

Becoming Like Jesus – Part 4 – Humility, Gentleness, and Patience

(Colossians 3:12)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In Colossians 3 Paul seeks to show what living as a Christian, or seeking to be like Jesus, is supposed to look like. We have seen how:
 - A. (3:1-4) Those who have been raised with Christ are to seek those things that are above where Christ is, refusing to get caught up in the things of this earth.
 - B. (3:5-11) That since we have been raised to newness of life in Christ we are to put to death immorality and ungodly treatment of others, seeing we have put on a new self that is being renewed in the knowledge of Christ.
 - C. (3:12-15) Because God has chosen us, made us holy, and loves us, we are to put on clothing, or a certain way of living our lives, from God that is befitting of our honored position.
2. The “clothing” to be worn...
 - A. Begins, as we considered last time, with a heart of compassion and kindness. For, our Lord is “full of compassion and is merciful” (Jas. 5:11), and it is by “the kindness of God our Savior” that appeared in Jesus Christ that we have been saved (Titus 3:3-7).
 - B. And, as we continue, the clothing I want us to consider today includes humility, gentleness, and patience.
3. It is my hope in considering these that we will compare our lives’ “clothing” to that supplied us in Christ to see if there are areas where we might grow and increase in the kingdom of Christ.

BODY:

I. Put on...humility (3:12):

- A. Defined (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*, *tapeinophrosynē*) lowliness of mind; modesty; having a humble opinion of oneself; a deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness (**Strong’s, Thayer, BDAG**).
 1. From these definitions we see that God wants others to see in us from the inside out—from a proper view of self that will be expressed in our actions.
 2. From these it is also easy to see why humility has not been highly valued by the world.
 - a. In N.T. times the Greek world rejected humility for the same reasons the world rejects it today—it is contrary to what our worldly self wants.
 - b. We value who we are, our thoughts, opinions, and wants, and we desire and *expect* others to do the same. When that does not happen, we have something to say/do about that!
- B. Yet, the New Testament rejects this worldly view, presenting humility, or lowliness of mind, as a virtue (Phil. 2:3-8).
 1. God demands selfless humility (2:3-4 – “Do nothing from selfishness or **empty conceit**, but with **humility** of mind **regard one another as more important than yourselves**; ⁴ do not merely **look out** for your own personal interests, **but also for the interests of others**.”).
 - a. It is hard to overemphasize the importance of developing this in our lives.
 - i. Without it we cannot establish and maintain godly relationships within the local church and among brethren in general.
 - ii. For, it is the realization of our own littleness and unworthiness that keeps us from fault finding, or being quick to condemn one another, from holding grudges, etc.
 - b. We need this same humility to positively affect those outside of Christ as well, because it presents something completely unique to what the world is used to seeing.
 2. Why? Because it is what was clearly exemplified in Jesus, God’s perfect and holy Son (Phil. 2:5-8 – “**Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus**, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant**, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross**.”).
 - a. Our Creator humbled himself for our salvation, being willing to leave the glory of heaven and face hatred, rejection, or even death from the hands of *sinners* to save us!
 3. So, it is no wonder that Jesus emphasized the requirement of humility if we hope to be

justified before God in His parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (Lk. 18:10-14 – “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘**God, be merciful to me, the sinner!**’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, **but he who humbles himself will be exalted.**”).

II. Put on...gentleness/meekness (3:12):

- A. Defined: (πραΰτης, prautēs) mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, courtesy, considerateness, (by implication) humility, meekness (**Strong, Thayer, BDAG**)
1. From these definitions we see that **gentleness**, or **meekness**, concerns controlling our thoughts and actions to assure that they are, again, focused on the good of others.
 - a. This is why gentleness is preceded by *humility* here and elsewhere in scripture.
 - b. For, one with a lofty view of self is not going to be willing or able to submit to God’s control when responding to others, especially when it means seeking the good of those who may have sinned against him!
 2. So, though gentleness, and especially meekness, are often equated with weakness, it is actually a matter of strength.
 - a. Meekness has been rightly defined as “power under control.”
 - b. So, it is not weakness that is shown in one’s willingness to hold in check tendencies toward selfishness and self-centeredness, especially when one believes he/she has been wronged.
 - c. Selfish and self-centered behavior expressed in complaining, telling someone off, or getting revenge is easy! Weak and sinful people do it all the time!
 - d. So, do not confuse gentleness/meekness with weakness. For, it requires rising above our base feelings and impulses to do what is best for others, even as God has done for us.
- B. Therefore, again, it is no surprise that God is the example of gentleness we are to follow.
1. For, His gentleness is presented as motivation for responding to God.
 - a. Jesus’ call to the weary is founded upon His gentleness (Matt. 11:28-30 – “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am **gentle** and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”).
 - b. Paul entreated the Corinthians to obey “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1ff.).
 - c. This should not surprise us because is it not a mother’s gentleness, a willingness to put aside her own needs, that draws a child to her when they are hurt or tired or hungry?
 2. If the perfect, all-powerful God is willing to show such great gentleness/meekness for the good of *sinners*, surely we, *the sinners*, must be willing to do the same for others (Titus 3:1-7 – “Remind them to be **subject to rulers**, to **authorities**, to **be obedient**, to be **ready for every good deed**, ² **to malign no one**, to be **peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men**. ³ For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. ⁴ But **when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared**, ⁵ **He saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but **according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that **being justified by His grace** we would be **made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**”).
- C. So, as Christians we must follow the path of gentleness walked by Christ, even if it means suffering wrong to do so. For, in doing this will we stand out as different to the world, as being those who have “been with Jesus.”

III. Put on...patience (3:12):

- A. Defined (μακροθυμία, makrothymia): enduring of evil, slowness of avenging injuries or wrongs, long-suffering (toward others), forbearance, steadfastness (**Mounce; Strong; Thayer; BDAG**)
1. From these definitions we see that patience concerns our response, or actions, in the face of *weakness, provocation, or evil.*
 2. It is resolute refusal to retaliate, not just a willingness to *wait a while* before avenging injuries or wrongs (Rom. 12:18-21 – “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”).
 3. Patience involves holding out under trial, a prolonged refusal to yield to anger, and shows anything but weakness!
- B. Like humility and gentleness, patience is learned through the attitude and actions of God.
1. For God is a truly patient God.
 - a. The Psalmist praised God for His patience and the benefits it brings.
 - i. Psa. 86:15 – “But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, **slow to anger** and abundant in **lovingkindness** and **truth.**”
 - ii. Psa. 103:9-10 – “He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. ¹⁰ **He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.**”
 - b. Peter echoed this truth (2 Pet. 3:9, 14-15a – “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is **patient** toward you, **not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance...** ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, ¹⁵ **and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation...**”).
 2. As special recipients of God’s **patience/slowness to anger** we are to show patience to others.
 - a. It is required to maintain godly unity (Eph. 4:1-3 – “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all **humility** and **gentleness**, with **patience**, showing **tolerance** for one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”).
 - i. Note how biblical unity requires humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance to be maintained.
 - ii. That is likely why, so often, we fail to keep the unity of the Spirit.
 - iii. For, far too often we present a “my way or the highway” attitude to others, never giving them a chance to learn, to grow, to understand the higher demands of God’s will for their lives.
 - b. Its value is also seen in being one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faith, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.”).
 - c. And failing to put on patience is to fail to be righteous (Jas. 1:19-20 – “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and **slow to anger;** ²⁰ for the **anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.**”).
 - d. Therefore, we must learn to take the time before we act or speak to assure that what we are about to show others expresses the same patience God has shown us in Christ.

CONCLUSION:

1. As you think about these character traits, the clothing God requires His chosen, holy, and loved ones to wear, know that making these a part of your life simply means you are becoming like Jesus.
2. We should want to do this because it is God’s humility, gentleness, and patience that has brought us salvation and the hope of eternal life.
3. If you have not been living for Christ in this way God invites you not to repent and seek out His grace for forgiveness.

4. Or, if you are outside of Christ, He invites you to come and be saved today by F-R-C-Bp.