

**Opening:** A look from God's perspective

**Text:** Colossians 3: 1 -5, 12 – 14 Nature or Nurture

### Back Drop

We have been considering the 5 traits – characteristics – attitudes of Colossians chapter 3

They are: mercy - kindness - humility – gentleness and patience

Today our focus is on gentleness

These five traits match up with the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians

What is the fruit of the Spirit? It is the evidence of new in a person whose heart and mind has been changed by the impact of God's influence on their life.

Evidence of what you have become ... a fruit tree does not eat its own fruit apple trees don't eat their own fruit ... it is for the benefit of others but it is also an identifying factor

Jesus said *you shall know them by their fruit*

Paul the Apostle wrote this letter (what we refer to as the book of Colossians) from a prison cell in Rome to the Church at Colosse

The letter is instructional - and Paul's concern was the non Christian – heresy teachings that were creeping into the church disguising itself as Christian

It was a combination of legalism and philosophy - it brought what was called a higher truth one that went beyond the scriptures and teachings of the apostles.

In Chapter 3 Paul instructs the believers to cover themselves – **clothe yourself** these 5 characteristics - attitudes

#### I. Gentleness

So what is Gentleness? *King James Version* does not use the term gentleness but meekness

Make a mental note that these two terms are synonymous

→ **Definitions:** generous- kind easily handled – tame (Lion & Lamb) to calm or soothe by stroking ... Krystn's Bunny (Flemish giant) gentleness

What then is gentleness or meekness? It is easier to describe than to define

Tough to explain but you know it when you see it!

- It is a word of encouragement in a moment of need
- It has a quality of softness
- It is comforting
- A word of wisdom shared in a gentle way can turn a person from despair into hope
- It is an open arms invitation – a second chance
- It holds the power of healing through forgiveness from personal failure, defeat, fear and confusion

**God of Second Chances** see Max Lucado

Gentleness is part of the very nature and character of God Himself

In his allegory of the *prodigal son* Jesus painted an amazing picture of the loving, gentle spirit of God.

A father waiting with open arms receiving his son back who still stunk from feeding and finally almost eating the slop feed to the pigs

**Matthew 12: 18 – 20** Matthew describes the nature of Jesus quoting from Isaiah 42

Do not make the mistake of thinking that gentleness is the same as weakness

Jesus instructed his followers to turn the other cheek but he never once allowed others to manipulate Him

When the angry crowd of Pharisees and scribes tried to lay hands on him to grab him to throw him off a cliff the Bible tells how he passed right through them.

He didn't float, he didn't vanish - he physically forcefully moved right through them and away from them.

*Personal story* ... early years as a teacher ... another teacher nominated me to take on a leadership role

## II. The Still Small Voice

Consider Elijah the prophet **1 Kings 19: 10-13**

God asks the question ... What are you doing here Elijah? When God asks a question of us it is not because He does not know the answer! Introspective

He didn't speak through the Wind – Earthquake - Fire .... But God was not in any of the demonstrations of power

He spoke in the quite – gentle – whisper

God has immense unlimited power but often reveals Himself through gentleness

It was the gentle voice of God, not the display of power, that called Elijah back from despair and back on the path and plan of God

**Personal story:** Little by little ... the terrible years

That evening on our walk Jennifer revealed had been reading **Exodus 23: 27 – 30**

## III. Re-establish Gentleness is not weakness

Moses was a prince of Egypt who had considerable power and authority yet all he could accomplish was to become a murderer

When he returned after 40 years of training on the back side of the desert as a shepherd under God's control he brought the Pharaoh and all of Egypt to its knees

Gentleness and power are not opposites they are complimentary

—→ Think of it in terms of who and what Jesus is like!

Jesus called Himself meek ... come unto me all you who are weak ... learn of me for *I am meek and lowly* (approachable)

**Read Zechariah 14:3** The Day of the Lord referring to Jesus in the battle of Armageddon yet to occur ... When did Jesus go out in battle? See the book of Joshua an Old Testament model of the book of Revelation

Jesus who by His own words called himself meek/ gentle demonstrated great authority

#### IV. Gentleness at Work in us

Gentleness is a quality an attitude God wants operating in and through our lives

Gentleness and authority work differently in men and women

**Men** – your wives want to know you possess the strength to support them and protect them but are gentle enough to listen to them to take time to understand what they have been going through and to know that you love them

**Women** be authoritative with your children make rules and stick to them

But at the same time be gentle enough and approachable enough to guide them and love them

—► Read Taylor's closet Guide Posts

#### V. Closing

**Romans 12:2** Not conformed but transformed

More than ever God is looking for men and women to stand in the gap to be the kind of people He can use

To establish in you a relationship so that your renewed heart and mind can minister to others

Are you willing to be that person God can use?