



# WEEKLY SERMON

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**Sunday** February 5, 2023

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**Message:** The Family of God - #5

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**Text:** Ephesians 4:1-3

In Galatians 6:9 we read, **“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”** This devotional cover letter is being written both as an encouragement and a challenge to God’s people to keep on keeping on.

Now in Acts 5:42 we read, **“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”** When you look at that crowd of folks who constituted the first-century Christians, you may be struck, as I am, by recognition of the fact that they just could not be stopped. Consider these early Christians:

1. When leaders failed, as did Simon Peter, they did not collapse in disappointment and disillusionment.
2. When professing Christians among them turned out not to be Christians at all, as did Simon Magus (Acts 8), they did not leave the church in anger and disgust.
3. When accusations misrepresented them, as happened repeatedly (Acts 2:11-13), they did not leave their post of duty.
4. When their authority was called into question, as it was (Acts 4:6, 7), they did not give over to their detractors!
5. When the government opposed them harshly and unmercifully, as happened often (Acts 5:17, 18; 6:12, 13), they rejoiced that they were **"counted worthy to suffer"** for Christ (Acts 5:41).
6. When one of their star players, Stephen, was brutally murdered (Acts 7), they grieved (Acts 8:2), but they did not quit.
7. When they were persecuted (Acts 8:1), driven from their jobs and homes and forced to flee to other cities, they kept on giving strong witness, **"preaching the word"** (Acts 8:4).

Early Christians were an amazing people, because obviously, the amazing grace of God was fully operative in them. Consequently, they kept on the right message and at their God-given task. Despite disappointment, disillusionment, despair, defeat, disrepute, dysfunction and other such Devil-induced dilemmas, these good men could not be silenced. They stood their ground! They withstood every assault! They refused intimidation! They kept their heart and their mission.

In II Timothy 2:3 we read, **“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”** The Christian life is often compared in Scripture to warfare, the struggle of sin against righteousness and of the flesh versus the spirit. Each follower of Christ is called to be a "good" soldier. Perhaps the hymn text that most reminds us of this verse is “Onward Christian Soldiers.” It was written by Sabine Baring-Gould, a Church of England minister.

Onward, Christian soldiers marching as to war,  
with the cross of Jesus going on before!  
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;  
forward into battle see His banner go!

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God;  
brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.  
We are not divided, all one body we –  
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

Onward, then, ye people, join our happy throng;  
blend with ours your voices in the triumph song.  
Glory, laud and honor unto Christ the King –  
This thru countless ages men and angels sing.

Refrain: Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,  
with the cross of Jesus going on before!

"Daily" they were on the job. They just simply could not be stopped. "They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Now how about us? Do we not have some twenty-first-century servants of God who will take heart from their New Testament forefathers? I believe we do! I do hope you will be one of the "unstoppable" in these critical days!

In *His* Amazing Grace,  
**Pastor David Miklas**

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**In our world it appears that everything is different,  
but nothing with God has changed.**

Sometimes we feel anger at the rapidity of change. Sometimes we just wring our hands and say – truthfully – that it can't be long until the Lord returns. We feel like Job who bemoaned in Job 10:17, "Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me." But don't despair. The person that matters most has not changed.

In the words of the second stanza of the hymn "Abide with Me" reads "Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou who changest not, abide with me." That prayer is based on sound theology found in Malachi 3:6 where we read, "For I am the LORD, I change not..." His strength doesn't waver. His love for us never lessens. His purposes don't falter. God is in control, and the One who doesn't change is more than sufficient to care for us amid the things that do change. To the world, it's here today and gone tomorrow; for the believer, it's Jesus "yesterday, and today, and forever." So when everything seems to be different, remember that nothing with God has changed.

# How to Bear the Irritating Qualities of Those in the Family of God

In Romans 16:17, we read, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause **DIVISIONS and OFFENSES** contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **AVOID** them." Today, the fundamental church has become its own little community. We operate in a family-like atmosphere in many different programs and activities. Therefore, being closely associated we will have more opportunity to **IRRITATE** each other.

This means that there are more chances for **DISAGREEMENTS, IRRITATIONS and even STRIFE**. Because the responsibilities of our church members and workers are interwoven, we are going to find **HABITS and QUALITIES** in other people that are **IRRITATING**.

There may be people who have qualities that will **IRRITATE** me at times, and no doubt I may have some qualities or characteristics that may **IRRITATE** you.

**Now, in order to keep the PEACE we must find ways to prevent these IRRITATIONS.**

In our last message on "**Treating One Another in the Family of God**," we looked at the Apostle Paul's admonition found in Galatians 6:1-5,

**"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (2) Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. (3) For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. (4) But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. (5) For every man shall bear his own burden."**

We studied the phrase that instructed us to "**BEAR ONE ANOTHERS BURDENS**."

In this message we turn to Ephesians 4:1-3 where we read,

**"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, (2) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love; (3) Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."**

Here we discover an instruction that sounds very similar to the one from our last message but the meaning is quite different. Paul in this passage instructs us to "**BEAR WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE**."

In **Galatians**, Paul was telling us to help "**carry the burden, to restore**" a believer who has been tripped up in a problem with sin.

In **Ephesians**, Paul is instructing us, "**to be tolerant towards other Christians**." The words convey the idea of "**to patiently endure their IDIOSYNCRASIES**."

Now go with me to one more passage found in Colossians 3:12-13 where we read,

**"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."**

Again please notice in verse 12 the phrase "**forbearing one another**."

If we as a church family are going to "**endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**," as we read in Ephesians 4:3, **WE MUST POSSESS THE NECESSARY CHRISTIAN GRACES**. In this message from Colossians 3:12-13 and Ephesians 4:2-3 let me call your attention to **Six Graces** that will help minimize friction within the family of

God.

**First, The Grace of Lowliness:** This unique Greek word for “Lowliness” is found in Ephesians 4:2 and in Philippians 2:3 where we read, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in **LOWLINESS** of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.” The word “**LOWLINESS**” conveys the act of “**HUMILITY.**”

Someone has said, “**Humility is that grace that when you know you have it, you have lost it!**” Humility means putting **CHRIST FIRST, OTHERS SECOND, and SELF LAST.** Here is a wonderful way to spell **JOY**: **J** stands for **JESUS**, **O** stands for **OTHERS** and **Y**, last of all, stands for **YOU.**

**HUMILITY** makes us conscious of our true position before the Lord and enables us to esteem others **BETTER** than ourselves. It is the opposite of arrogance and conceit. It is a picture of the “**GRACE OF LOWLINESS.**”

**Second, The Grace of Meekness:** Meekness is another unique Greek word used only twelve times in the New Testament. The word conveys the idea of having a spirit that never takes offense. Meekness is not weakness. It is power under control. We observed this word in our last message from Galatians 6:1, “**Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of MEEKNESS...**” This characteristic is also one of the fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23, “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, MEEKNESS, temperance...**”

**Moses** we are told in Numbers 12:3, was “**very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.**” Moses was a great leader with a strong temper who exercised tremendous power, but it was power under control.

**Jesus Christ** one day drove the moneychangers from the temple, all the while shouting, “**My house shall be called of all nations a House of PRAYER.**” That is found in Mark 11:17, yet in Matthew 11:29 we read that He was “**meek and lowly in heart.**” Jesus had great power, but it was power under control.

**THE GRACE OF MEEKNESS** is the **ATTRIBUTE** that submits to God's dealings without **REBELLION** and to man's unkindness without **RETALIATION.**

**Third, The Grace of Long-suffering:** Again in Ephesians 4:2 we have the word “**Longsuffering.**” This word can be translated by another word we may better understand, the word “**Patience.**” In the original language of the New Testament there are two different words for “**Patience.**”

The **FIRST** word means **PATIENCE** under circumstances. It is the Greek word “**Hupomeno**” meaning “**TO STAY UNDER.**” It is the ability to endure discomfort without fighting back. It conveys a picture of us getting under the pressure brought by circumstances and standing fast.

It's another word for **DON'T QUIT.**  
It's another word for **ENDURANCE.**  
It's another word for being **STEADFAST.**

The text is saying, “**BE PATIENT when people abuse you, DON'T RETALIATE.**” Begin to “**LOOK UP**” when everything seems to be dark and desperately hopeless. Why? Because **God is still in CONTROL!**

Perhaps you are asking, “Pastor, don't you realize there are many circumstances and people that try our patience, and irritations that cause us to grit our teeth and lose our cool?” There are:

Traffic jams and long lines when we are in a hurry.  
Phone call interruptions when we are most busy.  
Incompetent workers when we count on them the most.  
Inconsiderate neighbors and late mail deliveries.  
Cars with empty gas tanks when we have no time to fill them.  
Pressures from upper management to meet unrealistic deadlines, and finally,  
What about the persecution we sometimes experience from unsaved relatives and family members who reject our faith?

All of us experience frustrating moments when we find it difficult to cope with **pressures and problems**, the two "Ps" that cause us to "**Pop Our Cork**" and really explode. Now if you are a candidate for the "**Panic Palace**," this Greek word "**Hupomeno**" literally means "**ENDURANCE**." Keep standing while everything else is falling.

The **SECOND** word for **PATIENCE** in the New Testament is the Greek word "**Makrothumia**." This is better translated by our English word "**Long-suffering**." This word means to "**calm down, lengthen your temper, do not lose it, and don't swear out in revenge**." This word for patience has to do with **PEOPLE**.

One little girl expressed it this way as she stomped her way into the house after school and said, "**People, people, people, they are my problem, if it weren't for people I would have no problem**." After a while her mother came to her door and asked if she wanted to talk. Where upon the little girl shouted out, "**No, you are people, too!**"

This word for patience is telling us to develop long-suffering toward people in spite of what they may do to us. Paul emphasizes it this way in I Thessalonians 5:14 "**...encourage the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient (long-suffering) toward all men**."

"Oh, but Pastor, you do not know how \_\_\_\_\_ is getting to me, and I would love to \_\_\_\_\_." **STOP!** Patience here requires the act of endurance in spite of people.

And while you are thinking of your ability to endure, we had better take note that the Greek word "**Makrothumia**" is used as an attribute of God. The Bible tells us that God is Long-suffering.

II Peter 3:9 reads, "**The Lord is not slack concerning His promises ... but is long-suffering us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**."

Look, if God wanted to, He could easily destroy all resistance and immediately wipe out all **SIN** and **EVIL**. However, even though God hates **SIN**, He loves the **SINNER**. God hates the evil, but He still loves the evildoer for Christ's sake. So far, God is long-suffering toward the sinner. However, the Bible tells us that one day He is going to close up shop, pronounce judgment upon all the unrighteous and send them right into Hell.

Now, just as God has patience toward the unrighteous, so should we.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:43-44, "**Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, LOVE your enemies, BLESS them that curse you, DO GOOD to them that hate you, and PRAY for them who spitefully use you and persecute you**."

My friends, you know as well as I, that none of us is perfect. All of us have those little **IRRITATING** qualities that grind like sandpaper against one another. In the family setting where we live together day after day and week after week and year after year, we see one another at our best and one another at our worst. No doubt you can sit there and think of those **IRRITATING** qualities your husband has, or those your wife has, or those your children have, or even those your parents have. The same is true within the church,

where we strive to operate as members of one body in a family setting.

**We see the faults of others.  
We see the weakness of others.  
We see the idiosyncrasies of others.**

As a result of this closeness and knowledge of others, what do we often do?

**At times, we become irritated over others actions and their reactions.  
At times, we share words of criticism about them to others. We may develop a hard attitude.  
We may stop smiling. We may stop singing. We may even close our ears to the preaching,  
and then,  
We might even quit coming to church altogether, because we have let someone get to us.**

When these things happen, who is likely to be the **LOSER**? **WE ARE!** And who is the **WINNER**? You guessed it! It is the **DEVIL**, himself!

Stop for a moment and consider the next time you are **TEMPTED** to become **IMPATIENT** with someone. Then think about Jesus Christ and His attribute toward us. This was Paul's secret. The Lord's long-suffering and patience toward him marked his life and gave him unusual tolerance toward others.

In I Timothy 1:15-16 we are given a part of the Apostle Paul's testimony where he said,

**"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtain mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all LONGSUFFERING, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."**

Paul saw himself as the worst of sinners, and then experiencing God's love in **LONG-SUFFERING PATIENCE** in saving him. In turn, this caused Paul to respond to others with love and patience.

**Fourth, The Grace of Forbearing:** "Forbearing" is another Greek word used only two times in the New Testament, once in Colossians 3:13 and here in our text of Ephesians 4:2. The word means "to put up with."

**Forbearing makes allowances for the faults and failures of others.  
Forbearing makes allowances for the differences in personalities and abilities.**

"Pastor, this is a tough request." Yes, it is. But it's possible if we are under the control of the Holy Spirit, and we work at it. Let me call your attention to two enlightening discoveries:

**Number 1:** Ask what it is about you that irritates your family or others. Discover what irritates you about your family and others. Be honest, and face the facts with frank reality.

**Number 2:** Stay away from circumstances that cause this irritation. For example:

**There are some people with whom you can work, but you cannot play with them. In such cases, work together, but do not play together.**

**There are some people with whom you can socialize, but with whom you cannot work. In such cases, have a social life with them, but do not bear the yoke of work together.**

**There are some people with whom certain subjects cause strife and stress. In such cases, avoid those subjects.**

**There are some people that you can be with for a short time, but not for a long time. To be together for a while is pleasant and delightful, but after a while irritation begins. Limit**

the time spent together.

There are some people in the ministry that will irritate you for whatever reason. Maybe it is the way they handle their ministry. Maybe it is the way they sing. Maybe it is how they present themselves. Love them, pray for them, serve with them, and be gracious to them, but leave it there – forbear their faults.

**Fifth, The Grace of a Forgiving Spirit:** Please return to Colossians 3:13 where we read, “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Now turn back to Ephesians 4:31-32 where we read, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER**, even as God for Christ’s sake hath **FORGIVEN** you.”

How tragic that some Christian will irritate another, and for years that irritated Christian will carry a bitter angry grudge.

How tragic, and how out of character for us, who have been forgiven by the Lord Jesus Christ after what we in our sin did to Him, not to go out of our way to forgive someone who has irritated us.

This lack of forgiveness is a sad commentary upon today’s Christianity, upon our fundamental churches and upon our Christian homes. Unfortunately, I have witnessed unforgiving spirits repeatedly, from the time I was a little boy all the way through my many years of ministry.

Christians become offended, over seemingly insignificant things.

Christians lash out at the Pastor or another church leader.

Christians will sit in the pews as cold as icicles, because they have been irritated by someone, or over something they do not like.

Irritated Christians will stop speaking, and in some cases they will even quit serving the Lord. Eventually, those with unforgiving spirits will become bitter and quit attending that church.

Brethren when this happens, it is a victory for the DEVIL. This kind of unforgiving attitude causes great harm, not only to Christian adults, but also to the children in the church as they watch the adults’ behavior. Without **THE GRACE OF A FORGIVING SPIRIT**, we lose our testimony before the unregenerate world who needs Christ.

**Sixth, The Grace of Diligence:** Please return to Ephesians 4:3 where we again read, “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Would you notice the word “Endeavoring.” Literally it means: **YOU HAVE GOT TO WORK AT IT!** The word being in the present tense means **IT’S A NEVER-ENDING JOB**. Diligence means to work hard until completion. Since it’s “a never-ending job” we must continue to be diligent in “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Christians who really **CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST** will “keep on making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Please turn again to our opening verse found in Romans 16:17, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” This verse suggests the actions we should consider with those who cause irritations:

**1. Do not spend casual time with people who entice you to react wrongly.** There are people who cause you to react with bitterness, a quick temper, and yield to temptation. Be nice to these people, work with them if you must, but do not spend casual time with them.

**2. Spread the word that you do not participate in criticism.** Let it be known that you will not participate in character assassination or idle gossip.

**3. Do not live in unplanned situations.** Idle time is one of the great causes for unnecessary and unwise reactions. Just sitting around and talking with nothing planned amplifies differences and often leads to arguments, fusses and reactionary conversation.

What we have just studied is an amplification of what our Lord taught us in Matthew 7:12 concerning "**The GOLDEN RULE**" which says, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even to them..." Jesus is saying, "Put yourself in the place of another, and then treat him as you would like for him to treat you under the same circumstances."

The only possible way to live such a rule (and this should be the code of every believer) would be to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength.

The WORLD tells us to "treat your fellowman as he has treated you. Return kindness for kindness, revenge for injury."

JESUS says, "Treat your fellowman as you would want to be treated," FORGIVE and FORBEAR.

In our church, may our PRAYER be, "Teach Me, O Lord, this simple and beautiful precept of LOVE. Write it upon my heart and help me to live it out in full in my DAILY life as I live like thee before others."

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If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon, "**How to Bear the Irritating Qualities of Those in the Family of God**," then right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."

Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: "I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation."

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior let me know? Please send an e-mail to, pdmikBBM@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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