

An abstract image featuring a large, dynamic splash of blue ink or paint against a light, off-white background. The ink forms intricate, swirling patterns that spread outwards from the center, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors range from deep navy blue to lighter, misty blues.

IN THE FACE OF JESUS

Sermon Growth Guide

August 3, 2025
There is Gentleness



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Luke 12:22-34

Key Verse: Luke 12:32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”

Big Idea: Our Lord gently calms our fears. Jesus called His disciples little children—not to insult, but with love. He invites us to be like children to enter His Kingdom. “Do not be afraid, little flock.” His face is full of gentleness.

Foundations

This week we continue our In the Face of Jesus sermon series in which we examine the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) as shown in the person and ministry of Jesus. The focus now is on *gentleness*.

Today’s passage is Luke 12:22-34 finds Jesus speaking to His disciples about the subject of not worrying. In this, we find God’s gentle provision for His people and the reminder that worrying cannot increase God’s care or provide added security beyond the peace and contentment of God’s kingdom.

Jesus used everyday examples to illustrate His point. First, He asked his disciples to consider the ravens who do not sow or reap, but God feeds them nonetheless.

Second, He asked His disciples to consider the wild flowers and how they grow with spender, and then noted how much more God clothes His children with even greater splendor.

Finally, Jesus instructed His disciples to sell their possessions and give to the poor and put their trust in the treasure of heaven not in earthly wealth, security and wealth. Through this passage, Jesus spoke of radical surrender and radical trust. He called His disciples to embrace a value system that was the inversion of the natural and worldly system of fallen humanity.

Understanding God’s Word

Read Luke 12:1-59. Yes, the whole chapter! Understanding today’s passage in the context of the whole chapter is important to see how the pieces fit together. What themes to you find? How are they stressed? Are they repeated? What seem to be the priorities that Jesus is presenting?

Applying God’s Word

Our lives today can be complex with a number of pressures and stresses. Do you find the words of Jesus to be comforting, impractical or somewhere in between? Surrendering control in our lives might be one of the hardest things to do, but Jesus told His disciples to do that and trust that God will provide. If Jesus said those words to you what would you say in response? What areas of control would be the most difficult to surrender? What about God’s gentle character would give you confidence and hope to trust and follow the words of Jesus?

Witnessing God’s Word

How might you practice and demonstrate the values of this passage to others around you? If someone said, “You seem to not stress over things...” what would you say was the reason? Try to think of one person you know who is struggling with control and building up worldly treasure. What might you say to them to start a spiritual conversation about Kingdom values?

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” (Philippians 2:3-4) Others first. Friday we had a service for one of our Elders, Bryan Frame, who passed away on July 22. Bryan embodied this verse. Truly. The old virtuous order: God first, others second, me last. It’s rare. So is gentleness and humility. This is not a prized virtue in our times. The Broncos have started training camp. I have not noticed any articles saying we definitely have it this season because we have recruited the gentlest team in the NFL! Humility is off the charts! No. What do we do with this? Gentleness.

We are studying Luke and looking In the Face of Jesus to see the Fruit of the Spirit. If we are believers in Christ, the Holy Spirit is at work in us making us more like Jesus. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23) So, if that’s what becoming like Jesus looks like, we will find those same qualities in the face of Jesus. So far, in the face of Jesus there is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and today, almost done, in the face of Jesus, There Is Gentleness. Gentleness is what I call the forgotten fruit of the Spirit. The word is related to humility in the Greek. Gentleness and humility are hand in hand. Do we even want to be humble? Do we want gentleness? I’m not so sure.

There are increasing arguments for being gentle and humble in the workplace, and I’m glad, but if we are honest nobody in business believes humility is the road to success. That sounds weak. There are no biographies about the humble entrepreneur who made billions or the gentlest CEO. Gentleness is not a trait prized in politics. I’ll be honest with you, and this might surprise you, it is not prized in large church leadership. Ambition. Drive. Self-Con-

fidence. Relentless high standards. These are the qualities that spur rapid growth in our megachurches today. Why does Jesus want us to grow in gentleness? What possible good could that do? What is the last time you prayed that God would make you humble, gentle, increase your humility? We worry about a lot of verses in the Bible about sexuality or greed or idolatry, but I think we run right by this without a thought. Who would want to be gentle? Ew.

In the face of Jesus, we see gentleness. In this sermon in Luke, Jesus declares the gentleness of God. How tenderly our Lord calms our worries and quiets our concerns! How gentle. This is in the middle of a long sermon to a mass of people. “Then Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.’” (Luke 12:22) Do not worry about your life. Can we just camp out there for a minute? How does that sound? We are all so worried. There is so much anxiety. Jonathan Haidt’s book last year, *The Anxious Generation*, is becoming the definition of our times. Phones, technology, all of it has made us super worried about life. Take a minute. Soak that in. Do not worry about your life. Don’t let the things of life split your attention. It’s like the man spinning plates on stage at the talent show. Over here. Over here. Over here. Settle. I can’t tell you not to worry. I wish I could. But if Jesus says it, maybe it will settle in. “For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.” (Luke 12:23) Life is more. Take a minute in your worries to gain a life-sized perspective. What is life about? What little things have your attention? Life is bigger than that. What little things have taken up your whole landscape? What molehills have you allowed to become mountains, small struggles you have catastrophized into existential crises? Life is more. Do not worry about your life.

Worry is a non-productive use of emotional energy. “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry

about the rest?” (Luke 12:25-26) Be like the ravens. God feeds them. Don’t worry about your food. Be like the wildflowers of the field. God furnishes them with beauty. Don’t worry about your clothes. Now, let’s wear clothes. I don’t think Jesus wants us to lay down all thoughtful planning and work to keep ourselves and others fed and clothed, but the point is clear. Worry is a misplaced, non-productive use of our emotional energy. You will not live a single hour longer because you logged worry hours. You know the truth, you will probably live a few less, if anything. Worry does not add, it subtracts.

But I want you to see how gentle Jesus is with all of this. He doesn’t stand up and pound the table and start yelling, “Hey! Stop worrying! Don’t you know it’s not a productive emotion! Stop it!” Jesus is so gentle with us, so tender, as any good counselor must be in this situation. The images are pastoral and natural and peaceful. Birds happily snacking; flowers beautifully springing up and blossoming with colors; grass filling the field. God provides for them all. The summary verse of this passage is verse 32: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32) Jesus often calls his followers “little children.” It’s not an insult. It’s a reality. We are in need of care. We can’t go it alone. And Jesus says at one point that we need to enter Christian discipleship with a childlike mindset. “And he said: ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.’” (Matthew 18:3) But here the image is a flock of little lambs. Lambs need care. They need a shepherd to bring them food, to show them to water. They need to be protected from harm; they can’t defend themselves from the wolves. They need washing when they are soiled and healing when they are wounded. How tender and how gentle the Lord is with his little flock. Do not be afraid! The fear will not produce anything helpful. Do not worry! The worry will not add a thing. And here is the good news: your Father has been pleased to give

you the Kingdom. That’s the verse by which to understand all the other admonitions. This is the verse that makes the others possible. By this truth, worry is dispersed like a morning fog.

So, Jesus says, in this way, we are meant to be different from the world. We are different. How do you think about your career? If you are living out a story where there is no God, no Kingdom of God, no eternal life, then that career is all you are and all you will ever be! You will stress about it. How about your marriage? If this life is all there is, then this spouse better give me everything I ever needed to be fully satisfied and happy. You will worry. How about money? If there is no higher Kingdom... Isn’t it interesting how much Jesus talks about the riches coming to us in the next Kingdom? Inheritance. Mansions. Crowns and jewels. Why is that? If that wasn’t there, then the bottom line on your bank account would be the end of it. But it’s not. Don’t be like the rest of the world on this. You are in a bigger story. “And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.” (Luke 12:29-30) Your Father in Heaven knows your needs and cares for you. His resolve is to take care of you. Trust him. “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

So, what are we to do? Put God first. “But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.” (Luke 12:31) Worry says, “I don’t trust you, God.” Anxiety says, “These things are more important to me, God.” What’s the solution? Well, I don’t discount when we talk about anxiety that there are often professional interventions needed. Seek help from a Christian Counselor or doctor. But the primary spiritual solution is this: put God first. Seek first the Kingdom. Put Jesus in the top spot. Let the rest take care of itself.

Then you may feel free enough not to worry, not to be anxious, about things as important as money. “Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.” (Luke 12:33) This is not quite the challenge Jesus gave to the rich young ruler in Luke 18. That man needed to be rid of all of it if he was going to be free. But for us, maybe we don’t need to give all of it away, but we need to give some. The liberal side of the house might say you are not doing it right unless you stop valuing wealth; wealth should be dispersed. The conservative Protestant work ethic might say the opposite. You have the responsibility to make all you can with the gifts you have and secure generational wealth for your family and church. The Gospel says you are free. Freely earn. Freely give. Recognize that your true wealth is in Jesus and his eternal Kingdom. You don’t need to be chained to worry. Worry about giving enough; worry about gaining enough. No. You are free.

What if we dealt with one another as gently as Jesus deals with us? Of all the nine fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, the one we give the least thought is this, gentleness. But gentleness is a virtue. It is sweet and seed-bearing and attractive. Gentleness is a godly quality to be developed as the fruit of the Spirit of God in us. Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit. It is a fruit—so it has an ap-peal. (Sorry. Couldn’t help it.) Fruit is sweet. Fruit is attractive, so its seeds can be distributed. Spiritual fruit should be appealing. Spiritual fruit should be attractive. The fruit of the Spirit in our lives is fruit that others just want to be around. It may just be something Jesus intends to use to spread life. Someone who truly attends to growing in gentleness will stand out in this world. Gentleness will reflect the light of Jesus.

Lastly, you know, gentleness is not weakness. There is nothing weak about being gentle. It takes strength to be humble.

Gentleness is strength. Brash pride is selfish, defensive, self-centered, conceited, always needing to have the last word. Gentleness is not weakness; it is strength put in the service of others, power constrained to serve and love the other. Jesus is the most powerful man (he is man as he is God) to walk this earth. He called himself gentle. “Come to me, all 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 and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29) That’s Jesus. The most powerful, most influential event in all of human history, the singular event around which all human history spins, what is it? It is the day the most powerful man that ever lived was pinned helplessly to a cross of wood. Here is the gentle one; the gentle Savior, giving himself away for you and for me, and saving the whole world. There is gentleness in the face of Jesus.