

# Are You Known for Being Reasonable and Gentle by James Jennings

by James Malachi Jennings

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of reasonableness and gentleness in the church, highlighting its role in promoting unity and the gospel advance.*

**Duration:** 55:47

**Scripture:** Galatians 6:1, Philippians 4:5, Titus 3:2, 1 Peter 3:15

**Topics:** "Christian Character", "Humility"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of embodying gentleness, reasonableness, and humility in our interactions with others, both within the church and in the world. It highlights the need to prioritize the interests of others, maintain unity, and exhibit Christ-like characteristics to be a clear sign of God's salvation. The message encourages self-reflection on whether one's behavior reflects a spirit of gentleness and reasonableness, aligning with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.

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## Transcript

Go ahead and turn to Philippians 4. I'm going to knock another verse off of Philippians. Slowly, I'll get through it eventually. Philippians 4, 5. Paul in prison writes to the church at Philippi just after calling them to rejoice in the Lord always, just after dealing with a dispute in verse 2. He says in verse 5, Father, let Your reasonableness be known to everyone.

The Lord is at hand. Let's pray. Lord, we just ask, I ask, Father, would You please meet with us this morning.

Lord, help me to deliver this message clearly. Lord, help us to apply it appropriately. Lord, we thank You for the baptisms later today, the fellowship, the next message.

Lord, we just ask that Your hand would be upon us for good today. Lord, that You would strengthen us. Lord, help.

Lord, help Tavit down in Monterey. As he teaches, Lord, be with Diego as he interprets right now for him. We pray You, Lord, bless that trip and their trip to Pachuca.

And Lord, be with David Butterbaugh up there in temple right now. Would You strengthen him? Be with the brethren in Austin. Lord, we're thankful to serve You this morning.

In Jesus' name, Amen. So verse 5, Philippians 4, let Your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

Now most of you know, recently we had a survey done at the church in Monterey, Mexico to rate the pastoral qualifications on some of the men. One of those qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 is the exact same Greek word as this reasonableness. It's rendered gentle.

Why did we do this survey? We wanted to know what was known about these men in the church body as a whole. We wanted to know their strengths. We wanted to know their weaknesses.

And we wanted to know if the church was in a place to move forward with any of those men in Monterey to be pastors. Now ask ourselves this, what if each of us were to have a similar survey done within our church in order to find out what we are known for? You see, Paul here says to let this be known to everyone. If we did a survey of each of us individually, what would we be known for? If we did a survey on the outside and asked our bosses and co-workers and family members what we are known for, what is evident in our church corporately, what would they say? How would we grade on the test? What would they say about us as individuals? What characteristics of our Christianity stick out to them? What would be the first things on the list that they would say this aspect of their Christianity is very evident? And this one and this one and this one.

What would they say? To the Apostle Paul, this matters. It matters what the outside world, who were seeking to shine his lights before, as he said in chapter 1, it matters what they think about us. Paul's already called us in this letter to walk in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

He's called us to put on the mind of Jesus Christ. So this matters. He wants us to be a clear sign to the lost world of their destruction but of our salvation.

And here he gives a command. He says, let your reasonableness be known to everyone. Let this aspect of your Christianity be known to everyone.

Let this be something when they think of you and grade you, it's one of the things on the top of the list that this is known, this is evident to all. Let the world know as he renders it that you're reasonable. Now, as we're going to find out, this word that has many nuances, it speaks of someone who's able to humbly listen and understand others.

Someone who puts others' interest as more significant than their selves, as Paul's already called us to do in chapter 2. It's someone who's able to be patient, kind, and gentle towards them no matter how they're treating you. Paul already did that in chapter 1. He rejoiced when people were trying to make him suffer in prison. Now, something else as we dive into this to think about.

If Paul wants this to be evident to everyone out there, it also speaks to us that there are things that we don't want to be evident. There are things we don't want to be known for as a church. There are things we want to be known for.

Things we don't want to be known for as a church. There are things that should not exist in our church. That's why we have church discipline.

How can we maintain a pure testimony if we have people living in sin? We have to put them out from among us. Purge out the leaven that we might be a whole, pure lump. Now think of this.

In contrast to what we might expect, Paul wants us to be known for. If you said, what's the thing that you want to be known for as a church? What are some of the first things that sometimes come to people's minds? People think we want to be known for a church that has strong preaching. We want to be known for a church that has great zeal.

Should we be zealous for good works? Did He save us to be that? He did. We should have that. People say, I want to be known for all these things.

For strong preaching. For good doctrine. And all of that is good.

Yet, how many of us are striving to be known for reasonableness, gentleness, and humility that is able to yield and put others' interests above our own to be kind and patient as Christ has done? Now, Paul obviously wants this for a reason. Paul wants this because he desires the advancement of the Gospel. And he knows the advancement of the Gospel goes hand in hand with this being evident in our lives towards those who are lost.

And not just our advancement of the Gospel. If we don't have this reasonableness, it's going to affect our unity as well. So, first, we must more fully understand the Word in order to understand what we are called to do to be evident to all.

We've got to understand this Word. ESV says reasonableness. Other versions put a forbearing spirit.

Graciousness. The King James puts moderation. Other versions put gentleness.

A forbearing spirit. Graciousness, moderation, gentleness. Why are there so many different ways to put this Word forward? Well, it's because the Word has many nuances about it.

It's hard for there to be one Word to translate to get everything that's involved with this. Many people just use the word gentleness. The problem is there's more than just gentleness.

You think about someone who's gentle and kind and patient in their manner. This Word means more than that. That's why the ESV puts reasonableness.

Now, this Greek word, four times this word is used in the New Testament, and five times in its noun form, and each time it's rendered gentle or gentleness, except in this one spot. And this is a different word than what we find in Matthew 5 and Matthew 11 where it mentions meekness. It's not the same word.

It's different. So if a lot of versions render this as gentleness, what is gentleness? Let's make sure we have that. You think about someone who's gentle and you know they're gentle.

But how do we describe that? Someone who's kind, calm, gracious, as opposed to being harsh, overly strict. A person who quarrels is not gentle. A gentle person is someone who is willing to yield to others' thoughts and opinions.

Gentleness could be a good word. Gentleness captures a lot of what I think Paul's trying to convey here. But the ESV puts reasonableness because there's something more to it than just having a gentle manner.

Now you guys have heard someone say this. They say, that's unreasonable, brother. That's unreasonable.

And when they say that's unreasonable, what do they mean? Meaning, what you just asked me to do doesn't make any sense. What you just asked me to do is extreme. It's beyond limits.

It's illogical. That's unreasonable. Asking me to do that, that conduct, it's unreasonable.

Someone in court of law, they say the jury made an unreasonable verdict. And what do they mean by that? It wasn't supported by any evidence. Their verdict, it made no sense.

It doesn't have any logic involved. Yet, on the flip side, someone says that is very reasonable. What do they mean there? It means they've acknowledged, they've given much thought and consideration to the course of action.

They've not hastily said, let's do this. They've thought it out. They've considered your interest.

Their judgment and discernment was sound. When someone asks you to do something that's reasonable, you know what they're doing? They're considering your rights. They're holding you as significant.

They're thinking about you. When someone asks you to do something that's unreasonable, what's the thrust of it? They're not thinking about you at all. They're thinking about themselves.

So part of this reasonableness, as Paul's already said in Philippians 2, is to hold others as more significant than yourselves. And some commentators would even go to the point to say this verse is the exact same thing as Philippians 2 verses 3-4. That it's just another way of saying hold others' interests as more significant than your own.

And obviously, the person who does that is reasonable, but there are differences. More of a gentleness right here in this command than I believe is in chapter 2. Now when someone says do something and it's reasonable, you know what that means? They're asking us to do something that's based on the truth on the Bible. It means they're seeking our interest as supreme and not their own.

They haven't left us out of the equation. When someone says something to you that you say that's reasonable, it means they've considered your rights. They hold your interest as significant.

Now, we're trying to think about this word reasonableness. Gentleness is one way most people say it and it absolutely is speaking of that. But as we just looked at, it's clearly speaking of a humility, a selflessness of looking at the interests of others as Paul said in chapter 2. I think perhaps Paul gives this command in view of the dispute that he just dealt with in v. 2. If you look at v. 2, Philippians 4. He just entreated these two women to agree in the Lord.

And then he says, yes, I ask you, true companion, someone there, help these women who've labored side by side with me in the Gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life. So they couldn't resolve something. Paul gets a third party involved.

And he mentions this thought whose names are in the book of life. And then what does he say? Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I'll say rejoice.

Maybe Paul's even saying rejoice in the Lord because he just mentioned this glorious thought of your names are in the book of life. And part of him giving this repetitious command again is an overflow of our names are in the book of life. And then he says in v. 5, I believe speaking to the whole church, but maybe specifically he wants these two women and true companion who's going to deal with them.

He wants it to be real in their lives. He says, let your reasonableness, your gentleness, be known to everyone. In dealing with that conflict, let it be known you're reasonable, you're gentle.

It's possible that this reasonableness in v. 5 is what was deficient in Eodia and Syntyche's lives which prevented them from getting this problem resolved. Meaning, if these sisters were letting their reasonableness be made known to all, if they had this interest in the interest of others, this humility, this kindness, this being willing to yield your rights to someone else, if they had that, they could have resolved this without having true companion, whoever that's referring to, get involved. Now, that's a possibility.

But Paul, I don't think he's indiscriminately just saying these things in chapter 4. There's a reason behind it. He's trying to deal with issues and encourage them. Now, if that's so, let's think about Eodia and Syntyche again for a second.

We looked at that months ago. The issue between them was not on some essential doctrine. It wasn't.

Paul doesn't even mention what it was on. So, it's very doubtful it was on something essential or he would have named it for what it was and he would have been stronger like he is in Galatians. Probably, the issue with these two women, if one of them would have yielded and laid their pride aside and had this reasonableness and gentleness, the problem would have been resolved.

And Paul sees in these two sisters this lacking of this ingredient is leading to disunity, and disunity does what? It halts a gospel advance. And so Paul is telling everyone in the church, let your reasonableness be made known to everyone. Not just in the church, on the outside.

Look at our testimony as a church because this ingredient is so deficient in these people possibly. This affects our witness. This affects our unity.

This halts a gospel advance. That's why he's wanting true companion to get involved to get this resolved. That they might continue side by side together for the gospel.

So not having this reasonableness in your heart, it prevents unity. Not having this gentleness, this humility, this ability to yield to others. Pride prevents that.

Pride says it's my way or the highway. Pride is harsh. Pride forces its own ideas on others.

It's not willing to yield. And it affects our gospel advance. Now we know whatever is in the root of verse 5, this word reasonableness, we know it falls under a bigger heading, and that is having the mind of Christ.

Paul's already called us to have the mind of Christ. There are so many different aspects of having the mind of Christ that fall under that. And this gentleness and reasonableness is obviously one of them.

It all is pointing back to imitating Christ. When we think about this word, one of the places it's used is Titus 3. And in Titus 3, Paul commands Titus to remind the church of certain things. He reminds them to submit to the governing authorities.

And he says this, to avoid quarreling. And then he puts the positive. To avoid quarreling and to be gentle.

And that's our word. Gentle. So Paul is saying, in a sense, if you lack this reasonableness, what does it produce? Quarreling.

Why do people quarrel? Pride. They're convinced their way is right. They're not able to yield to others.

They're not able to be kind. They're not able to be gentle with people. So Titus 3 too.

Titus reminds them to be gentle. To avoid quarreling. We see this word in Ephesians 4. Paul urges them to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which they've been called with all humility and our word, gentleness.

You see, humility and gentleness go together. Paul didn't just say to them, have gentleness. He even says in 2 Corinthians 10, he came with the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

There has to be a humility for this reasonableness to be there. For this gentleness to be there. It's not just having a gentle manner.

It's having a right heart. Humility speaks of a person as a right view of themselves, a right view of God. When you think about how patient and kind the Lord was of you, right there, that should help you be patient and gentle with others.

Think of how reasonable the Lord is to us. When we make mistakes, we tend to reason why we made the mistakes, right? When I don't do something, I explain myself. That's why I didn't get that done.

When others don't meet our expectations, we tend to be what? Irrreasonable with them. We're pointing out all these faults. You should have done this for this or that.

But when we fail, we tend to make excuses, give reasons. We're very reasonable. We're very gentle with ourselves, but we're not gentle with others.

Having a right view of God, a right view of the Gospel, it affects whether you have this characteristic or not. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10, I, Paul, myself, entreat you by the meekness and gentleness that's the Word of Christ. And they were saying of Paul that he's humble when face to face with you, but bold towards you when he was away.

And here Paul says, I entreat you with the meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ. If we don't have humility, we're not going to listen. We're not going to have patience.

We're just already convinced. I remember getting an email before and something was in the email I disagreed with, and right away I was thinking it should have been done this way. Rather than thinking this person said that because they were looking out for the interest of others.

But right away, my pride had me unreasonable. I was already correcting it to thinking this is how it should be. No kindness, no gentleness, no patience.

It wasn't some essential thing that's worth dying over of the Gospel. If our focus is on our own interests, we're going to be impatient, short, unkind. We're going to stomp all over people.

We're not going to be gentle. We're not going to be reasonable. Pride makes us unwilling to bend.

Unwilling to bend. Think, what's one of the things Paul already prayed for the church at Philippi? It is my prayer for you that your love may abound more and more with all knowledge and discernment in order that you might approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ. Paul's already been asking God for their love to abound more and more.

No doubt if their love abounds more and more, they will have more of this reasonableness. Because this reasonableness is looking for the interests of others which love drives us to do that. So, so much of this is a command to love.

Even as 1 Corinthians 13 says, love does not insist on its own way. The reasonable person, the gentle person, they're not always insisting on their own way. The person who does not have this, that's what they're doing.

The only way they're able to reason is what works for me. This reasonableness or gentleness is the opposite of being a bully. In 1 Timothy 3.3, that's where the elder qualifications are.

And he says, you're not a drunkard, not violent, and then there our word is, but gentle. But gentle. Not quarrelsome.

Not a lover of money. Here he mentions not violent, but what? Gentle. You think about someone who's unreasonable.

They're violent. They're always bringing the tone loud. Forcing silence on the other party.

Gentle is contrasted with violent. That word violent, it means a pugnacious man, a bully, someone who's ready with a blow. But here Paul says pastors are not to be that.

We're to be the opposite. Gentle. Not contentious, but peaceful.

Now, we say that, but think about Paul. Paul called some people foolish. He rebuked a co-worker in the presence of all.

Jesus Christ was incredibly strong with the Pharisees. Was all that done in perfect humility and gentleness? Yeah, it was. He was very reasonable, because these were black and white issues.

These were issues to die over. So Paul wasn't going to shrink back in some false gentleness, false humility, false reasonableness. As one brother said, he heard a lady in the church was marrying a lost man, and he called one of his pastor friends in that church and he said, why are you letting a 60-year-old lady marry a lost guy? And he said, well, I'm wanting to be loving.

Well, that's not loving. That was wrong gentleness. That wasn't seeking her own interest.

Seeking her own interest is don't let that lady become unequally yoked with a lost person. Paul, he said, this word is used in Galatians 6.1 to restore those caught in sin with what? A spirit of gentleness. Alexander Strauch, he said, correcting people with gentleness makes people more willing to listen, more open to a real change of heart and mind.

Isn't that true? Even just in Monterey. I commend Brother John, how gentle he is. In those meetings with those three men, his gentleness, looking back at the end, I think it won the day compared to the way I think I would have been.

And Strauch is right. You have this reasonableness, this gentleness, you're looking for the interest of the other person. Yes, Christ's kingdom.

People are more willing to listen. Paul, though he came in both ways, he even said in 1 Corinthians 4.21, we find our word there. He says, what do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod or with a spirit of gentleness? So Paul was very willing to come with a rod.

He was very willing to call you a fool. He was very willing to rebuke you in the presence of all. Yet, he says to restore people with a spirit of gentleness.

A big question is, am I insisting upon truth on the essentials of the Gospel? I better not cut truth out. But on the non-essentials of faith, you are not to be overly dogmatic and create disunity because of your convictions. And you know, Romans 14, we see Paul displaying in many ways an example of this reasonableness.

If you want a good example, what does this reasonableness look like? What does this gentleness look like? Go look at Romans 14 and see what Paul is calling us to do. A lot of this idea is in that chapter. Encouraging brethren.

Not forcing their own non-essential opinions on others, but bearing with them. Being patient with them. Not condemning them because of some conviction.

The man Paul wants us to be in Romans 14 is very reasonable. So, this reasonableness that Paul wants evident in our life, this gentleness, where we have to have humility to have it, we're looking for the interest of others, we're willing to yield, it's absolutely concern for the truth. I was thinking about this morning and Proverbs 18, 2 came to my mind.

It says, a fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only expressing his own opinion. And you've seen it. There's people that are unreasonable where all they want to express is their own opinion.

They want to force that upon you. They don't want to understand. They don't want to be reasonable.

You think about defending the truth. Should I be gentle when I defend the truth? 1 Peter 3.15, this is one of the places it's used. He says, being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect.

That's our word. Having a good conscience, so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. One of my criticisms of a lot of the open air preaching that goes on in our country today is they don't do it with gentleness.

They don't have the respect when they're giving an answer. They're not reasonable. Are a lot of the people who are cussing out the open air preachers unreasonable? Yes.

A lot of them are like irrational animals. And that's all the more reason for us to show gentleness in that context so that it shuts their mouths. So they'd be put to shame when they revile us.

So what is Paul wanting to be known? He wants it to be known that we are a Spirit-empowered people because as Galatians says, restore them with the spirit of gentleness, you who are what? Spiritual. You have to have the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul already said in Philippians 1, I will come to you with the help of the Spirit.

Or I will do these things with the help of the Spirit. So we have to be a Spirit-empowered people who have control over our passions while in tough relational situations and we're able to hold the other person's interest as more significant than our own. We have the humility where we're able to yield to the other person, even if we disagree with them.

We're able to be kind and patient towards them with a forbearing spirit that does not quickly cut them off. Yet, we're unwilling to compromise on the essentials of the truth. You know, you have to have humility and discernment to rightly categorize what is essential.

There are some people who put things in the essentials of the faith which are not essentials. And then they don't have the humility to recognize they're being proud and saying this is an essential. And then they become the very person who's unreasonable.

And then they charge everyone else with being unreasonable. Unable to reason. And we outwardly see this inner consideration in our heart for the other person.

We outwardly see them conduct themselves in a manner that is gentle, kind, and patient. Asahel Nettleton, who God used greatly in the revival in the 1800's, he said this, the eminently humble Christian is clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behavior. And with a soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and deportment, humility has no such thing as roughness or contempt or fierceness or bitterness.

In its nature, which things are marks of spiritual pride. Is Paul calling us to a personality change in these verses? He's not. You see, gentleness, reasonableness, it's not change your personality.

It's something empowered by the Holy Spirit. You know, people often want to make excuses. I'm not a gentle person.

Now, that may be true, but it's not personality. Gentleness, reasonableness, it deals with the heart. We could basically say, I'm not a person who likes to hold others' interests more significant than myself, and I'm unkind, and I'm all these things.

That's not personality. That's a sin issue. There are sinful aspects that manifest through our personality that need to be sanctified.

Where we need to be made more like Jesus Christ. And especially the men here. You don't want to excuse this away and say I don't need this to be evident in my life.

Paul doesn't exclude that. Did he just say it after two women had an issue? Yes. But this is for all.

Let your... I believe it points to everyone. Not just them two. Not just true companion.

Whether true companion was Lydia or someone else. A male or a female. No matter what you say your personality is, or what type of family you came from, all of us are commanded to let this spirit of gentleness be made known to all.

And being reformed as we are in doctrine, we could easily become puffed up in pride. We could have all these truths. We could have our Calvinism and lack and be deficient in this area.

Even recently, one of the questions Tim dealt with asked Pastor Tim. One of the guys that just went to a debate or something like that. And he was saying, shouldn't Calvinists have more kindness, more gentleness? Something along that nature.

Well, that guy got that perspective because I think that is something that is an Achilles' heel, a weakness in our generation. And Paul says it. Knowledge puffs up.

We need more love. This reasonableness, gentleness. It's love motivated.

It's looking for the interest of others. We need more of the Holy Spirit's power then. If we're going to have this, I don't wake up in the morning and say, I need to be more reasonable and gentle today.

No, I need more of the Holy Spirit's power. I need to pray Luke 11 and 13. I need to behold the face of Jesus Christ and see His patience with the woman caught in adultery.

See His gentleness with Peter when Peter denies Him and how He's praying for him. I need to see these things and be changed from one degree to the next. I need to be doing as Paul just said in v. 4, rejoicing in the Lord.

Have you ever seen a person, usually the people who are not gentle, they were not rejoicing in the Lord that day. As I was studying this, I even thought, the days where I am lacking in my joy in the Lord and I'm focused on my performance in me, those are the days I'm impatient, I'm not gentle, I'm not reasonable, at least manifest itself more than on the days where I'm rejoicing in the Lord always. Someone said the joyless person can't be a gentle person in regards to this text, and that's true.

They may have an apparent gentleness, but it could be false. It's not true gentleness. It's not truly looking for the interest of others.

It's not according to truth. So for us to have this, we have to have Christ as our source of joy. We have to have joy in Him.

And then we're not going to be selfish, harsh. We're going to imitate our Savior. We're going to have that aroma of Christ coming forth from us.

So Paul, why? Why say let reasonableness, gentleness be made known to everyone? Why? Why say that? Why not strong preaching? Why not our great zeal? Why? Again, first, it's important for the internal workings of believers in the church. We can assume it being manifested would have resolved the conflict above. That's my assumption.

He mentions these things right near each other. And they clearly lack in something, no doubt humility. No doubt a yielding spirit, which is part of this word reasonableness.

You're able to yield to the other person. Their idea. You're open to reason with them.

So, why have this? It promotes unity, which promotes a gospel advance. You throw people on the missions field who don't have a gentle reasonableness and you know what happens? They end up biting and devouring one another, problems, and the team disbands. They can't get along together.

You throw people who disagree on different things, on the non-essentials, but they have humility, they're able to yield to one another. Guess what happens? They stick together for 30 years. And they don't

disband.

Another reason why Paul wants this is our testimony to the lost world. Think of how radical this command was for those at Philippi in the Roman era. Do you think the Romans were running around being gentle? Didn't they put people on stakes and burn them? Do you think the Roman society was a society of people who were looking out for the interest of others? Or was it a society of people insisting on their own ways? Well, it was a society of lost people like ours is today, and therefore that means a bunch of people insisting on their own ways.

So I think part of Paul giving this for in the church, but for testimony of shining as a light to the outside world, showing them were true. Again, Asahel Nettleton was greatly used of God in a revival over 150-200 years ago. Look what he said.

He said, we may talk about the best means of doing good, but after all, the greatest difficulty lies in doing it with a proper spirit. Speaking the truth in love and meekness and instructing those that oppose themselves with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. He says this, I have known anxious sinners drop the subject of religion in consequence of a preacher addressing them in an angry tone.

Mankind, it is true, will be sure to find fault with everything that awakens their fears. But we should endeavor so to conduct as to keep their consciences on our side in spite of all their opposition. Take care and not give them a just cause to complain.

Now that's coming from a man who saw thousands of genuine converts. That's coming from a man, that statement has the fragrance of the Scripture. Not his own ideas, but these verses even we've been looking at.

And he says, sure, are people going to find fault? Yes. Are people going to say we're harsh when we're not? Absolutely. Are people going to falsely accuse us? Yes.

But, we no doubt have to constantly be refining ourselves. Who here wouldn't acknowledge they need more reasonableness, more gentleness? I hope we would all line up and say I need more of that. More humility.

More of a willingness to yield and not force my own thing. More willingness to not be harsh. Pastor Mike Riccardi, who's one of the co-pastors of John MacArthur, he said this, when homosexuals see people who stand immovable upon their convictions on the one hand, but on the other hand, respond to trials and joy and thanksgiving, who when they are reviled, don't revile in return, who turn the other cheek and even repay evil with good, when they see these people, and he's saying this in regard to this verse, he says they have no idea what to do with them.

And that's part of what Paul's wanting from us. Be so gentle, so reasonable, so willing to yield, so kind, so concerned with the other person's interests, even while you stand firm on the truth unwavering, that that Christ-like aroma will even make these homosexuals who you tell at one hand that they're going to perish in hell, unless they repent, in the end, they don't have any idea what to do with you. Like Rosaria Butterfield, who was converted.

She was a lesbian teacher at a college and some Presbyterian pastor invited her over to the home to have dinner with his family. And she saw such gentleness from him she never saw before. And in the end, she got one to Christ.

And you know what? Maybe we need a little motivation to live this out. Maybe we need a little motivation for this to be more real in our lives. And Paul says right after he states this, he says, the Lord is at hand.

Now, commentators say this phrase has no formal connection with v. 5 or 6. The implication is it stands by itself and can be applied and joined to both charges of reasonableness and prayer. Meaning, rejoicing the Lord because the Lord is at hand. Resolve this conflict with one another because the Lord is at hand.

Or show gentleness towards everyone because the Lord is at hand. Meaning, people say you could apply that right there. Clearly, it's a truth that applies overall, so what does it mean? If this is connected, if this is going to motivate me, what is Paul talking about? It could mean two things at least.

It could be a reference to the Lord's physical nearness. Meaning, the Lord is at hand like a parent being in the other room. When the child knows their mom is right there in the other room, they'll maybe act a little different.

Or, Christian, if you know God, sees you and is right next to you right now, the Lord is near in that sense, does that make a difference? Absolutely. It makes a difference in how we behave. Kind of like the servant who wouldn't forgive.

It's like I forgave you so much and you wouldn't go forgive this person. The Lord could say to us, look how gentle and patient I was with you and reasonable. And I didn't cut your life off.

And yet, look how harsh and critical you are with this person. How could we be this way if the Lord is right there? Or, Paul could mean this. It could refer to the Lord as at hand in regards to the second coming and the Lord being near as in time.

Like my parents are coming home soon. That affects one's behavior. If my parents are coming home in two years, throw a party at the house or something.

If my parents are coming home any minute, what does the good servant do? He cleans the house. And Paul's already talked about using similar language in this letter. Maybe it's referring to that.

Whether it's referring to the Lord being near, like next to me, or the Lord being near as in His second coming is coming soon, this is going to affect us having this quality. Gordon Fee on this text, he said this, our judgment of others is tempered by the fact that God will need to judge us. If you know that you're about to face the judgment, the Lord is near and about to come back, boy, that really creates a gentleness in your heart, a reasonableness to that person.

It kind of slows you down. It makes us conscious, Fee says, of our own failures and limitations. And limitations tends to make us more patient with others who may fall short.

You see, it just creates a patience in your heart. So, there's a motive. There's a reason.

There's a help. It's not just I need more of the Holy Spirit and more of Christ. I need to meditate on the fact that the Lord is near.

Whether it's His presence being near which is true nonetheless, or whether it's the Lord being near as far as His coming back and the judgment. That's going to help me as I think about that. It'll help me be patient.

It'll help me be more conscious of my own failures. This text shows us it matters what we're known for. Do you even want to be known for gentleness? Do you want to be known to be a reasonable person? Do you want to be known as a person who yields to others? Do you want to be known as a person who puts the other person's interest above their own? I want that.

Because the people I know who manifest that the most, you love being around them. Because they're so loving to you, you feel rebuked. You're treating me too nice.

I don't deserve that. Well, that's how Christ has treated us. Again, they're saying we don't want to be known for.

We don't want to be known as a hypercritical, harsh church. Not saying we are. But if that ever happens, it's because of pride, self-interest, us demanding our own rights.

Again, Nettleton wrote in 1826 to a student at seminary, and he said this, it is very important to a young preacher that he avoid a sincerious spirit. That is, someone who's overly critical and rebuking constantly. And he said that he always speak kindly to those who are held in reputation among Christians.

Again, I'm saying that, but Paul on the other hand says rebuke them sharply that they may be sounding the faith. So you don't want to take this and say, well, sharp rebuking. No.

But look, I'll speak for myself, my own issue is not I need to rebuke more sharply. My own issue is I need to have a greater fragrance of the gentleness and reasonableness and humility and yielding spirit of Jesus Christ. Nettleton said a denouncing spirit is that which real Christians have no fellowship and are bound to shun.

And we know there are cults in Texas who when you think of them, you think, unreasonable. There are people in those groups I've had conversations with, they don't even let you talk. They just blast you and you give reasonable arguments.

They don't even hear it. They have no humility to acknowledge you. So, your question is, if you're married, are you gentle and reasonable in your marriage? If you're not, you're not going to be like that with others.

If you argue and are harsh with your wife, you're not going to be gentle around the lost world. Peter says, live with your wife in an understanding way. Let your prayers not be hindered.

Be reasonable. Don't demand your rights. What about parents? The children? Parents, do you exasperate your children by pressing on them that which is constantly unreasonable? I remember a mother, her kids were I think 16 or 17, and it dawned on her in her parenting, she always would be critical of everything her kids did because she wanted them to be perfect.

So they would bring a drawing, and rather than commending them, she would point out what should be changed in the drawing to make it perfect. And it totally discouraged the kids. It exasperated them.

Everything they did was rebuked. Maybe rebuked isn't the best word, but they were critical. They exasperated.

They provoked them. I want to read an example of how not to have your reasonableness be made known to all. This is a bad example in regards to John Darby.

This is a good example of Anthony North Groves who we looked at months ago. Page 279 in Father of Faith Missions. It records Dr. Edward Cronin.

He served with Groves in Baghdad. And then eventually he went back and was in the church with Darby. And Darby influenced him.

And Groves got a letter from Cronin out of the blue from his longtime friend and co-laborer, and Cronin said, you're partaking in other men's sins. You're no longer welcome in my home. 2 John 10 applies to you.

If I let you in my home, I'm taking part in your wicked works. What serious sin did Groves do? That's some pretty serious, right? I mean, that's some strong words. Well, Groves, it appears all he did was he kept fellowship with George Mueller.

That was it. And William Craig, whom John Darby had split with. But, the author says this, Darby's harsh attitude squashed any finer feelings of Dr. Cronin that he might have had towards Groves.

It came completely out of the blue. It was a great shock to Groves. Groves said this, there wasn't one line or one word preceded this communication, either of warning or inquiring of me.

The letter of rejection concluded an unbroken intimacy and fellowship of 25 years. Just like that. Was that reasonable? Was he willing to yield, to talk, to be reasonable, to be gentle with Groves? No.

And the author's saying John Darby's what influenced him to the negative. And it says this, Groves, he left it with the Lord. 26 years later after Groves died.

He's been dead 26 years. In 1897, Cronin was 78 years old. Upon visiting the town and sharing the Lord's Supper with a group of Christians that weren't known to him that they were a group that Darby had displeasure, all he went was went to the church he had the Lord's Supper with them.

Like someone coming here today. And then one of their pastors really doesn't like us. And he finds out that person came to us today.

Right? And Darby heard of it. And you know what he did? Did he go talk to Cronin? Hey, brother, why'd you go to that church? Did you know that we have these problems with that church? Nope. Darby did this.

He wrote a public letter saying Dr. Cronin has been clandestine, untruthful, dishonest, and profane. And it led many to suspect Cronin of some wickedness whose details were not known to them. And it ended a friendship between Cronin and Darby that had extended for more than 50 years.

And it resulted in him being excommunicated out of the church. What was his crime? Friends, he just had the Lord's Supper at another church that he did not know that Darby disliked. And Darby did not talk to him.

History records. And boom, 50 years gone. Is that reasonableness? Is that gentleness? Is that humility? Is that a yielding spirit? No.

Incredibly unreasonable. Cronin was so profoundly affected, his son wrote years later that his own mother at that time, being cut off from the church she had labored with for over half a century, it crushed his mother's heart and hastened her death. Now, Groves had died over 20 years earlier.

But shortly before Cronin's death, he visited with Groves' son Edward and Cronin said this, his feelings towards Groves have entirely changed. And Edward said, Cronin sat there weeping like a child as he recalled his earlier association with my father. Why? Because Anthony Norris Groves was a man living under the law of Christ.

He was imitating Christ. Christ was his standard. It gave him a gentleness, a reasonableness, a patience.

He was not quick to throw the first stone. He was able to bear up with people and their weaknesses. And in the end, Cronin loved him.

For Darby, the author Dan records this, shortly before John Darby's death at the age of 81, he saw half of his followers abandon his camp for another. It was a devastating realization. He had survived precisely to the tragic moment, just long enough to see his work go to pieces in his hands by his own act.

Look, I can stand here and judge John Darby, but from history and the books I've read, when I think of him, I don't think of a man whose gentleness and reasonableness was evident to all. And look at the end, what his work became. So my fear is that maybe this reasonableness, this yielding spirit, this gentleness, we have to have humility for it to be so.

My fear is it might not be on some of our list near the top. And even in Paul's day, that was so. Because what did Paul say again in Titus 3? He said, remind them to be gentle.

Why do you think they needed a reminder? To be gentle. The same word. To be reasonable.

To have a yielding spirit. Because they were lacking in that. That happened 2,000 years ago.

David Brainerd, the famous missionary. Zealous. You love his diary.

And it dawned on me, in his diary, he said this in February 10, 1725. He was a zealous man, right? But look what he said here. A virtue which I need in a higher degree to give luster and beauty to my behavior is gentleness.

If I had more of an air of gentleness, oh, I should be much returned to full health. David Brainerd. He saw it.

It was deficient in his life. Nettleton said this, some preachers are in great danger of condemning the meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ. Despising it.

Under the names of a carnal policy or hypocritical charm of manner. What does he mean by that? He's saying some look at being gentle as compromise. And fleshly, of trying to charm someone rather than being strong with them.

You know, you're kind of sitting there and you're thinking, say it as it is. Is there a time to say it as it is? You fool! Rebuke them in the presence of all there is. But there's a time that yielding, gentle spirit, boy, it wins the day.

You restore them with that spirit of gentleness. You defend the faith with gentleness and respect. It's not something that we should condemn.

It's not something that should be looked down upon. It's something that we need more of in our own hearts for the unity of the church and for our testimony to the onlooking world. Is gentleness and reasonableness readily evident in your life to everyone? If you had a survey, if I had a survey done on me, what would the results show? Would I have this humility that holds others' interests as more significant than my own? Do I have a love that abounds more and more? Am I able to yield to others' thoughts, opinions? Do I cut them off? The only way I'll have the right balance is if I stand on the truth, if I stand on the Bible.

So, the message is more towards gentleness and reasonableness. You guys realize there's a place to take a firm stand. The Bible does not condemn that.

But I think the weakness in our generation is what Paul is calling this church to have evident to everyone there. So, brethren, I hope that our reasonableness, our gentleness, our yielding spirit, our humility, which you need all of those things to have this quality. I hope it will be evident to everyone in the church, in our relationships, and out there in the world, that when San Antonio thinks of us, that's one of the things that comes to the top of their list in regards to us.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank You for Your patience with us. Lord, forgive us for the times in pride we insist on our own way, the times we're harsh, not gentle, not humble, not manifesting a reasonableness in our minds.

Lord, keep us balanced. Lord, we stand here today on the truth and we don't want to compromise on the Gospel, but Lord, work in us more of a Romans 14 type of love that we see. Lord, help us.

Lord, work this quality in us. Lord, we want to be a clear sign to that lost and dying world of their destruction, but of our salvation and that from God. And Lord, You said You're working in us to will and to work for Your good pleasure.

Lord, wouldn't it please You? Wouldn't it please You to work this more in all of our hearts? A greater gentleness. A greater yieldedness. Lord, strip us of pride.

Work in us to will and to work for Your good pleasure. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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