

August 4 & 11, 2021

Topic 16: Faithfulness & Gentleness *Becoming God's Humble Servant*

*"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls."*

Matthew 11:29

The Disciple of Jesus needs to know certain things about the Bible, God (the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost), and the Church.

In spending time with Jesus, we really become like Jesus.

Discipleship isn't just studying the Bible and engaging in religious activities. Rather, it involves a slow, steady transformation into Christ-likeness. In other words, it isn't simply knowing and doing new things; it's becoming the new people God created us to be.



In Galatians 5:22–23 we are given a snapshot of the heart of Jesus, an example of the way he lived.

Looking at the Text

Faithfulness

One of the traits that Paul says marks Spirit-filled followers of Christ is faithfulness. The Greek word is *pistis*, which is almost always translated "faith," though it can be rendered "faithfulness." It conveys confidence, certainty, or trust. To have faith is to have those things; to be faithful is to inspire such things in others.

Some Bible Verses about Faithfulness of God

- "Because of the lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22–24).
- "But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory" (Hebrews 3:6).
- "If we are faithless, [Jesus] remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:13, esv).

1. When you think about these verses, how would you describe faithfulness?

In everyday terms, to be faithful means to be dependable. It means to be trustworthy, loyal, and consistent. A faithful person is reliable. You can count on him or her. If you are faithful, it means you will be there. You'll show up. You'll do what you said. You'll keep your promises – even when you're tired, or don't feel like it.

2. Describe the times in your life when you were blessed by God's faithfulness.

When a person is faithful – literally “full of faith” – it leads to a radically different life.

Let's explore faith in action

Gentleness

3. How would you define the word “gentleness”? What words come to mind when you think of someone who is gentle?

The Greek word for “gentleness” is *prautes*. It was used in ancient times to refer to a tame beast, a pleasant person, or a lenient punishment. When this word gets translated as “meek,” it is wrongly understood by some to suggest weakness or wimpiness – being soft or a pushover or a doormat. This is not the biblical idea.

Gentle people allow the Spirit of God to pervade their lives. They are calm, humble, non-threatening – the very opposite of harsh or irritated. Instead of the power of pride and anger, a gentle disciple of Jesus opts for the power of humility. Gentleness in the bible means showing care and respect for others in the way that you act and speak. And as Proverbs 15:1 indicates, anger is no match for gentleness and humility!

Gentleness is the quality or characteristic of being kind, tender, mild-mannered, compassionate, and considerate. To be gentle means that you show love, care and respect for others in the way you act and speak. To have gentleness is to have a gentle spirit or nature about you.

Consider how the prophet Isaiah described God’s Servant, the Messiah – Jesus – who would one day come: “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice” (Isaiah 42:3).

In the Old Testament, gentleness is illustrated in the bible as a stream or river ([Isaiah 8:6](#)) and also to a shepherd caring for his flock of lambs ([Isaiah 40:11](#)). God himself spoke to Elijah as a gentle whisper ([1 Kings 19:11-13](#)). From these examples of gentleness in the bible, we can picture a soft touch, calm reassurance, and a loving hand.

In the New Testament Jesus comes as the perfect example of being “gentle and humble of heart” (Matthew 11:29). Paul then continues to model gentleness in the way he preaches ([1 Thes 2:7](#) and [1 Cor 4:21](#)). These great examples of gentleness help us to see practically what that looks like in everyday life.

There is a strong connection in the bible between gentleness and the power of words. Proverbs indicates that gentle words turn away wrath and are a tree of life ([Proverbs 15:1,4](#)). These verses can be applied to any relationship or interaction with have with others.

The power of our words can be life-giving and diffuse a tense situation. It is important to remember that as Christians we are called to more than this.

In sharing the good news of the gospel we are to do so with gentleness and respect ([1 Peter 3:15-16](#)). In doing so we will win over those who hear us. Other faithful followers found this to be true ([Job 29:22](#), [2 Timothy 2:25](#)). We are to be calm and respectful when speaking with others. Speak the truth but watch your tone so that the truth, however painful it may be, will be well received.

Columnists Christina Dronen offers 10 ways you can show gentleness:

1. Be considerate of others’ feelings and needs.
2. Show empathy.
3. Be Patient.
4. Remember the Golden Rule: Treat others the way you would like to be treated.
5. Speak respectfully to everyone.
6. Seek peace
7. Be a calm presence.
8. Act with tenderness and love.
9. Listen more than you speak or act (James 1:19).
10. Be Humble

4. When in your life have you been most touched by the gentleness of Christ? What were the circumstances? What happened?

Consider the actions of Christ on the night he was betrayed.

- He gathered together with his disciples – despite knowing that before the night was through, they would all betray, deny and/or desert him. Nevertheless, he was faithful to them and gentle with them. He tenderly washed their feet. He earnestly taught them important truths. He passionately prayed for them.
- And he wasn't only faithful to his followers. In his prayer he mentioned his utter faithfulness to the task God had given him to do (John 17:4).
- Later, in the Garden of Gethsemane, even when he was grieved by the terrible reality of what awaited him, he reiterated his desire to be faithful to the Father's will (Luke 22:42).
- Then, when violence broke out and one of those who had come to arrest him suffered a wound, Jesus gently touched the man and healed him (Luke 22:51).

What humility! What a servant! No one ever faced greater pressure or stress than Christ did on that night. And yet, he responded to every situation and every person with absolute faithfulness and gentleness.

Life Application

In one sitting, read John 13–21. Place yourself in that evening experience and pretend you are there with the twelve disciples. Watch Jesus. Pay close attention to his words. Notice his humility – how he serves faithfully and gently.

Wrestle with the following:

Think of some ways in which you think, talk, act, look, and dress like other people with whom you spend a lot of time? What other characteristics might you be picking up from them?

What are some specific areas of your life in which you could stand to be more faithful – either from God's point of view or toward other people?

We all have “pet peeves” – things that tend to get under our skin, and cause us to react strongly instead of gently and humbly. What are some of your pet peeves? How do you handle them? How should you handle them as a disciple of Christ?

