

# FORBEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE

*Ephesians 4:1-3*

**Ezekiel Oghenekaro**

*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; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (KJV)*

*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup> with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, **bearing with one another in love**, <sup>3</sup> endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (NKJV)*

***Ephesians 4:1-3***

“Anyone can love the ideal church”, but “the challenge is to love the real church.” This is like what we have in our text; “bearing with one another in love”—Paul knows that loving the real church is not something that naturally springs from us.

The word “bearing” suggests a challenge; note he does not say “hi-fiving one another in love”, as if the challenge were simply to direct our enthusiasm for one another. Does becoming a Christian make a person instantly loveable and easy to be around? We know better. Relationships rooted in love take effort. Leo Tolstoy wrote: “What counts in making a happy marriage is not so much how compatible you are, but how you deal with incompatibility.” If this is true of a relationship between two people, how much more so in a church community of many people.

In the late 1800’s there is a story of two deacons in a small Baptist church in Mayfield, Kentucky, USA. The two deacons did not get along and always opposed each other in any decision related to the church. On one Sunday, one deacon put up a small wooden peg on the back wall of the church so the preacher could have a place to hang up his hat. When the other deacon discovered the peg, he was outraged that he had not been consulted. People in the church took sides and eventually there was a split. This is still happening among us every day. We hardly get along especially when things do not go our way.

**Defining the Action...** The KJV and ASV use the phrase “Forbearing one another”. The original word is *anéchomai* (an-ekh’-om-ahee) which means to “hold oneself up against... (figuratively) **to put up with**. There you have it. In that long list of one another responsibilities the Lord says we must **put up with each other**.

The word “forbear” literally means to “*hold up or back from falling*”. Thayer says... *to hold oneself erect and firm... to sustain, to bear, to endure*. Thus, forbearance is patience or endurance.

Paul’s use of this term in **Ephesians 4:2** has to do with bearing with each other – *putting up with others*. Barnes says... “*Bearing patiently with the foibles (a minor weakness or eccentricity in someone’s character), faults, and infirmities of others*” – **1 Thessalonians 5:14** – *14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold (anechomai) the weak, be patient with all*. It is a word that can deal with support for another, especially regarding their weaknesses.

- “*to bear with, have patience within regard to the errors and weaknesses of anyone.*” (WS Dictionary)

### Factors Militating Against Forbearance

- **Lack Of Humility**

Many a time we see others as worse than us. I remember last week; our brother reminds us that the Believer’s life is not one of comparing ourselves with ourselves. The moment you feel others are worse sinners, we find it difficult to tolerate their frailty. Consider giving an assignment to a subordinate and you expect more from them, but they deliver less than your expectation; you may end putting it bluntly to your subordinate not minding their feelings.

This also happens among us. A husband may expect more his wife but got especially when it comes to stomach infrastructure not minding the stress the woman must have gone through to prepare the meal, all you are interested in is her frailty. What about leaders killing the moral of a subordinate because they did not meet your expectation. My former always tell to own up mistake. Even when he is hurt about the mistake I made, he still finds a way make me feel comfortable so as not to lose my trust while at the same time trying to ensure our jobs are safe.

If you are humble, you will remember that you are far from perfect. “Humility” the lowliness of mind which springs from a true estimate of ourselves”. If you are gentle, you will be considerate of the feelings of others. Irrespective of what transpired between you and another brother, you will always want to consider their feelings. Paul says, *forbearing one another in love. Philippians 2:2-5*.

- **Not Walking Worthy of Our Calling – Ephesians 4:1**

*“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received”*. Whenever our walk is not in conformity with our calling we become intolerant of others. That is when you hear people say I don’t take that... I cannot put up with this kind of persons etc.

Paul has described the calling of God with the attitudes of lowliness, meekness, and longsuffering. The call for us to forbear with each other takes these attitudes a step further. He is specifically calling for us to tolerate the weaknesses of our brethren. To not allow the little things get to us and disrupt our relationship with each other. We all have weaknesses of conviction and faith. We all fail to meet the needs of others and to fulfil our responsibilities to each other. At times we even sin against each other. How do we respond when this happens to us? We are called to be **forbearing** – to **put up with it**.

### Points to Note

- Not in a compromising manner that excuses sin or threatens the integrity of God's church.
  - But we must not be poised to condemn, but rather yearning and working toward continued unity and reconciliation.
  - **At times it is obvious that unity or reconciliation** is the farthest thing from our minds. Like an animal stalk its prey we watch and listen to our brother's or sister's actions with a view toward correcting every *misstep* and *condemning every error*.
- a. It is easy to see forbearance in Jesus in His attitude towards His disciples. How often did He put up with their weaknesses and lack of understanding? **Matthew 16:5-12**– 5 *Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.* 6 *Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."* 7 *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."* 8 *But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?"* 9 *Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?* 10 *Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?* 11 *How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? — but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."* 12 *Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*
  - b. Later in the next chapter of Matthew, a gentleman brought his epileptic son to Jesus to be healed. They had previously brought the boy to the disciples, but they could not heal him. Jesus was grieved at the impotence of the disciples and said... *"O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I **bear** (anechomai) with you? Bring him here to Me."* (**Matthew 17:17**) Later when the disciples asked about their inability to work the miracle, Jesus calmly told them to fast and pray more earnestly.

### The End of the Matter

**"Forbearing in Love"** The end of **Ephesians 4:2** connects forbearance with love. Personal forbearance is an act motivated by **love** and made possible through love for others.

- A. Paul's description of love in **1 Corinthians 13** begins by saying that ***Love is patient...*** and ends by telling us that ***love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.***
1. This is how parents bear with their children. How husbands and wives survive the struggles of a marriage; How members of a family give each other the benefit of the doubt and forbear the weaknesses and mistakes of each other. This is how the body of Christ, composed of differing and at times even conflicting convictions and actions, continues to exist in unity. They **love** each other, and **love** bears all things
  2. This love is not a sentimental emotion. It is a resolve to act in the best interest of another. Take a closer look at **1 Corinthians 13:1-7**. This is the foundation of forbearance. If we can learn to love, putting up with each other will not challenge us. It will be the natural response. How does love help us to forbear?
    - It is not too proud to put the other person's feeling above their own
    - It is not easily angered or provoked – It takes a lot to get it riled up.
    - It is not rude or use language that incites others or is simply meant to hurt another person.
    - It keeps no record of wrongs – it does not use the mistakes of the past against another.
    - It does not get pleasure in the failings of another. It is saddened by it and provoked to compassion not retribution.
    - It seeks to protect the other person from accusations or harm.
    - It always hopes for the best and perseveres through whatever comes to support the other person toward reconciliation.
    - It never fails.

**Conclusion:** Putting up with each other is preparing our hearts to forgive each other. When we forbear with one another, it becomes easier to look closer at forgiveness. How can we show the world we belong to Jesus?

- **Colossians 3:12-13** – *12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

## References

Walking with an Attitude – Part 5: “Bearing with One Another in Love” – webpage publication: [\*Walking with an Attitude – Part 5: “Bearing with One Another in Love” – Southside Church of Christ in Fort Myers\*](#)

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