

St Martins C3 – October 13, 2024

The Way of Jesus – Under Construction

Sermon Summary:

We have been doing a series over the last few weeks called “Under Construction”. In the series, we have been exploring the growth of our character.

Today, we are going to have a look at another two attributes that Jesus talked about that followers of Jesus can see chiselled into their lives.

Read Matthew 11:28-30

What a beautiful promise from Jesus for all who follow Him! Whatever we're going through, we have a God who cares so much about us that he will take the heavy burdens from our lives.

Jesus then outlines what people will find when they come to Him: someone who is **humble** and **gentle at heart**. However, this is more than a description of Jesus' nature it is an indication of what it means to walk in the way of Jesus.

The early followers of Jesus considered these characteristics to emulate.

Read Ephesians 4:1-2; Colossians 3:12; Titus 3:2; Gal 6:1

Gentleness

There's something about the word “gentle” that feels soft.

The same word for gentle is the word that's used in Matthew chapter 5, verse 5, where Jesus tells the crowds that the meek shall inherit the earth. Meek sounds weak.

However, gentleness is associated with strength, not weakness. It actually assumes more about the receiver than the giver.

Gentle people control their strength because they recognise the things they are handling are easily broken. Others are easily broken. It does not mean that you back down from the truth, but it might change the way you bring the truth.

Humility

If pride is the vice that leads to all others, then we need to embrace its opposite. Humility.

Read Philippians 2:1-4

Christians should aim for a heart of humility: thinking of others before ourselves. Taking an interest in others, before promoting themselves.

As we spend time in God's presence, we can forget about ourselves. We are then free not to worry about what others think but care about how others are treated.

As we try to live these character traits, we will find there are more days that we get it wrong than days that we get it right. Yet as we submit ourselves to His work in our lives we will find that we become more like Him.

Connect Group Material:

Key Point

The way of Jesus is gentleness and humility and we should emulate this in our lives.

Questions

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

Read Matthew 11:28. What does it look like to receive God's rest? Where do you need rest most at the moment, your body, mind or emotions?

Why do we not spend a lot of time talking about gentleness?

What would gentleness look like in your life?

How can you be gentle but not let others walk all over you?

In what ways is the Christian value of humility counter-cultural?

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself it is thinking of yourself less." How can you make this a reality in your life?

Where have you been living with harshness and pride?

What needs to change in you to be known as a person of gentleness and humility?

Monday Devotion: A Time To Be Hard

Read 2 Corinthians 13:1-11

The objection many people have to Christian ethics is that they are too soft. They allow others to get away with wrongs, and they make an individual vulnerable to being mistreated. If we are forgiving, patient, and gentle all of the time, then we will get hurt, and they will get away with it.

There is a balance to be found here. Often, we need to treat people with deference and respect. However, there are a few notable exceptions to this. We should treat people with love, but love doesn't always mean we speak quietly to others. Love confronts wrong and seeks to make it right.

A great example of this principle is found in two Corinthians chapter 13. In this chapter, Paul is sending a final encouragement to the church in Corinth. He lets them know that if they tolerate sinful people, he will come to them with a harsh word of correction. But you can sense his tension. He doesn't want to come with a harsh word, he wants to come with gentleness.

There are times to be strong with others. As we have seen with Jesus, this is not to promote ourselves or to overzealously defend ourselves from emotional harm, but it is when an abuser or evil needs to be confronted. May God give you the grace to know the difference. If in doubt, start gently and go from there.

Tuesday Devotion: When Sharing the Gospel

Read 1 Peter 3:15-16

We need to talk to people with gentleness and this applies especially when sharing our faith.

Unfortunately, that is not the opinion many people have of Christians when they think about how they share about Jesus. Christians are seen as the ones who want to argue the point.

Evangelism isn't about having the strongest argument; it is about finding something deeper in a person's life that is calling out for God.

It's easy to win the argument but lose the person. We are not called to demolish arguments or shut people down. That is why we need gentleness.

Gentleness in how we share our perspective. Gentleness to see there might be more going on than just the question they ask.

So, if someone expresses to you that they don't believe in God for any reason, then our response should be to talk to them with gentleness and respect. We can ask questions and show that we respect them as a person and their beliefs. This will pave the way to a heart that is open to Jesus.

Wednesday Devotion: The Servant

Read Isaiah 42:1-4

One of my favourite passages in all of scripture is found in Isaiah, chapter 42. It is one of the Servant Songs, the passages that speak of the coming Messiah, his rule and his nature.

In this passage, it talks of him having the ability to bring justice to the nations. The way that he does it, though, is not to bring war or shout people down.

“A bruised reed He will not break; a flickering candle he will not put out.”

Ponder on those words for a minute. Jesus, with all the power of the Godhead available to Him, decided to come as the most gentle of Saviours. What a beautiful picture of our Messiah, the one who has brought justice to the whole world.

He did it by healing those who were weak and fanning flickering candles into flames that would shine for Him so the whole world could see.

Let us take a moment to appreciate the wonder of Jesus. May we never forget how gentle and humble He is.

Then let's determine to be like Him!

Thursday Devotion: Humble Living

Read Micah 6:8; Ephesians 4:29

God's people have always been called to live humbly. It is part of the walk that they are to have before a merciful God. This should impact every part of our lives. It doesn't mean people can't be in a public position. It does mean that if they are publicly known, it is for the good of others. Sometimes, the most humble thing you can do is serve others by speaking publicly.

However, it is not just speaking publicly that we need to watch out for if we want to live humbly. It is the way that we speak when we are in private. Our speech should always treat others with positive regard and seek to build them up. We shouldn't be those who use foul or abusive language but instead look for ways to build others up.

This may be one of the most underrated ways to be a humble and gentle person. It is not so much about what we do it is about how we do it.

There have been numerous occasions where someone has said something to me and because of the way they have said it I have been very responsive. There have been other occasions where their speech has been not so good.

As I remind my girls, it's often not what you say it's how you say it.

Friday Devotion: The Ultimate Example of Humility

Read Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 23:12

The love of God that a believer has fuels their desire to be connected and united with others. Here, Paul is saying to the people of Philippi, "If God has changed you, then the natural result will be a true and deep love for each other."

Paul is saying that to be humble, you need to first look upward to God rather than inward to yourself.

Humility is a by-product. Sometimes, when you read the documentation of medication, it says: "Side effects include dizziness, nausea and death. If death persists, please see a doctor." It's a bit like that with our relationship with God. But with good side effects.

If there was supplied documentation, it would say: "Side effects include agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and humility." (Which to you might seem like nausea!) This is the result of spending time with God.

We can see this lived out in the example of Jesus. Who was the ultimate humble servant? He lived and died for the sake of others. Yet God has exalted him. We should, too.

As we think about our lives and the things we choose to focus on, we are challenged to ensure we keep our eyes on Jesus and off of ourselves. We need to follow His example and lay our lives down for the good of others.