest and Joan had a very significant ministry with Sis.

So that brings me to the second thing about Joan, with her diligence sometimes she would kind of be intent on one purpose, which is okay. Yet, as things went along in her life, she demonstrated a very wonderful quality of submission, submission to what God was doing, because physically she just wasn't able. Submission to the local church as we kind of gave her direction as to where to put her energies, and she was fruitful in it. And then this, when life went on, she became my model of what I want to grow up and be, truly. Because of her submission to the directions of family because of her needs, and her submission even to her doctor here. So it was really, really sweet. That's what I recall of walking worthy. I'm going to open this up now if someone would like to share what you recall.

(Congregant speaks) I met her right after 9-11, after a friend of ours had passed away and we were taking her daughter in to live with us. Her mother had already planned to have her daughter attend Aslan, we didn't make that decision. And we had heard of Aslan because our daughter in law had missed so much school from being sick as a child and she was going to have to miss a whole grade at high school so her mom had found Joan and this school. And then when we got our new member of our family, I got to go in and meet her teacher. And oh my gosh, I loved her from the very start. She was a strong woman. She was strong, and she was dedicated. And she was on a mission. I just loved it. I love that. And she had kids coming four hours in the morning, or else four

hours in the afternoon. And there were just two classes, you either came in the first part or the second part, and she gave them work to do. She had a picture of Aslan up on her wall, and she told me about the mission of her school and her love for children. And I also found out, from the very first day, that she hates old people, I'm just gonna tell you, she hated old people, she hated them. She goes, I don't want to be around old people! I want to be around these kids. And so, as pastor said, when she was trying to get a ministry here at church going with kids, she was so discouraged that it wasn't working like it used to. And pastor kept saying, We really need someone to help with widows or with older people. She did not want that at all that! I don't even like older people, she told me, I don't even like them. And she said, I can't stand to be around them. And then she came to my Bible study with us younger women and just was a delight over the years. She sat there quietly, just learning. We always had to pick her brain about what she had to add to it. And we just adored having her for years and years and years. Then the D-band started here at church and she joined the one for the older people. And she found out she doesn't hate old people. I cannot tell you how many times she told me, These old people are such dear people. And then she would even says, My Leslie. Many of you have heard her say that too, My Leslie. And I'm going to tell you, that's a heart that goes after what God's doing. She told us, I repented of that attitude. And that repentance brought forth fruit in all of your lives that were in that D-band with her, because you touched her. She loved it. And she couldn't get over how much she loved old people too. I want you guys to know she went in there kicking and screaming. And then we couldn't even hardly get her to come back to our younger people class, because she adored you. I'll close with this, because I know I talked too long. But I do have to say this. Our theme of Narnia today is in honor of her, because she called her school Aslan and she loved that. She just loved the book, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe. But when it came out on the big screen, she didn't even know it. She didn't keep up on stuff like that. And so I asked her on a Sunday morning if I could take her to see it. So I took her out on a date. And we went to the movie and bought her popcorn and a drink. And she did she eat popcorn and have a pop. I was so surprised. And I sat beside her, we laughed and we cried together. We went to two of the Narnia movies together. And she had such a love of that allegory. It just seemed fitting to honor her with the Narnia theme for our activities in the afternoon.

(Pastor speaks) Yes, very good. So that's what I was saying about diligence and submission. That was a little personal note.

(Another congregant speaks) I felt really honored to be in the same D-band that Joan was. She had a real interest in people, a real earnest interest in people and a concern. She prayed for people. She was a great prayer warrior. She prayed for people and like I said, she was really concerned for people. And she would always ask, every time you'd see you, she'd ask about your family, deep things, it wasn't just surface things and she prayed for people. She prayed for my husband for years, because she knew he wasn't saved. And then, not long before he died, he did get saved. And he went to heaven. And I couldn't help thinking, you know, he was there to greet her. One of her students, sort of, and he was there to greet her, and you could probably name others. And it was just awesome to watch her.

(Another congregant speaks) Well, I'm glad I heard the last of the story over there. Because what Joan said about old people did not resonate at our Bible study for us older people. And she was actually a blessing to us all. She just really was a blessing to us. She was not just knowledgeable as a teacher of children, but she was also very knowledgeable in the scripture, and was a real addition to our Bible study.

(Pastor speaks) Very good.

(Someone else speaks) I'm not a member of your church, and I am appreciative to have been included in the D-band she attended. And to have known Joan, she was a wonderful person. And if I could describe her in any way would be to say she was love. And her thought of saving people, anybody and everybody, it was just lovely. And we really enjoyed her company.

(Pastor speaks) We have a couple of film clips here from people who want to share thier memories of Joan. And then we'll come back and hear from some more of you.

(Showing video from a congregant) This was her first gift to me, when she came into my life a little less than two decades ago. This book, Streams in the Desert, meant a lot to her. And she wanted to share it with me as she has many of you. She said that she treasured this book only second to the Bible, that the devotions in this book are something that she valued, and she hoped I would enjoy it. And she was right. I do enjoy it. I continue to read it and think of her. And this song, oh my I can still hear her voice, strongly singing these very words. She was the song. She so love to be part of people's lives, to show them the light of Jesus to be his loving arms around them. She did this in my world. She exampled for me what it looks like to be a strong Christian woman who seeks to do what God wants her to do. She was the light of Christ in my life. She is greatly missed. And I continue to try and be that example that she left for me, to carry His love to others, because she learned a valuable lesson. And she taught it to us, that all that really matters in this world is Christ.

(Another congregant speaks) We all know that she was a great inspiration. And she shined God's love and she carried her candle. And she never missed a chance to go with us when we were going to another Bible study. She even climbed stairs there toward the end. A minister in Upland was holding Bible studies there and she would climb the stairs, two flights, but we'd take our time. She loved to listen to this minister. She also liked to go with us when we went to other Bible studies. And she loved kids, but not only kids, but the young people that she had taught, and she loved to see what they were accomplishing, especially one young man. He had been through so much, and now he's got his own church. And then when she started going to church elsewhere, because it was closer to her home, she was reunited with yet another one of her young men she prayed for. And when she'd come to Bible study, our D-band, she would just talk about this young man and how proud she was of him. And how he treated her like a queen. She was very important to us and very special.

(Pastor speaks) Amen. It's good to remember Joan.

(Congregant speaks) Well, I was also the recipient of Streams in the Desert from Joan, when I first started coming to Heartland and became friends with Joan. And she wrote the sweetest thing in that book. I also found a note in a Bible study book that she sent me. The note says, Just a note to thank you for being my friend. And she knew I had written a book, and she gave me some kudos for my book and how much thought I'd put into it and how she had often thought about writing her story. So when I was asked by some of the ladies if I had any memories of Joan that I wanted to share, I thought, well this is this is for you, Joan. This is your life story. And the people that love you are here to share that with you. She was just an inspiration to me. And we shared many similar paths cross so many different levels. And she was inspiring. That's what I can say about Joan because her love was infectious. She loved you, and you knew it. And I thought what a good example for us to just love on people. And I have a chance now to be in a school situation and I see the need for these kids to just have a hug. You know, if you see a kid with her head down or, you know, a fifth grader who you think, man maybe she's being picked on or something, well I'm going try and befriend her, you know, and I'm going to talk to her and I'm going to come up and hug her and treat her the way I know Joan did her students. And then, the other day, she came up and actually hugged me...my friend, my new friend Pearl. And so I'm just thankful that God brought Joan and I together. She was and is a great example for us. And I too want to be Joan when I grow up.

(Pastor speaks) Very good. And you did well, you didn't even seem to have a problem with it. Alright, someone else a note that they would like to share here.

(Congregant speaks) One of the things that I remember, one of my first memories of Joan was this little older lady that I didn't know very well. And I was raising up boys. And I'm tell my boys, Help her carry things, open the door, hold the door for her. Oh my gosh, she strongly stated, I'm not old! I don't need any help. I don't need the door to be held. And I said, You're right. You don't need it. But my boys need to learn to do it. She thought about that for a second. And then she said, Okay then, I guess I can allow it for that. And that was just so typical of her. I don't know how much younger I am than she was but I just thought I wish I had that energy now. And she was just fiercely independent and very strong. But like you mentioned she was willing to bend to the need and I so appreciated that in her.

(Pastor speaks) Amen. Very good.

Dr. Stewart

(Another congregant speaks) Joan was for the underdog. I shared this at her grave sides service. There was this guy in church, most everybody here knows who I'm talking about, 6' 2", 260 pounds. And Joan, of course, is this little slight thing. And when this young man would come into church, she would always give him a big hug. And the other young man that was previously mentioned also, both these guys had been in prison, one had been a drug runner, the other an addict. But she was for the underdog, I really appreciate that about Joan. And in my office before she had to go in the nursing home, we had a conversation about that. I can tell you from past experience, that some of the most angry people that I've ever seen are a little older people that have to go in the

nursing home, they lose their home and go to a place they're not used to and it can be a very ugly situation. But with Joan, she thought about it. And she said, You know, whatever you think is best, I'll accept that. That's the submission that you were talking about, that I've rarely seen. That's the the fruit of Christ's work and her heart.

Pastor Thom Rittichier

(Another congregant speaks) Even when she was in the nursing home, I would walk in and she was sitting on the side of her bed, multiple times, I would find her sitting on the side of her bed, and just talking with another of my co workers about Jesus or she was praying with them. And one day she said, You know, I really don't want to be here. But I know these people need Jesus. So I'm gonna try and be a light. She was, she was absolutely a light.

(Another congregant speaks) If I had one word other than what's already been described, it will be available. She was available. And you can hear that and all of these stories that have been given already. There was not a time we didn't set down to visit or at a meal that she wasn't talking about how she wanted to be there for her family, for her children, for her grandchildren, for her great grandchildren, going to a ball game or helping them move or fixing something for them, she was available. We had a mom's group, had a lot of little kids also attended the mom's group. It's difficult to do any kind of conversation when you've got little ones around. She said, I'll come, I'll sit with the little ones. I'll read them stories, tell them to bring their homework, a lot of them were homeschool. I'll help them with their homework. She was available. If someone needed a ride back and forth to different doctor's appointments. She was available. I will take them. If someone needed tutoring. She was available. She was whatever Christ needed to be for that person, at that time. She was always available. And I missed her.

(Pastor speaks) Amen. Do we have another film clip or is that it?

Unknown Speaker

(Showing another video memory of Joan from a congregant) My memories of Joan are so vivid. I miss her so much. To me, she epitomizes the song, Go Light Your World by Chris Rice. A song that says, Every soul has a candle in it, whether it's light or not. Joan epitomized the fact that her candle was lit. Whenshe would come into church on Sunday, if there'd be somebody by themselves, she'd immediately go over there and visit with them and see about them. She loved the children. She loved being with people and sharing the Word of the Lord. I miss her so much at Bible study. I learned so much about our walk of faith with Joan. She lit her candle, she showed it to the world. And she was an example to all of us to go light your candle in the world.

Pastor Thom Rittichier

(Pastor speaks) Amen. Good, very good, wonderful, wonderful testimony.

Dr. Stewart

(Congregant speaks) My very first recollection of Joan is when she came out to a Bible study that we were hosting on the farm and in a very kind of polite way she got my face and said, How are you doing this financially? And being from California, you don't talk

to people like that. It was really off putting. And I thought to myself, Who do you think you are, asking me about my financial situation. But she was such an endearing person that my offense at her, at her questioning, went away very quickly and I considered her a dear friend. I never grieved her death until today. I look forward to reuniting with her in heaven.

Pastor Thom Rittichier

(Another congregant speaks) She was a very big part of our lives on the farm for a lot of years, and coming and just sharing meals and sharing life and love. We do miss her.

(Pastor speaks) Amen.

(Congregant speaks) I don't know if this has already been said. But I always loved Joan's honesty, sometimes it was brutal. And sometimes it wasn't. But she was really transparent. Having humility would almost cover it, that she was willing to be humble, but not only humble, but risk being humiliated. It's hard to change so much, to go from a person who was one thing in attitude to another, and for an audience to be there. And then for people to talk about the change in your life. It can be exposing, and humiliating. And she was willing, she was willing to be talked about in the growth that she experienced so late in life, spiritually. And that was always so inspiring to me. As you watch other people settle in their ways, to be a constant learner, constantly willing to challenge herself, even when she didn't want to. Wanting to learn new things, wanting to grow and change, and then being willing for people to see it and talk about it. That was always so inspiring to me. I want to be like that.

(Pastor speaks) Seems to be a reoccurring theme, I want to be like that. I want to be like that. That is a very, very encouraging note and frequently Joan would push off any attempt to have the attention on her. But to put the attention on the grand demonstration. The grand demonstration in God's love.

(Joan's daughter speaks) I'm daughter two, child number three out of four. Forgotten one because the middle child is the quiet docile one that just does what they're told. On March 10, University Nursing Home locked down due to Covid. I was one block away from visiting when they called me. I just swung around the building and went back home and realized I was going to have to explain to her what had just happened. And every week we'd visit through the window. And I would say, It's going to be a few more weeks that we're going to be locked down due to this pandemic. It's pretty bad, mom. And I think she understood and somehow accepted it. On March 10, she was still going to therapy, could walk, do her exercises, was determined to do her exercises. And she made friends there and loved the therapist. So from November 1 to March 10, I think it was good for her. And I think she gained some strength back. But being locked down and no one could visit was a very negative thing. And by May she was falling. By June, she couldn't walk. And by July my daughters were saying, You have to bring her home. I said, I can't bring her home. I can't take care of her. First of all, my back won't, you know, I can't bend over and take care of her. And they came to visit, one daughter from New York, they'd been locked down in Harlem for months, they came for three weeks just to get out in the country. And they're like, You just have to do this. I'd say, I can't do

this. So a week after they went home. The Lord just helped me see and accept that if I didn't bring her home, she would die there, alone. And so my three siblings and I, they agree. And I knew I would be the main caregiver. But they did agree. And so my husband and my brother would try to get her out of the car and get her into the house, because at that point, she could not walk at all. This was August. And I have to say that the 74 days that I cared for her were an honor. And this is what I wanted to tell you. Not one time, did she say, I wish I didn't have to lay on this bed. Wish I could just get up. Because by day three, coming home, she said, Just let me lay here. I don't want to get up anymore. She was just worn out. And yet her heart and will were so strong that she lived. And the hospice ladies were like, We don't know why she's still alive. She lives 74 days. And she was such an example to me of an uncomplaining spirit and just still wanting to honor the Lord. And it really was an honor to care for her.

(Pastor speaks) Wow, that's an encouraging note with those who are closer, an encouragement and inspiration to me to be like her. And you know, this passage that we're looking at, talks to us that we are all called to this, walk worthy. We're going to take a few minutes and just cover this passage here in Ephesians 4:1-6. First of all, we have this urging that the apostle gives us here, to walk worthy, verse 1. And it's to be seen, he says, with some certain things that we've heard highlighted here today, verses 2-3. And then finally, this is only reasonable. He says, because...verses 4-6. Now, like I mentioned, this Ephesians passage talks to us about, as believers, what we're into. As a matter of fact, all of Ephesians speaks to this. God electing his children before the foundation of the world, adopting them through Christ when they were dead, making them alive, together with Christ, by His grace because of His great love were with He loved us. Even while we were dead in sin, He made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved and that grace that saves us, through faith, also brings us the opportunity to walk into the good deeds, the good things we can enter into, that He's before ordained.

Those things are the basis for him giving us the urging, Ephesians chapter four, verse one, he says, Therefore, based on those things that God has done, and the call he's put on our life in Christ to experience this love, based on that, the urging is to you and to me, to walk. Meaning to participate by what you do in and the way you do your life. To participate in this thing, this call, that God has put on our life, a call that is to effect the way we live life. So we're to participate with him. That's what Paul urges. And he urges this with a pleaing sense of appeal. Do this, walk worthy, he says, in a manner not equal to what God has done on your behalf, you can't equal that, you can't ever match that. But it can be fitting for the calling that he's placed on your life.

I want to give an illustration here. So we are going into November tomorrow. Let's say you get a call, an invitation. The invitation is to go to the playoff games that are coming up. And now it's Friday that you're going to one of these high school playoff games. So you're going to the game and the weather is in the 30s, potentially going into the teens, by the time you leave, it's going to be damp, maybe some snow rain mix. And so hmm, could that ever happen? Yeah, it's happened quite a bit. When you're going to that game, how are you going to get dressed to go to that game? Wear layers, probably? Water resistant? Taking an umbrella? Yep. That's what you're going to do. Because you're

going to walk in a manner that's suited to the calling, the invitation, that you had to go to this game, it's going to be fit. When the apostle talks to us, in this urging, he's talking about walking in a way that fits this calling, it's suited to it, it's appropriate to it. As a matter of fact, that's exactly what that adverb, walk worthy, is talking about, being fitted. Let's say that you got invited in August to the beach for the day. Are you going to wear the same layers and the same coat with the same umbrella? Well, maybe an umbrella, but not or rain, more as a parasol. So you're going to adjust and be fitting.

God has put a call on our lives based on the love that he's demonstrated to us. And because, verse seven, he's given us all this gift, and grace with these gifts, and we're to fit, we're to be suitable to that calling he's placed on us. For Joan and her experience in education, Aslan School was the natural outcome, especially with her attachment to the Chronicles of Narnia. And by the way, our young people are going to be demonstrating some of that today, as we kind of have our family activities. That was natural for her. And then some of the things that weren't natural for her, her focus on the kids, then making the transition to another ministry, and giving up her freedoms, and to all of us, this becomes an example. That's fitting for the love of God in her life, to be shown in our life. And this urging is to you all and to me, to walk in this way that's suitable to the call.

Then he points out to us what's to be seen with this, verses 2-3. And that's exactly some of the words that we heard here today. These are the traits, all these traits show up and are suitable. There's humility, a lowering of your attitude. That was Joan's way, the lowering of the attitude. It was the same mind that was in Christ, looking not out for your own interest only but the interest of others also. In the giving up her house so that she could invest in lives. And then gentleness. This was a growing thing for Joan when she was managing the classrooms. One thing, as she went on, was considering the impact of her words and actions. One person this morning talked about the notes that she send to her. The things that she said to us, the encouragement, considering the impact of your words and your actions. Now, this is a growing thing for us all, a mild manner that comes from an attitude that you lower your interests, thinking others more important than yourself, that's what Christ did. And then there was the endurance and staying in there. And I want you to notice particularly what he talks about this endurance, this hanging in there is. It's with this, forbearing or putting up with one another. Do you know sometimes I am hard to live with. I've got some things...you say, No surprise to us! And you know, the fact is, we all have these things. I can mention to you some of the things that are hard to live with. My wife was talking to me yesterday about some things that are hard to live with. And she was talking about living with her. Here's the point. In some of these things, which we all have, God wants us to put up with them, put up with them. Because it's fitting to his demonstrated love for us. It's fitting, it's fitting.

And then this, doing all of this with eagerness and a diligence to maintain the unity of the Spirit, in harmony with each other. Do you know, God intentionally puts us with some people, sometimes, that kind of push us the wrong way. As a matter of fact, one person has said that the church is kind of like porcupines on a winter's night when the cold wind blows, and we huddled together because of the nature of this world, but these quills...and we kind of needle and poke each other and we kind of rub each other wrong

at times. So there needs to be this invested effort to be unified, not uniformity, we're all different. Have you noticed that? And I want to push forward the differences, because the differences is what makes this body of Christ, providing different things. Don't all be like Pastor Thom. Some folks think he's too stiff to live with, some folks say, he's so enthusiastic, he gets carried away. Can you just calm it? Okay. Don't be me. Don't be me, be you, with your differences. Unified, united, not uniformity. But united in the Spirit.

And notice, he says, to maintain this unity of Spirit. That's our challenge. Christ has created this. It's our job to keep it and this belongs to the local assembly. And can I add this too, this belongs to other believers around, universal, with them. Now, does this mean compromise on everything? No, there are truths to stand for. But we do it in a manner of unity of Spirit with a bond of peace. Let me tell you, this is so needed in our time, especially with the vaxxers and the anti vaxxers, and the political positions, and all of that that goes on. And this is real. This is for us. This is now and this is a call of walking in a manner that's worthy. It's that, that he says, those traits, putting in effort to do that.

And by the way, this is all reasonable, verses 4-6. It's all reasonable, because you are all in on this one of the kind realities, and here's those realities. One, oneness of the body of Christ. It's all one body, oneness of the Spirit, the Spirit of the living Christ in us, the oneness of the hope of our calling, that we are all together going to join Jesus, and live and rule and reign with Him, for all of those who are in Christ. There is one Lord, we all have one boss, that's the director. We all have one faith, one experience of putting our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Him making us new, there is one baptism by the Spirit. And there is one God and Father of all, whose overall and through all and in all. He is a God who is sovereign over this, he is a God so far above us, over it. And yet he's working through and in these present situations very closely, being so intimate, that he's in us.

Conclusion of this matter, so you're headed to the next event in your life. You're headed there. Joan had a common theme that she referred to often, over and over. Tis one life...you ever heard this from her?...will soon be passed...and for Joan, that's the case, the conclusion of that...it's only what's done for Christ that will last. And as we talked about this, we agreed that what's done for Christ is done for other people, keeping a unity of the Spirit in a bond of peace, by humility and gentleness, enduring, putting up with each other, reflecting the love of Christ. The next event, well, we've got some events today. Here's the challenge, go at it, fittingly, suitably, appropriately, to what God has called us to. That's the urge.

Father in heaven, we thank you for your great kindness to us. And as we conclude today, Lord, with this song, this song that was a joy to Joan, we pray that we'll take the Apostle Paul's urging and accept the challenge for when we're finished here. Well done, good and faithful servant. You've been faithful in that which is little, hey, behold, I'll make you ruler over much. Enter the joy of your of your Lord. Amen.