

TO BE LIKE JESUS

Part Four: Gentleness & Passion

Adapted from Bruce Marchinano's *The Character Of A Man*. Los Angeles: Howard Publishing Co. Ltd., 2006, p.p. 159 - 176 & p.p. 49 to 66.

Text: 2 Corinthians 10. 1 – 6 (in pew Bible p. 1147 / in large print Bible p. 1785).

Intro:

- **illust.** Bill Cowher

-part 4 of series “To Be Like Jesus” = **Gentleness & Passion**.

- Forgiveness (Isaiah 53. 1 – 7) = keeping our mouths closed & hearts open.
- Love & Spirit (Mark 1.1 - 12) = loving our Heavenly Father in the Spirit's power.
- Selfless & Humble (Philippians 2.1 - 11) = having Christ's mind to make a right estimate of one's self and to think of the interests of others.

-Bruce Marchinano (actor who portrayed Jesus on film in *The Gospel of Matthew*) to understand what it is like to be like Jesus, we have to “*tiptoe into His life and walk in His shoes*.”

- we must take on Jesus' priorities, motivations, point of view, and desires.
- in other words, we must seek to understand and move into Jesus' heart.

Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will **give you rest**. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, **for I am gentle and lowly** in heart, and you will **find rest** for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11.28 - 30).

-Bible portrays Jesus as:

- a gentle Lamb (John 1.29, 36; Revelation chs. 5 - 7, 12 - 15 17, 19 – 22).
- a passionate, powerful Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5.5).

-in today's text Paul the Apostle pleads with us on the basis of Christ's meekness and gentleness (v. v. 1, 2) *to passionately labour to bring all things under God's control* (v.v. 3 - 6).

Take Home Point:

-pray that you might be like Jesus – *in passion controlled by gentleness*.

- we are commissioned to pull down the enemy's strongholds.

1. PEOPLE WHO ARE GENTLE

-Jesus, who steadfastly faced His critics and robustly cleared the Temple of extortioners, *is also the model of gentleness:*

“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26.52, 53).

-**illust.** Bill Hybels.

-fun-loving children and marginalized women *were not afraid to approach Jesus.*

- Jesus' ministry was marked with *kindness, patience, grace and self-control.*

-Jesus willingly associated and ate *with the sinners in his society.*

- woman caught in adultery (John 8.3 – 11).

Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?" "No, Lord," she said. And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more" (v.v. 10, 11).

- woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears *and dried them with her hair* (Luke 7.36-50).

"I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?" And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (v. v. 47 – 50).

- repentant thief on the cross (Luke 23.39 - 43).

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise" (v.v. 42, 43).

-Jesus gently rescues and restores us *when we are wayward and trapped.*

"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will **joyfully carry it home on his shoulders**. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away! (Luke 15.4 - 7).

2. PEOPLE WHO ARE PASSIONATE

-Jesus, who modelled such gentleness in life and death, did so within the context of *passion for His Father's Kingdom.*

Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The **zeal of the LORD of hosts** will perform this (Isaiah 9.7).

-we need to be passionately concerned about the spiritual welfare of those in God's Kingdom.

For I am **jealous for you with godly jealousy**. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Corinthians 11.2, 3).

-use proper weapons in our quest:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are **not carnal but mighty in God** for pulling down strongholds, (2 Corinthians 10.3, 4).

- these are spiritual weapons – *not physical*.
 - doing God's work in God's way.
- we have been given the weapons of love, God's Word, all-prayer, and our personal testimony.

-use proper weapons to accomplish proper goals:

Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and **authority** as apostles to **tell** Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name (Romans 1.5).

We **destroy** every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We **capture** their rebellious thoughts and **teach** them to obey Christ. Being ready to **punish** all disobedience (2 Corinthians 10.5, 6).

- through Christian ministry and service we strive to bring every worldly system of thought and behavior into submission to Jesus Christ.
- spiritual power is found in "meekness and gentleness" (v. 1), *not in throwing weight around* (e.g. Diotrefes / 3 John 9).

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: ... **gentleness, and self-control** (Galatians 5.22, 23).

-passionately and gently wield the weapons of love, God's Word, all-prayer, and our personal testimony to expand and strengthen God's Kingdom.

Conclusion:

1. Know what God wants.

-pray that you might be like Jesus – *live to do God's will*.

-we are to be like Jesus *in a gentle passion for God's Kingdom*.

- we are commissioned to pull down *the enemy's strongholds*.

-we often fail to realize that the church is involved in warfare *and that the battle must be fought in God's way*.

- using human, physical methods to defeat demonic forces *will fail*.
- Joshua fought Jericho in God's way – *simply marched around the city walls for one week* (Joshua ch. 6).
 - we can unite in the warfare *of praying*.
 - once the walls of people's minds have been torn down, *the door to the heart can be opened*.

This lawless man [i.e. the anti-Christ] will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies (2 Thessalonians 2.9 - 11).

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, **we do not lose heart**. But **we have renounced** the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them (2 Corinthians 4.1 - 4).

2. Know how to do what God wants.

- passionately & gently restore the wayward *and the wandering*.

My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, you can be sure that whoever **brings the sinner back** will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins (James 5.19, 20).

And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for. If you see a Christian brother or sister sinning ... **you should pray**, and God will give that person life ... (1 John 5.15, 16).

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But **I have prayed for you**, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22.31, 32).

-may our **motto** for 2012 be *TO BE LIKE JESUS*.

- Forgiveness (Isaiah 53. 1 – 7) = keeping our mouths closed & hearts open.
- Love & Spirit (Mark 1.1 - 12) = loving our Heavenly Father in the Spirit's power.
- Selfless & Humble (Philippians 2.1 - 11) = having Christ's mind to make a right estimate of one's self and to think of the interests of others.
- Gentle passion for God's Kingdom.

3. Know that you will do what God wants.

-**Closing Hymn:** #382 Be Thou My Vision (all verses).

Benediction

Renew us in the image of your Son, Jesus Christ
Renew us in the likeness of your gentle passion, O God.
O Father, may your fire be in our thoughts
Making them true, good and just, May it protect us from the evil one.

May the fire be in our eyes;
To see what is good in life.
We ask that the fire may protect us from what is not rightfully ours.

May the fire be on our lips,
so that we may speak the truth in kindness;
that we may serve and, encourage others.
May it protect us from speaking evil.

May the fire be in our ears.
We pray that we may hear with a deep, deep listening
So that we may hear [Your still small voice in] ... all creation ...
May we be protected from gossip
And from those things that harm and break down our family.

May the fire be in our arms and hands
so that we may be of service and build up love.
May the fire protect us from all violence.

May the fire be in our whole being –
In our legs and in our feet,
Enabling us to walk the earth with reverence and care;
so that we may walk in the ways of goodness and truth
And be protected from walking away from what is true.

(Blessed Edmund Rice, *Pray for Us*.)

- St Patrick's Province, Australia)

Bill Cowher

Bill Cowher took over as coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1992. He quickly showed himself to be a man with a future. The Steelers made the playoffs each of his first ... seasons as coach and went to the Super Bowl XXX [four years later] in 1996. One thing that made Cowher an effective coach was that he was focused on his priorities. In *Sports Illustrated* Tim Crothers writes:

After almost every game, every practice, Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Bill Cowher drives straight home to his wife, Kaye, and their three daughters. He doesn't do ads for cars or frozen yogurt. He exists inside his two passions, family and football, exclusive of everything else.

Cowher is so focused that one afternoon he was seated next to a woman at a civic luncheon and politely asked, "What is it you do?"

The woman responded, "I'm the mayor of [your city] Pittsburgh."

Granted, it's a good idea to know who your mayor is, but Cowher shows us one essential truth: A person cannot focus on everything. A person with priorities must let some things go by the wayside. The more we focus on the Lord, the less we focus on the unimportant things of this world (Craig Brian Larson *750 Engaging Illustrations*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993, p. 425).

Bill Hybels

In *Honest to God*, Bill Hybels writes:

Recently my brother and I spent a lunch hour discussing the mark our dad left on our lives ...

Dan and I reminisced about the times we had sailed with him on Lake Michigan. We remembered violent storms with fifty-mile-an-hour winds. All the other sailors would dash for the harbor, but Dad would smile from ear to ear and say, "Let's head out farther!"

We talked about the tough business decisions we had seen him make. We winced when we remembered his firm hand of discipline that blocked our rebellious streaks. We never doubted it. Dad was strong, tough, and thoroughly masculine.

Yet for twenty-five years he spent nearly every Sunday afternoon standing in front of a hundred mentally retarded women at the state mental hospital. Gently and patiently he led them in a song service. Few of them could even sing, but he didn't care. He knew it made them feel loved. Afterward he stood by the door while each of those disheveled, broken women planted kisses on his cheek. As little guys, Dan and I had the unspeakable privilege of watching our six-foot-three, two-hundred-twenty-pound, thoroughly masculine dad treat these forgotten women with a gentleness that marked us (Craig Brian Larson *750 Engaging Illustrations*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993, p. 189).