

# Gentleness & Self-Control

December 11, 2022

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled Gentleness and Self-control, and it wraps up the Fruit of the Spirit series. Thank you to Geoff, Glynnis, Jim and Don for being part of the video. The scripture readings are Matthew 11:25 to 30 and First Peter 1:13 to 16

## Welcome, Announcements & Prayer

Good morning, church. Let's start with the announcements. Happy birthday, Lee. I don't see him here. And an anniversary. Chris and Rebecca. Anyone know how many? No, I don't. We don't have Tom. He would know. He would know that. At any rate, be sure and. And get a hold of both of those and let them know. As you know, probably Val passed away a week ago and there will be a service honoring her life here on next Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m.. And we have Jack on the prayer list. He is home and Marie especially needs prayers as she's tending to him.

Two more things that won't be up on the screen. First of all, a thank you to all who were part of Operation Christmas, Christmas Child. We did a good job again this year and Tina's in the back and she's very happy with what has happened and I thought I would bring you a quick update on our newcomers to Canada. First of all, in the case of Helene and the two girls, Happy and Christina, the Government of Canada changed their rules for refugees between the time that the first three came. Five counting the girls. Yeah, that one there. And at that time, government flights were paid for as part of the whole package that the government paid. So there was no cost to people. But in the interim, they made the decision that they could bring more refugees if they didn't pay for flights. So when Helene and those two girls came, they had about a \$4700 bill that was left for one year and then became a loan from the government that they needed to pay back. Earl challenged Tintern and they rose to the challenge. They have offered \$2,000 and in one of those giving Tuesday things, we we're going to match that. That was his challenge. Do you go for what he suggested or go higher? And they did. So all together, that means that they will receive \$4,000 to pay down that loan and it will be paid down. Now by the end of the year, probably.

And then you have seen in the bulletin for a long time but Neema, I was with Peter yesterday for about 3 hours and Neema was on WhatsApp from Tanzania. We are almost at the point where we have everything done. She has twice applied for a visitor visa and been turned down at least once she was turned down the other time, we just never heard anything. But this is to request permanent residency. So he is hopeful that he we will get that in the next couple of weeks. We're not sure how long that might take, but continue to pray that she can work on her English and that she can work on her skills because she's not coming as a refugee. If she comes, she's coming as a migrant. And so she needs to meet the qualifications for all of that. But we're really close after a lot of work to collect stuff together. And if anybody has a picture with Neema or you've been conversing with her, talk to me because we can use that as proof that they have a legitimate relationship. I think that's it for announcements.

So let's go to God in prayer. But before we do that, I want to read from Psalm 145th. Psalm one generation will praise your deeds to another and tell about your mighty acts. I will focus on Your Honor and majestic splendor in your amazing deeds. They were real. Proclaim the power of your awesome

acts. I will declare your great deeds. They will talk about the fame of your great kindness and sing about your justice. The Lord is merciful and compassionate. He is patient and demonstrates great, loyal love. The Lord is good to all and has compassion on all He has made. I'm pretty sure that I'm not too far out if I say that when Don speaks to us today. The nature of God is what we'll be looking at, because we're asked by the Spirit to have those fruit. So let's go to God in prayer at this time.

Father God, your compassion for us is without measure. We know that our sins are like scarlet and that you can't abide that. But you chose to give the most precious thing you possibly could. You gave your own son. Father, we can't begin to understand how difficult that must have been for you as you watched it unfold and for him as he found himself separated from you for the first time in all of eternity. Father, it is absolutely amazing to us that you want us that he was so much in love with us that he would take on our sins because he wanted to bring us into your presence. This morning, as we come into your presence during this time of worship, open our hearts to your spirit that we may be a changed people father, that we may go from this place today, recharged and father ready to lead another pilgrim just one step closer to you. Thank you for your gentleness and your compassion that we may have a home with you. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

## Communion

Well, good morning. I was here a little bit early to do a little prep work. You may or may not know that I like to finish furniture. Sometimes I refinish it and paint it. Sometimes I don't paint it. Sometimes I just restore the wood that's there. And last week, as I was sitting in the congregation, I noticed that our beautiful pulpit here is looking a little kind of ragged, especially on the top. People touch it. And as I got thinking about it, I just happened to notice it's like, you know what? I have a great product that I that I use called hemp oil that restores the finish on and makes things beautiful without a whole lot of work. And it's very nourishing for the wood. And that's how I got thinking about that. It's like, you know what? It's not a perfect analogy by any means, but I thought, you know what? That's that's kind of a cool analogy for for communion. And actually, Geoff talked a lot this morning about what happens in his introduction. And I was like, you know, Holy Spirit's at work again. And it's because I was sort of thinking, you know, I'm not doing a lot of that. So thank you, Geoff, for reminding about us. And I have to apologize for my voice. I think I'm I think I'm going through some kind of adolescence because I can't I can't sing high anymore. My my voice is getting lower and lower. I don't know whether it's just a convincing, but it's I am so up to date on all my shots, I've had my recent flu shot, I've had my everything shot. So I and I was tested yesterday because I had to go visit my mom. So I don't have COVID, but I've got I definitely have something going on. So I wanted to I don't know how I'm going to feel about coming after this. I brought some things with me. I've already cleaned the top, which is really important, but I know that and I'm just going to work as we talk here because this is what I do. So this is this is the hemp oil.

So one of the things about one of the things about working with beautiful pieces is that, you know, that they have been chosen in this particular piece, I know was very much chosen. It was it was made by Johnny, whom we all really love. This is completely natural. So if anybody's wearing it. But my bare hands, it was made by Johnny with love. And that makes me so happy. I work with furniture all the time and work at finishing it and that I know that the materials by the craftsmen that make them. And it makes me so happy to know that I know Johnny, who put so much love into it, that these materials were chosen. And it's interesting because totally unsolicited this morning, I was I was cleaning this up

and Adam said, did you know that this was made Johnny made this out of an old LCBO cabinet. So some of you might remember way back in the day, you used to have to go to the LCBO and line up at the, at the, at the desk. You filled out a little--you had to fill out a card and they went back in the back because nobody wanted nobody wanted you to see what the bottles actually look like. So this particular and that was that was cool for me because I was thinking that this, you know, the materials are chosen very specifically for for what is for what is done in there. They're crafted and hewn very purposefully. And that's very much like us.

So even though the rough hewn parts began the way they were, they're fashioned by the maker. And that really spoke to me because I know that when we first prior to coming to God and prior to our baptism, we are very much rough hewn, we're very beautiful, we're very beautifully made, but we've definitely got some rough hewn parts to us. And over time, after our baptism and with our I guess with our partnership with God, us allowing Him to mold us and shape us and do what He does in our lives, we become beautiful, beautiful. Not just a little bit beautiful, but really beautiful, gorgeous pieces of furniture, so to speak. We're not furniture. We're way more important than that. But we are we are brought to a beautiful, beautiful state. And then over time, we can sometimes get a little bit less beautiful. Right? We get worn out. I don't know if you can relate to feeling sometimes worn out. As a Christian, I know I certainly can get a little bit worn out. Get a little bit I don't know. It's not like we it's not like we've it's not like we lose our love, but we lose kind of some of that luster that maybe we had at the beginning. And sometimes we get it back and sometimes it's we're looking a little shabby, like on top of this. And it reminded me most especially this product, Hemp Oil, and where the analogy to communion really hit me was for me, communion.

And Don talked about it in this class today as well. Sometimes I can get a little bit. I don't know, though, maybe like you said, Don, you know, you sort of say prayer, dinner and kind of sometimes I'll go to bed. It's like, oh, my gosh, like I didn't have dinner time to spend with God this this week or this today. I didn't have time to to be with him the way that I wanted to be. And when I come to church and we have communion, just the act of remembering the things that Geoff said, remembering how dearly loved we are, how chosen we are, like, like a beautiful piece of we are God's craftsmanship. Just like this is to start remembering all of that feeling. For me, the feeling of and this is what I love about I love what God chose as the emblem to get us to remember that we have to take in the emblem. It comes into our body. It floods our body with, with. But it's mysterious. It floods our body with renewed like the oil that's penetrating into the wood. It penetrates into our bodies and and and restores our face somehow and brings back the luster to us as we remember how dearly loved we are, how how much effort went into making us the piece of God's craftsmanship that we are. And so as you take the communion and I cover this up because you know what? Don's Bible -- I came prepared, it's like it's going to be a little bit tacky for a bit.

As you take the communion, think about how the love of God expressed, expressed to us through this remarkable emblem, how the love of God and this refreshment soaks in and restores our faith back to back to a place that is ready to go again, ready to really fulfill our purpose. This has a purpose. It was built for a purpose. We're built for a purpose. But how God blessedly blesses us, I mean, that's too many "blesses" I know in one sentence, but he blesses us so richly with this amazing gift of communion. And let us remember the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. Let's pray, dearest Lord God, thank you so much for all that you give us.

God, thank you for the way that you blessed us so richly. God, thank you so much for communion. Thank you that we have the this emblem to remind us of how important we are to you. How blessed we are to have you in our lives. God, we love you. We thank you. We ask your blessing on our time of reflection. We love you in Jesus name. Amen.

## Scripture Readings – Matthew 11:25-30; 1 Peter 1:13-16

All already scripture reading this morning is going to come from Matthew 11:25 to 30. And first, Peter, one, 13 to 16, Matthew 11, 25 to 30. And that time Jesus said, I praise you, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to the little children. Yes, Father, this is what you were pleased to do. All things have been committed to me by my father. No one knows the son except the father. And no one knows the father except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle, humble in heart. And you will find rest from your souls For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. First Peter one 13-16 Therefore with minds that are alert and fully sober set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ has revealed that His coming as obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy, and all you do for it is written be holy because I am holy.

## Message

Good morning, everybody. Glad that you are with us today. The pulpit smells good. Thanks, Glynnis. So today we're going to conclude our preaching series on the fruit of the Spirit, and then we'll enter into the Christmas season. It's unique that gentleness and self-control are the last of these these beautiful virtues for all of us. They go hand in hand. A soft answer turns away wrath when we want to lash out. We remember that the piece of Jesus and the piece of love that Jesus had for us is what we have. That God pours out His love into our hearts. And if He does pour out His love into our hearts, then we manifest that to others, shouldn't we? I was thinking about this this week. Shouldn't we be so grateful that God doesn't lash out in vengeance and anger upon us that He is our loving Father who created us in his image so that we too can learn from him with his love, his joy, his peace, his patience, his kindness, his goodness, his faithfulness, his gentleness and self-control. I don't know if you've ever thought of it in these terms that God gives us these virtues. It's part of his personality that He gives us

So, gentleness. This is somewhat ironic. I guess has a strong meaning to it. And when you put strong and gentleness together, that just doesn't seem to make sense. But in reality, it makes a lot of sense. Gentleness has a strong meaning to it. It's a softness of disposition, along with great integrity and in an often angry world or an angry time. Gentleness can change the mood from contention to loving kindness. So when Paul writes this letter, he's writing it to a church in the province of Galatia. They're having some troubles. Jew, Gentile relationships have been, you know, pretty difficult over the years. We all want to come together in Christ. So how in the world do we do it? Well, we do it by God. Living through us and in us. And what he gives us a question to ask ourselves is this. And it's a pretty simple answer. And I ask you to try to answer it. Do you want an angry God who will lash out and punish you when me and eventually destroy us because we haven't measured up? Or do we want a loving God who is gentle and kind and encourages us to be a person? A self-control? And that's just a touch of his love for us every minute of every day. I think the answer's pretty simple.

In the Old Testament, the Prophet Zechariah talks about the Messiah who would be coming into the world. Jesus would be talking about that as the weeks go by and says to him what Jesus would do one day many, many years before Jesus came into the Earth in physical form. Here's what Zechariah 9:9 says: Rejoice greatly. O Daughter of Zion. Shout. Daughter of Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you. Righteous and having salvation. Gentle and riding on a donkey. On a colt. The foal of the donkey. And you remember that that story came true. And that's exactly what happens in Matthew 21 verses one through 11. Here are his words. Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem and came to pass on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent to disciples, saying to them, Go to the village. Ahead of you. And at once you will find a donkey tied there. So interesting. We hear the story. Put yourself in those shoes. Here you go. Yeah, it's exactly what he said. The donkey will be tied there and her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. And if anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them and he will send them right away. This took place to fulfill what was spoken to the Prophet. Who was Zechariah say to the daughter of Zion, See, your king comes to you gentle. And riding on a donkey. On a colt. The foal of a donkey. The disciples went and did as Jesus instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. And a very large crowd showed just picture. This took off their cloaks, spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of them and those who followed shouted Hosanna! Praise to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. It's incredible to think all of that Old Testament that we've looked at so often comes true. Therefore, the promise from Old and New Testament that are there for us are true. We can take confidence in this. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the holy city, the crowd was stirred and some asked this question, Who is this? I was thinking about that this week.

What if we were in the crowd? What if we heard about this prophet? We knew John the Baptist. We've read a lot of the stuff by Isaiah and Kings and so forth all the way through. What about this? Would we believe he was the Messiah? When you read some of those powerful, strong words in the Old Testament about a king coming in glory and we see Jesus, he doesn't look anything different than just us, which is perfect. He came to live among us and he still lives in us. See, the fruit of the spirit is more than just the words. It's the understanding of God giving us part of himself. Love, joy. Joy. Sometimes it's difficult, peace, patience. Difficult. Kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Peter wrote these words. It should be that our inner self, the unfailing beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. Sometimes when people are are upset with one another or challenging things, it's good to have a soft answer. Sometimes in the midst of confusion and strength and anger and loudness, there is this gentle answer that can calm things down. It should be our inner self, the unfailing beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. See the fruit of the spirit? I think it's perfect that they end up this ends up this way. Why Paul writes these things. All the other things, Love, joy. But all the way through. all The end of it. It's this. This gentleness that is listened to. And then the angry crowd. It's this soft, gentle answer. When Paul writes to the church in Ephesus, he reminds them to be completely humble and gentle. And a person who is humble and gentle is a person that we like to spend time with.

And then there's self-control. When the Apostle was encouraging Timothy, he told him not to share in the sins of others, but to keep himself pure self-control. A wonderful man. You may recognize this name by the name of Lloyd John Ogilvy. In discussing, discussing self-control, said self-control. The last of the fruit is one that makes all the rest work to the Greek self-control meant to have power over

yourself. Power over yourself. Self-control is not negative. It's a vibrancy of God's Holy Spirit active in our lives. It's a strength that focuses on what would Jesus do? And all we have to do is read the New Testament, and we knew what Jesus would do. We understand that in all those situations, many of our church songs and hymns are amazing sermons. Do you remember in the hymn Take My Life and Let It Be Written by Francis Havergal, listen to the words, take my life and let it be consecrated, dedicated, consecrated Lord to thee. Take my moments and my days. Let them flow in ceaseless praise. Have we praise God today? Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of God's love. Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for the Lord. Take my voice and let them sing. Always only for my king. Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from the soft answer. A soft answer can soft, soft, lower the temperature. Lower the anger, lower the loudness. Soft answer takes away wrath. Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose. Take my will and make it time. Excuse me. It shall be [ahem] excuse me--no longer mine. Take my heart. It is thine own it shall be thy royal throne. Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store Take myself and I will be ever only all for Thee

in a unique way. The Apostle Paul is teaching us that self-control is a blessing to ourselves and one another. We remember the statement of a gentle spirit as its effect can turn away dissension and wrath. Way back in the year 1923, Henry Ward Beecher told us the story. I remember that once a man came to our house red with anger, he was boiling over with rage. He had or thought he had a grievance to complain. My father listened to him with great attention and perfect quietness until he had got it all out. And then he said to him in a soft and low tone, Well, I suppose you only want what's just and right. The man said, Yes but went on to state the situation all over again very gently. Father said to him, If you have been missing, I presume you would be perfectly willing to know what the exact truth is. The man said he would. Then Father very gently, quietly made a statement for the other side and explained things more perfectly. Then the man got up and said. Please forgive me. And that's all it took. It was a soft answer that turned away wrath. A gentle, quiet response.

The wonderful Max Lucado commented on the magnificence of self-control. He said, I'm a spiritual being. After this body is dead, my spirit will soar. I refuse to let will not rule the eternal. I choose self-control. I will be drunk only by joy. I will be impassioned. Only by my faith. I will be influenced only by God. I will be taught only by Christ. Yes. I choose self control. The beautiful hymn. I surrender all, all to Jesus. I surrender all to Him. I freely give. I will ever love and trust you in his presence. I will daily live all to Jesus. I surrender humbly at his feet. I bow worldly pleasures all forsaken. Take me, Jesus. Take me now. All to Jesus. I surrender. Make me save your holy. Die. May, may thy holy spirit. fall on me. May I know thy power divine all to Jesus. I surrender. Lord, I give myself to Thee. Fill me with Thy love and power. Let Thy blessing fall on me. I surrender. all, I surrender all. All to Thee, my blessed Savior. I surrender all. I think many of us could hum that too. We know it so well. Self-control admits to oneself, to ourself that we need help.

Charles Swindoll says, Here is a prayer. I like it. Here is a prayer to be said. When the world has gotten you down and you feel rotten and you're too doggone tired to pray and you're in a hurry. And besides, you're mad at everybody. The prayer is, Dear God, help. Self-control is reaching up all across to the one who has all control and trust that he has control over our life. Because one day we will stand in front of him and see him as this wonderful says face to face. Have you ever thought of that? Standing with Jesus. Face to face. I've always wanted to know the face of the Holy Spirit, seeing God face to face. And then, of course, all our loved ones again, whom we miss so many days, so many months, so many years, so often. But we know that they're with you and we will be together again. I think that's why, at

the conclusion of the Fruit of the Spirit, it all wraps up together. Here's a church in contention. And so Paul comes and says, Look, here's how to do this. And Paul got it. Paul was a contentious man. He was before he was Paul. He was Saul. And he was dragging Christians off and killing them. And his life changed completely. And many of us know how our lives have changed completely over the years and will continue to change. Have you asked God recently to help change your life, to be more loving, to be more joyful, and all the things to the fruit of the spirit?

So let me just conclude by what Peter Marshall wrote, encouraging us for consistency in the Christian life. He doesn't hold anything back. And here's what he says. Lord, what is the matter with us? That we are so fitful and were so moody and we're so change for one moment, professing our love for the in the next moment, cheerful, smiling and kind. And the moment after that glum and surly. Lord, we do not understand ourselves what strange creatures we are. Yet we do not pray, our father, that always everything should be the same. For we, for we would get tired of unending sunshine. We would long for a shower of rain. We do not pray that our way may always be on a level surface, for then we would long to see a mountain. No. Knowing all these things we give ourselves to you today, tomorrow and forevermore are in. This concludes our series. Let's pray. Dear Lord, we're so grateful to you for everything, for every moment of the day. And if it's possible, Lord, remind that you're with us every moment of the day and that we can speak to you and that we can often hear your voice in, our heart. Help us to be people who live by the fruit of the spirit so that we can help others know you and love as much as we know you and love you. Thank you. In Christ's name. Amen.

## Closing Prayer

Lord, you have searched me and know me. You know, when I sit down or when I get up, you understand my thought far away. You scrutinize my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways, even before there is a word on my tongue. Behold, Lord, you know it all. You have encircled me from behind and in front and placed your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is too high. I cannot comprehend it.

Father, your love for us is beyond comprehension. We thank you that you have had this kind of love since before the creation of the world for such as us. Today, as we get ready to go back out into the world. Father, we. We celebrate with those who are celebrating. For Chris and Rebecca, their anniversary. For Lee's birthday and, Father, we--we mourn for those who mourn. We know that Val is at home, that she's had a chance to sit with Art and with Tom. But for those who are left behind, Father, there is there is sadness. And we pray that you will be with the family and comfort them. At time of need comes to each of us and father at this time we pray that we can be a bolster to to them. Father, we pray likewise for Jack and Marie in their difficult time. We ask Father that as we leave this place today, that we may be a reflection of your love to the world, that we may, as the video said, we may be like Jesus. Bless us, Father, that we may be a blessing to others in Christ's name. Amen.

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