**September 24, 2017 “Gentleness” Ephesians 4:1-3**

A couple of things have come to light as I have been studying the last three chapters of Ephesians. The first insight is how the Holy Spirit through the writings of Paul challenges the Church to “walk worthy” of all the blessings, we as believers, have received through the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. Perhaps the most important question we have to ask ourselves is why does Paul want us to do this? The answer is found in verse three, “to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. That unity cannot be attained through a set of rules but rather must be initiated through a changed heart that strives to “walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called”.

Paul, in his epistles or letters to the churches reiterates this concept time and time again. Note the words used which are: humility and gentleness (KJV meekness)

 Galatians 5:22-26

 Philippians 2:1-3

 James 3:13-18

 I Timothy 6:10-12

Notice all the things mentioned deal with attitudes and not with actions.

The second thing I have noticed in my study is that there is a correlation in what the Holy Spirit is admonishing the Church to as an attitude and then how that same attitude affects my home life.

Consider how my home life would change if I applied Philippians 2:1-4 to my wife and her to me? How would your home life change if you applied Ephesains 4:1-3 to your home life?

Micah 6:6-8

Humility can be summed up in one phrase from John the Baptist which is “He must increase and I must decrease”.

What then is “gentleness or meekness”? I am going to use the word meekness since it is a less familiar word to us.

1. Meekness
	1. Matthew 11:29
		1. This is Jesus description of Himself
	2. Dictionary
		1. Overly submissive or compliant; spiritless; tame
		2. Zephaniah 2:3… seek meekness
			1. Is what the dictionary described a biblical definition?
	3. Note Matthew 21:5
	4. Compare that to Matthew 21:12-14
		1. Drove them out… the second time
		2. John 2:13-17… the first time
			1. Is that the dictionary definition of meekness?
	5. Note I Timothy 6:11
		1. Compare that to Timothy 6:12
			1. “fight”
2. Meekness the double-edged sword
	1. Quiet, gentle spirit
	2. Angry spirit under control
		1. Ephesians 4:26
	3. So, what are we to do?
		1. Be gentle???
		2. Be angry?????
	4. Key to knowing what to do is found in
		1. I Peter 2:21-23
		2. Jesus never retaliated against anyone who came against Him
		3. He constantly rebuked those who reviled His Father
			1. “whitewashed sepulchers”
			2. “hypocrites”
			3. “turned my Father’s house into a den of thieves”
	5. Note Matthew 26:51-53
		1. 12 legions of angels
		2. II Kings 19:34-35
	6. Numbers 12:3… Moses
		1. What did he do when he saw the golden calves?
		2. This was the man who stood in front of Pharaoh… and said, “let My (God’s chosen people) go”
3. Where does that leave us?
	1. Four questions
		1. Are you ready to and defend yourself at the drop of a hat?
			1. Your husband, or your wife, or your kids or someone in church says the wrong thing to you… what is your reaction?
		2. When you and I get angry is it for the right reason?
			1. Is it because God’s name is being maligned or is it something that just irritates you and me?
		3. Galatians 6:1-3
			1. Does that describe me?
			2. Am I ready to restore or condemn?
		4. What is my reaction to God’s Word?
			1. Do I do what it commands or do I pick and choose?
				1. Am I angry if it says something I don’t agree with?
				2. What if the preacher steps on your toes?

Humility is not being self-centered and meekness is being God centered. Both are needed for maturity in Christ.

Let’s pray