

**THE BIG IDEA:** The difference between a choice and a chore is ownership.

### The Take-Off

For the past 7 weeks, we've talked theory and doctrine.

We've studied the part of Paul's letter to the Ephesians that explains WHO WE ARE without much thought about how that might impact WHAT WE DO.

Today, all of that changes. Beginning in chapter 4, Paul gets practical.

He starts to put some walk with the talk.

But what we can't forget is that the walk is 100% connected to the talk.

Our actions are totally impacted by our understanding of why we're doing what we're doing.

In other words, the difference between "I have to" and "I get to" is knowing what "I'm called to."

The Big Idea says it like this: the difference between a choice and a chore is ownership.

Paul knew that, and so he took the first 6 verses of chapter 4 and to lay the groundwork that we'll need over the next 3 chapters of in-your-face, leave-no-doubt-about-it applications of how we live this out.

### 1. I have to versus I get to

- a. This first point is admittedly not overly spiritual, so if you're with us at The Gathering but you're still a bit on the fence about church and Jesus, this one's for you, too
- b. You don't have love Jesus to understand the truth that there is a difference between "I have to" and "I get to"
- c. It's the difference between a CHOICE and a CHORE, and if you can think back to the first car that you actually owned, you'll see this pretty clearly
- d. I remember how much I hated washing my dad's cars
- e. Nothing could ruin a beautiful sunny afternoon more than seeing my dad pulling out the buckets and the hose
- f. I am not overstating this: I hated washing his cars
- g. But something happened when I bought my first car - a 1984 2-door Honda hatchback
- h. My dad didn't have to ask me to wash my car
- i. I saw beautiful sunny Saturdays differently - they didn't make me cringe at an obligation, now they made me jump at an opportunity!
- j. Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:1 that we are to live in a manner worthy of the calling that we have received
- k. That word "received" means that we've been given something - and verse 3 tells us that what we've been given is unity
- l. Little known fact: you'll never find anywhere in scripture that commands you or me to build unity
- m. We're just called to keep it, to maintain it, to guard it, and in this passage, we're called to OWN it
- n. Paul's spent the last 3 chapters explaining that the ONE thing that matters most to God is making ONE body, and here in 4:1, Paul explains that God now gives us this gift.
- o. It's ours, and everything that follows will either be a choice (I get to) or a chore (I have to) depending on whether or not we step up and take ownership of the unity God is building
- p. If we see unity as disposable, then we'll see the things necessary to guard it as obligations that we may or may not feel like doing
- q. But if we see it as vital, then the things necessary to guard it become opportunities that we get to do in order to make the body stronger

### 2. Balance begins with "be"

- a. Once we take ownership of the unity that Jesus gives us, we've got to figure out how to live in it, right?
- b. Admittedly, it can be a little tricky at times, sort of like walking on a tightrope.
- c. Paul knew that what we need in order to pull this off is balance.
- d. In fact, the phrase "live a life worthy of the calling you have received" speaks of balance. The Greek word for "worthy" is "axios" and carries with it the meaning of "equal weight"
- e. It's a lot like a tightrope walker carrying a pole - the pole distributes the center of gravity and allows him or her to keep their balance
- f. So Paul gives us some poles that we need to carry with us as we walk this out

- g. Here are some “be’s” that will help us keep our balance as we guard the unity we’ve been given ownership of:
- h. First, we need to be humble (v. 2)
- Let’s make sure we have a proper understanding of humility, ok
  - It isn’t the same as having a poor self-image
  - The wrong kind of humility comes from seeing ourselves in relation to others (shame, don’t measure up)
  - True humility comes from seeing ourselves in relation to God (He’s bigger than me and that’s good!!)
  - The word literally means “aware of one’s on littleness”
  - Here is what we gain from having true humility:
    - Grace (James 4:6)
    - Exaltation (Luke 14:11 and 1 Peter 5:6)
    - Riches, honor, life (Proverbs 22:4)
- i. Second, we need to be gentle (v. 2)
- this isn’t being a doormat or being weak
  - this is meekness, and a great definition of meekness is “power under control”
  - this is a quality that can only really be lived out by people who know who they are
  - we don’t have to PROVE meekness, we simply live it
  - we can yield to others and not lose our identity
  - Psalm 18:35 is a great picture of what meekness allows us to do
    - The Psalmist has just described God as a rock (Psalm 18:31)
    - He is a strong, victorious God
    - verse 35 says that God “stoops down to make me great”
    - Phrase for “stoop down” is the Hebrew word for “meekness”
- j. Third, we need to be patient (v. 2)
- patience is a tough one, because there is really only one way to develop it, isn’t there?
  - Slow cars, long lines and people!
  - Romans 12:12 tells us that we’re to be patient in affliction and Romans 8:25 tells us that we need patience while we’re waiting for what we don’t already have
  - Put it all together, and the last pole to keep us balanced is necessary because it will take some time for us to truly live out fully the unity that we’ve been given!
- f. These 3 balance poles are non-negotiable if we expect to live out the unity we’re called to without losing our balance

### The Landing

It’s interesting how Paul closes out this section: ONE body, ONE Spirit, ONE hope, ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE, ONE, ONE  
 Seems that this is the only option, doesn’t it?

It’s like Spanish conqueror Hernando Cortez commanding his men to “burn the ships” we they landed in Mexico  
 But when we see unity in the body as the ONE thing we’ve been called to instead of an option we may or may not want, then it changes everything.

We’re in this for better or worse, and owning that makes us WANT to make it the best it can be!

That changes everything, and as our Big Idea says, **the difference between a CHOICE and a CHORE is ownership.**

We begin to sacrifice my way for our way. Laying down my rights enables me to serve your needs.

It’s like Howard Schultz, the CEO of Starbucks and why he never drank free coffee in his stores

He paid for what he could have taken because ownership made him want to help the business succeed

Paul’s command to the Ephesians and to us throughout the rest of this letter is simple: “Make EVERY effort to keep (own) the unity”

What felt like a chore suddenly becomes a choice. We own it, and what were obligations before now become opportunities.

Ownership changes everything, because the difference between a choice and a chore is ownership.

Let’s pray.