

### **Prayer of the Week:**

*Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Proper Twenty-five)*

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.*

*We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.*



### **Gentleness**

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

October 25th

### **Love of Strength**

We live in a culture that values strength.

More often than not, however, the strength value is expressed as “power-over” - that to be stronger than someone you must demonstrate you can over-power them.

In a culture that values this kind of strength, gentleness is a bad word, and has come to be synonymous with “weak.”

Yet, the scriptures list gentleness as one of the fruit of the Spirit.

### **Paul’s Ministry In Thessalonica**

In our text, the Apostle Paul is describing his ministry to the church in Thessalonica. And we hear signs of strength.

- “we proclaimed the Gospel in the face of strong opposition,”
- “we are not trying to please people, but God,”
- “we are not looking for praise from people...”

Then Paul surprises us. He describes his ministry as a nursing mother who cares for her children. He saw where people were at spiritually and came alongside of them, cared for them, imparted life to them,

and nurtured them into maturity, just like a good mother does.

That is the point - gentleness (hospitality, understanding) is not the opposite of strength; it is evidence of strength.

### **Our Call To Gentleness**

In a world of violent, “power-over” strength, Christians have an opportunity to display the strength of gentleness and servanthood (“power-under”).

Gentleness is inner strength that is so strong, you are freed from having to display it “over” people.

Gentleness is the ability to stand up to evil by way of service to the vulnerable.

Gentleness is not weakness, gentleness is an entirely different kind of strength.

- Jesus in front of Pilate. He did not argue.
- Jesus on the cross. He offered forgiveness.

Perhaps the best way to resist evil these days is to speak up for and advocate for groups that are being harmed by people in power.

*“There is nothing so strong as gentleness and nothing so gentle as real strength.” –St. Jerome*

### **42 Film**

In one of the most powerful scenes of the film, 42, baseball executive Branch Rickey is talking to Jackie Robinson about the difficulties he’ll face playing in a white baseball league. He intentionally gets Jackie upset as he paints different scenarios of facing persecution on and off the field.

JACKIE:

Do you want a ballplayer who doesn't have the guts to fight back? Is that what you want?

RICKEY:

*I want one who has the guts not to fight back!* There are people who will not like this. They will do anything to get you to react. If you echo a curse with a curse, they will only hear yours. Follow a blow with a blow and they will say a Negro lost his temper; that the Negro does not belong. Your enemy will be out in force, but you can not meet him on his own low ground.

We win with hitting, running and fielding, nothing else. We win if the world is convinced of two things: that you are a fine gentleman and a great ballplayer. *Like our Savior, you must have the guts to turn the other cheek.*

Can you do it?

JACKIE:

Mr. Rickey, you give me a uniform, you give me a number on my back, and I'll give you the guts.