

Series: 2 Corinthians

Title: The Meekness and Gentleness of Christ

Text: 2 Corinthians 10: 1-2

Date: November 26, 2017

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

2 Corinthians 10: 1: Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you: 2: But I beseech *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

When the apostle Paul was present he was *meek and gentle* toward brethren and toward those God was drawing to Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2: 7: But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

But in his letters, he was bold to chasten and correct them so he would not have to be bold when he was present—“*But I beseech you, that I may not be bold [that I may not have to be bold] when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.*”

So due to this some at Corinth accused Paul of “*walking according to the flesh.*” They accused him of walking the flesh in his letters and when present.

2 Corinthians 10: 10: For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

When they said “*his letters are weighty and powerful*” they accused him of being oppressive, severe, and harsh and of walking after the flesh rather than the Spirit. When they said “*his bodily presence is weak*” they meant everything about his appearance: his person, his character, his speaking voice. They mistook humility for *walking according to the flesh* rather than the power of the Holy Spirit. When they said his “*speech contemptible*” they meant not only his stammering tongue but his knowledge and wisdom. Since Paul did not preach with excellency of speech or wisdom of words, they mistook this also to be walking *according to the flesh* rather than in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Yet, Paul corrects this saying his humility was indeed produced by the Spirit of Christ working within him, “*Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you.*”

So everything his enemies thought was the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul did NOT do. And everything they thought was walking according to the flesh was worked in Paul by the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2: 1: And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3: And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4: And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Proposition: The power of the Holy Spirit creates humility in the believer making us deal with brethren and needy sinners with a meek and gentle spirit while it causes the believer to have boldness toward enemies.

MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS OF CHRIST

Many appear humble simply because they know they are helpless against their enemies. But Christ was meek and gentle because He was strong. Christ is God in human flesh with all the power of God—“*Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*” Yet, “*he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and [as a Man] he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*” (Php 2: 3-8)

When John the Baptist first preached Christ, he said, “*Behold **the Lamb of God!***” “Lamb” because he would give himself a sacrifice to God in place of his people. But there is nothing more meek and gentle than a lamb.

As he walked this earth, though he was God all-powerful, *in meekness and gentleness* Christ submitted himself to God his Father.

Toward sinners, Christ did nothing “*through strife or for vainglory; but in **lowliness of mind** [Christ] esteem[ed] other[s] better than [himself.]* He never looked only on his own things but he looked “*on the things of others.*” He was always seeking ways to help the helpless.

His “*gentleness*” of Spirit is seen in that he came into this world, not to judge and condemn it, but that through him the world might be saved. He had power to command devils to come out of men and run headlong off a cliff yet he was *meek and gentle*, as he called out and gathered his helpless people in great tenderness, saying,

Matthew 11: 29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Yet, Christ’s gentleness and meekness did not mean he was weak. While Christ defended helpless sinners in tenderness, he was *very bold* toward their oppressors, the Pharisees. To their face, he called them “*a generation of vipers and children of the devil!*” Yet, even in their case he cried out,

Matthew 23: 37: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

Nor did Christ’s humility mean he was ignorant of men’s characters: but knowing his people’s heart is the cause of his meekness toward us. Christ knows what is in men; he was never deceived; he knows we are but dust, sinners with depraved hearts, he knows the weakness of our flesh. This is one of the reasons he is meek and gentle. He understands all the difficulties that beset his sinful people. When his disciples thought he was a spirit walking on the water, he said, “*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*” When Peter and John hit their face on Mt of transfiguration, he said, “*Arise, be not afraid.*” To Paul at Corinth, “*Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.*”

Remember, Eli’s treatment of Hannah? We are often hasty in judgment because we are ignorant of men’s hearts. But Christ was meek and lowly, patient and forbearing because he knew everything in the hearts of men. Knowing the sinfulness of his people, Christ dealt gently in his rebuke.

His meekness and gentleness made him overlook so many ignorant statements by his disciples and apostles. We sometimes become puffed up in knowledge expecting younger believers to know everything God has

taught us. Some even divide from brethren because they think they know something their ignorant brethren do not. But in meekness and gentleness Christ said to his apostles,

John 16:12: I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13: Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:

Though Christ was meek and gentle, he was not indifferent to justice and holiness. We are so accustomed to sin that we do not hate it as we ought. We often overlook sin, not in meekness, but in indifference. As he walked this earth, Christ was meek and gentle but he himself was perfectly holy and righteous. He loved righteousness and hated iniquity. He was as just as he was meek and gentle.

It was to vindicate divine justice and bring in everlasting righteousness that he laid down his life in place of his people, dying *the just for the unjust*. And he was meek and gentle as he satisfied justice and manifested the righteousness of God. John began saying, "*Behold the Lamb of God*"; Isaiah said of his end, "*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*" (Isa 53:7) When reviled by men, *he reviled not again*.

He knew that being taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain was the weapon by which he destroyed the power of the devil and delivered his people from bondage. He established us in his righteousness. He purged the sin of his people before the holy court of heaven forever. So he used that one weapon in meekness and gentleness as he died in place of his people.

MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS OF HIS SAINTS

It is the Spirit of Christ that makes the believer meek and gentle in our dealings with brethren and with needy sinners.

Paul had experienced the power of Christ's boldness as well as the power of his meekness and gentleness when Christ arrested him on the road to Damascus and throughout his life as a believer. It is the one reason Paul dealt opposite to how he once dealt with sinners. When he was Saul of Tarsus

Acts 8: 3:...he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Our flesh is proud, self-righteous, self-protecting, self-exalting, blaming everything on the faults of others.

Galatians 5: 19: Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20: Idolatry, witchcraft, [and just as bad] hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21: Envyings, [and those harsh dealings with others are in the same list with] murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, by the Spirit of Christ working within Paul, he says, "*I beseeched by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.*"

Galatians 5: 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

When we have experienced the power of Christ's boldness and meekness then we know, "*though we walk after the flesh, we do not war after the flesh 4: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty*

through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)” As we use this one weapon we do so in meekness and gentleness so that the faith of men might stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Scripture said of Christ,

Isaiah 42: 2: He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3: A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

He rebuked his disciples for severity of spirit. So by his Spirit in us, Christ makes his people sow the gospel the same way he does, in peace: to our wives and children, to our brethren, to friends

James 3: 13: Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14: But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15: This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish. 16: For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work. 17: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Brethren, if there be in you the Spirit of Christ then crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Galatians 5: 24: And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25: If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26: Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Do you want to see others obedient to Christ—it is produced only by the power of Christ’s love—his goodness, his meekness and gentleness and patience—subdues us and brings us to his feet. He deals in meekness and gentleness with us until his very meekness and gentleness makes us ashamed of our sin.

What argument can be more powerful than this for you and I to deal in meekness and gentleness with our brethren and with all sinners who God is drawing to Christ? There never was such an instance of humility, and lowliness of mind, as Christ; nor is there any example so worthy of following!

Amen!