

Gentleness Galatians 5:22-23

I. The State of the Church

I look across our very own brother hood and I have noticed our numbers dropping. According to the Christian Chronicle our numbers here in Iowa have dropped also in the past few years. Parts of our brother hood, in an ungodly move, are embracing entertainment practices to try to increase church attendance and interest in the church.

All this has left us debating, arguing, bickering, fighting, backbiting and gossiping with the focus on our selves instead of on a lost world. Sharing the saving message of Jesus seems to have taken a back seat.

But church I want to tell you that it is only upon our stand in the word of God that we will be strengthened and found pleasing to God.

But not just knowing God's word is enough, but letting it absorb deeply into our hearts and effect the way we live, move and have our being is what God is looking for.

II. Our perception

Church with this in mind, I'll be the first to admit that I am concerned about the direction of our brotherhood at large. But this could drag us down and even consume us if we don't trust in whom we have believed in. We must remember that the glass is neither half full nor half empty. Since we are filled with God our cups are overflowing. We have been given every thing we need pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). And our God is a God of impossibilities...Amen? Eph 3:20

III. Plea to God for Help

So with that in mind I cry out to God in my prayers to please help us so that we can get beyond the walls of our meeting houses to take this saving message of Jesus to the lost of this world. I ask God to help me understand what is holding us up so we can make headway with kingdom business.

IV. I believe that a good old fashion study of the Fruits of the Spirit will help us redirect our focus and re-establish our intended purpose.

- A. My assignment tonight is to talk about "gentleness" as a fruit of the spirit. I think that if we can get our teeth into these fruit it will change it will change the core of who we are.
- B. Gentleness is the Greek word "*prautetos*" and it has to do with meekness. But meekness in the English language doesn't carry the meaning well because meekness in our thinking equals weakness and that is not the idea at all.
 1. Gentleness, is the way we relate to other people. It is a kindness that comes from humility, and a heart that sees value in everyone else around them. It is not a stand alone fruit, but it carries a blend of all the others and is the idea of being mild, friendly, even tempered, and calm in the face of abuse (Theological Dictionary of the NT).

2. Gentleness you see, is opposed to roughness, impatience, sudden anger, and arrogance and pride.
3. Gentleness makes us quick to love and slow to judge.
4. Gentleness or Meekness is well described as power under control.

C. Jesus is our great example for Gentleness.

1. Now, when we think of Jesus maybe we think about His:
 - Wisdom
 - The miracles He performed
 - The examples He set
 - Or maybe even the anger He displayed in the temple

2. But certainly among the very fabric of His being is Gentleness

Matthew 11:29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,…”

3. Think about His gentleness upon the cross of Calvary. On the cross, He was ridiculed and treated like a thug. He could have called ten thousand angels and smoked all of mankind. But deep within His heart gentleness prevailed. And the Son of God died in the place of the very people that were persecuting Him. He stood in our place too, pleading with God for our forgiveness.

-He did all this while we enemies and sinners. Romans 5:8,10

4. And we are suppose to be Imitators of God

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

- a. Suppose to try to be like Him
- b. And do as He does
- c. All as a sacrifice unto God.

E. Sometimes our greatest failure is a lack of gentleness with each other.

1. Specifically, the older and the younger generations.
2. The younger in many instances don't respect and value the older folks
3. And I've seen the older folks lacking in patients and understanding with the younger.

4. This leads us to inward struggles that take our focus off our mission to share the gospel with the world.
5. This creates walls of resentment that stifle spiritual growth
6. And to top it off makes us repulsive to the very people that we are trying to reach with the gospel.
7. I wonder what God thinks when we display all gentleness with people the people of the world and treat each other so roughly.

V. A good view of the Fruits of the Spirit.

I think it might be an inaccurate view of these fruit of the Spirit that leads us to personal and brotherhood ship wreck. I wonder if we have bought into the idea that if we have been baptized with Christ that the Holy Spirit moves into our hearts and gives each of us some measure of these fruits and then we just end up with a set portion allotted to us by God. !

But that's not true. In Galatians 5:23 the Apostle Paul says against such things (Fruit of the Spirit) there is no law...that is there is no boundaries. The fruit of the Spirit are not a fixed position, but are suppose to be increasing as we draw near to the heart of God.

Verse 25 tells us that we are suppose to live by the spirit and we are suppose to keep in step with Him.

In other words we are suppose to let the Holy Spirit set the pace in our live and we have the responsibility to keep up with Him. I wonder what would happen if we would place our full trust in God and stop quenching the Spirits fire.

Conclusion:

These Fruits of the Spirit should help us grow closer to God and to each other while we share the good news of Jesus Christ with a world lost in sin.

Philippians 4:5

5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. NASU