

Title: GENTLENESS ON DISPLAY, PHILIPPIANS 4:5  
(Chatham, NJ; 10/12/14, AM) [Pc – Two Part Outline]

Theme: Paul encourages the Philippian church to demonstrate Jesus' quality of meekness and gentleness.

Purpose: To change our attitudes from harsh critics to gentle, loving people whose demeanor and manner attract and comfort those around them.

Introduction:

1. Headline from World Magazine: "Is the World Falling Apart? It often looks that way, but from church basements in Ukraine to living rooms in Iraq to fellowship halls in Israel, a redemptive center still holds."
2. Can we add, "To small church buildings in Chatham, NJ?" What holds our redemptive center together?
3. In Phil. 2:15 Christians shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.
4. We talked last week about things that make our church receptive and appealing to others. There are a few other things.
5. In chapter four Paul urges the church to possess peace that passes understanding, to focus on noble and virtuous deeds, and to be content whatever the circumstance: all appealing traits to attract a confused, disruptive world.
6. However, one trait stands out: "Let your gentleness be evident to all," (4:5).
7. My two points today are not two different sides of the same coin, rather, they are two points connected by a straight line. Geometrically a straight line is pretty boring, but the two points connected by it paint a portrait of humanity that is filled with colors, depth, and calm.
8. Or perhaps we can see this line as one side of a constellation consisting of other stars: peace, noble virtue, and contentment, etc.

## I. The Meekness and Gentleness of Christ

- A. I am gentle and lowly in heart, Mt. 11:29-30
  1. The two ideas—meek and humble—essentially are equal
  2. Gentleness might be inherent in the word "meek" (also in Mt. 5:5 and 2 Cor. 10:1)
  3. Approachable, comforting, maybe even a good listener
  4. Not driven, edgy, or arrogant but calm and engaging
  5. His yoke is easy and light – in contrast to the teachers of the Law
  6. A relationship with Jesus will provide a deep sense of ultimate well-being
- B. Behold my servant, Mt. 12:15-21
  1. Consider Isaiah's description of the "servant" (a deeper reason for not wanting people to talk about him than just wanting to enter a town without interference)
  2. "Not quarrel or cry aloud" "no one will hear his voice in the streets"
  3. To listen to some preachers, you'd think that the only way they think people will listen is to shout and get angry
  4. Do zeal and passion for the Gospel demand a forceful approach?
  5. His real work involved quiet, gentle conversation
  6. Won't damage a "bruised reed or a smoldering wick"
  7. Rather than crush or humble others, Jesus prefers an approach that fans small fires into flame; this demands a more finesse
  8. He had to work with people who didn't always understand that:
    - James and John were the "sons of thunder" (Mt. 3:17)
    - They were given to fiery outbursts, Luke 9:51-56; Jesus rebukes them
    - They were ambitious, Mk. 10:35-39

## II. Gentleness Evident to All, Philipians 4:5

- A. The word in question: gentleness, reasonableness
1. Difficult to translate
  2. Some suggest “magnanimity” – the quality of being generous, esp. in forgiving; being much less severe in judging others
  3. Aristotle contrasts it with “strict justice”
  4. It is “that considerate courtesy and respect to the integrity of others which prompts a person not to be forever standing on his rights”
  5. In other words, we are not harsh in our judgment of others
  6. Some translate it “sweet reasonableness,” close to Greek word for reasonable
  7. The word keeps company with peaceable, good, pure, peace-loving, open to reason, and rich in mercy
  8. By association, reasonableness and gentleness are not that far off the mark
  9. This is not the word Jesus uses of himself in Mt. 11
  10. However, Paul puts it in parallel with meekness (used in Mt. 11) in 2 Corinthians 10:1 – “By the meekness and gentleness of Christ”
  11. By this he appeals to the Corinthians to be right with God
  12. This is what he wants the Philippians to exhibit
- B. How people see it – “evident to all”
1. In teaching, 2 Timothy 2:24-25
  2. Wives’ beauty is of a “gentle, quiet spirit,” 1 Peter 3:4
  3. Fathers are not to provoke their children, Eph. 6:4, Col. 3:21 or be harsh with their wives, Col. 3:19
  4. Proverbs 15:1 – harsh word stirs up anger
  5. Proverbs 15:4 – gentle tongue is a tree of life
  6. Proverbs 25:15 – a soft tongue can break a bone

Conclusions:

1. You can be committed, zealous, and passionate about your faith without being a “son of thunder.”
2. See the direct line between Jesus “humble and gentle” and “let your gentleness be evident to all.”
3. The gentle persuasion of Christ will hold the redemptive center.
4. Let’s make every effort to imitate Jesus spirit of gentleness to all.