

- After talking about the fruit of the Holy Spirit for several weeks now, I realized last Sunday that I should have taken each fruit separately instead of doubling up – really, we could spend much longer than we are talking about the fruit that the Spirit produces within us as followers of Jesus ... Our character as Christians is of great importance ... That we imitate Jesus, and how we imitate Him, matters, for how can we say we are of Him, if we do not act like Him ... Therefore, you and I need the Holy Spirit to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, namely to produce the life of Jesus in us and through us ... It is His fruit and His work that is grown, so that it changes us from the inside out – it renews our minds, reshapes our priorities, refocuses our direction, restores our relationships ... The Spirit's fruit is evidence that He is at work in our lives
  - As I've argued before, the fruit of the Spirit is love, manifested in various ways and reasons ... [5:14](#) – Paul restates this in [Rom13:8-10](#) ... As dearly loved by God, we are to put on love – [Col3:12-14](#) ... What causes you and I to not act in these ways – [5:17](#) ... As I've said before, there is a battle going on within us; a battle that rages over our desires, motives, actions, and thoughts ... The battle within us is greater than the battle around us, and here's why: how we respond to the battle within, influences how we respond to the others ... So, God says, *Here's My Spirit to get you through the journey, and He's going to make sure you make it*
- What is meant by gentleness ... This word does not appear often in the Bible, but when it does, gentleness speaks of a strength that is controlled by the direction and empowerment of God ... [Mounce](#), "to approach others (including one's enemies) in a humble and caring spirit, not using force to get one's way" ... Gentleness is not what we muster up ourselves, but what God, through the Holy Spirit, produces in us and enables us to live out
- Gentleness is prophesied of Jesus
  - [Is40:10-11](#) – Jesus is the Gentle Shepherd, who comes in strength and power, who also gathers those who are His and who holds each one near ... He is a Shepherd and a Servant, who does **not cry out or shout or make His voice heard in the streets. Nor will He break a bruised reed; He will not put out a smoldering wick (Is42:2-3)** ... Jesus did not come to destroy or demean people, especially people weak in their faith and with no faith ... Jesus did not come to leave humanity stuck in their hopeless condition in which He has found us ... In gentleness, He was sent to pursue after us – [Zec9:9](#) ([Mat21:5](#))
- Gentleness is demonstrated by Jesus
  - [Mat9:35-36](#) ... [Mat11:28-30](#) ... [Ortlund](#), "The posture most natural to Jesus is not a pointed finger but open arms... You don't need to unburden or collect yourself and then come to Jesus. Your burden is what qualifies you to come." ... How Jesus responded to the woman at the well, the woman anointing His feet, the woman about to be stoned by the religious leaders ... His inherent gentleness is seen when He healed, and when He fed the multitudes ... When falsely accused, Jesus did not retaliate, nor was He insincere in how He treated others – He washed the feet of Peter who denied Him and Judas who betrayed Him
  - Neither did Jesus turn a blind-eye to sin ... Jesus spoke against the hardness of man's heart, pride, greed, selfishness, hypocrisy, things which robbed God of His glory, and which held people at arm's length from God's presence ... But who was this most often directed towards – the very ones who should have known how to live as God's people, and who should have accepted and followed Him as their Messiah
- What is demonstrated by Jesus is then imitated by followers of Jesus ... His inherent gentleness is to be our own
  - Of the apostle Paul, before he believed in and followed Jesus, it is written – [Act8:3, 9:1-2](#) ... Paul wanted to see the Church destroyed, and he did this believing that he was doing the will of God ... Yet, he was terribly wrong ... On the road to Damascus, Paul encounters Jesus, and his life is never the same ... Now, Paul is not made perfect, and for a period of time he is out of the picture, but when Paul returns, the Spirit's work in his life is truly evident ... The harsh and violent man that once was is no more ... And as he travels around as a missionary planting churches, Paul continually calls followers of Jesus to a posture of gentleness

- [Titus3:1-5](#) ... Who we were before encountering Jesus should not be who we are following Jesus – there is an inner change that has occurred ... And this new life and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the basis for how we speak to one another, how we relate to one another, how we see and understand one another ... Paul writes a similar message in [2Tim2:22-26](#)
- It seems anymore, we talk past one another, we talk over one another, we talk down to one another, we talk back to one another, we talk less to one another ... We're a divided nation, and this division is within the walls of the Church ... We're listening to so many voices at one time, that I wonder if we're able to hear the voice of the Father, the prompting of the Spirit ... Even well-meaning voices may be saying something different than what the Father is trying to get us to hear ... Though it may sound good, does not mean it is true, or something you should be listening to – **everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial** ... What is the Father saying in your prayer time, as you read His word, as you converse with other believers
- [Prov15:1](#), **"A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath"** ... Gentleness is able to defuse a person's anger, it provides an opportunity for the conversation to change directions ... Gentleness helps both parties to hear the other, without being misheard or misunderstood ... Gentleness of a Christian goes a long way in a non-Christian relating better to them ... Christians should be the gentlest of all people – we have experienced the greatest demonstration of gentleness in Christ
- I always cringe when June rolls around ... Things that some Christians post online about gay community is shameful ... It's like Christians forget that they're Christians ... I believe every word of this book; I believe in what God has created and in what God has instituted; that also means I believe in how followers of Jesus are to live, especially among those who don't believe in Jesus – [Tts3:2](#), **"slander no one, avoid fighting, be kind, always show gentleness to all people"** ... **Mounce** ... Some of what I see and hear from Christians about LGBTQ individuals, are the very things that used to keep me from God as a gay teenager ... What I needed to hear was the gentle truth of a God who loved me enough to die for me, who wanted to make me His own and into the image of His Son ... The gentleness of Jesus does not come natural to us ... It takes the work of the Holy Spirit, it takes you and me submitting ourselves to His control, asking Him to produce in us His gentleness so that we can have honest conversations like this with those whom Jesus is pursuing after
- Small Town Pride – I know there are calls to boycott businesses who support the event, and a group will be protesting ... Is this how the Church is to present itself as a witness for Jesus ... Are we being led by the Holy Spirit, or are we merely being reactionary ... How can the Church best present itself as Ambassadors of Christ that we are in a world not our home ... **Begg**, **"We must not miss the opportunities to become a bridge over which Christ may walk into the heart of our friends and neighbors."** ... My challenge to you, ask the Holy Spirit to provide opportunities for you to be a bridge such as this ... Are you willing to ask Him to produce in and through you the gentleness of Jesus for the benefit of others and the glory of God