

WORSHIP @ HOME



WHAT DOES YOUR SPRING WARDROBE LOOK LIKE?



Preparing for worship:

Christian meditation music <http://www.viewpure.com/g51ExyTuZbM?start=0&end=0>

Take a few moments to be still.

The Greeting:

ALL: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN'. Our tradition is to cross ourselves as this is said.

Opening prayer and lighting the candle:

O God, as light comes from this candle,
 May the blessing of Jesus Christ come to us,
 Warming our hearts and brightening our way.
 May Christ our Saviour
 Bring life into the darkness of this world,
Amen.

Bible reading:

A reading from Philippians Chapter 4: 5-7

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

A message:**Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.**

Three years ago to this day, my family went to collect a puppy, now called Milo and one of the family! Furry family members are a great way of teaching responsibility, gentleness and caring. They also provide comfort, soften thoughts and soften hearts. This image, this warm and special moment between a puppy and a young child, helps me to remember what it means to be clothed in gentleness.

Gentleness is defined in the dictionary as “the quality of being kind, tender, or mild-mannered.” True gentleness involves showing humility and thankfulness towards God, as well as polite, restrained and compassionate behaviour towards everyone else. If we think about gentleness in terms of its opposites, we find that it is countered by a desire for revenge, a sense of self-importance, or the expression of anger.

Gentleness is a gift of the Spirit, but as a trait it is produced when a softened heart abides in Jesus. It may be a gift, but true gentleness also demands something on our part: intention. By this, I mean being intentionally kind, compassionate, and humble towards others, especially when they are facing struggle or difficulty.

Like many other garments in our spiritual wardrobe, kindness is inseparable from all the other traits we have been discussing. Jesus himself connects gentleness to humility in Matthew 11:29, when He says: “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.” Gentleness can also be translated as meekness, which should definitely not be confused for weakness. Instead, meekness is the quality of having controlled strength. As Paul tells the Corinthians: “I myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ – I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent” (2 Corinthians 10:1). He instructs us in the kind of attitude we must adopt when we interact with others – an attitude that is in tune with the Spirit and informed by the teachings of Jesus and His disciples.

It is easy to be gentle when we are around those who were care for, and who care about us in return. But to do the same for strangers, or people who hurt us? This is where gentleness is often confused with weakness. We fear appearing weak, fragile, or uncertain to others, and in so doing forget that maintaining a gentle attitude is a better sign of strength. We fear their judgment if we become overcome with emotion, when we should recognise that our ability to be moved, to identify with the suffering of others, and to want to help them, make us better. The kind of gentleness God calls us to go beyond what we are, to be moved, and to be ready and willing to accept the Spirit into our lives.

Gentleness is the fruit of the Spirit that demands most from us. It requires humility and sacrifice, patience and compassion – qualities that we might feel that we lack (even on our best days). But God shows us the way. His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Our world may be a harsh place, but we soften it when we follow His teachings and work for His kingdom. This Whit Sunday (31st May) remember to celebrate the Holy Spirit and God giving wisdom to people.

A time for reflection:

How will you dress up in gentleness?

Walk in God’s peace. Trust in the power of God’s love and gentle words of truth.

Closing prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Help us serve your kingdom with intention, opening ourselves up to the Spirit and all of its gifts, but especially to gentleness. Help us to be gentle and help other people feel warm and special. May we know that the greatest and most important plans can come to fruition when they are carried out with gentleness.

ALL: Amen.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us, now and evermore. Amen.