

**Jesus Is . . . | Week 2 - Jesus is Gentle****Message Big Idea**

Jesus is gentle. In Jesus, we find grace and new beginnings.

**Scripture**

Matthew 11:29, John 8:2-11, Hebrews 4:14-16

**Opening Questions**

1. Have you been able to BLESS anyone this week? Is there someone you could BLESS this next week?
2. What are you looking forward to in the next few months of life?

**Bible Discussion**

3. Read Matthew 11:28-30. The passage says Jesus is gentle. What do you think it means that Jesus is gentle in light of these verses?
4. Read John 7:53 – 8:11. What do you notice in these passages? What questions does it raise for you?
5. How do you see Jesus being gentle in this story? What other qualities do you see that go hand in hand with his gentleness?

**Life Application**

6. Read John 3:16-17. Jesus didn't come to condemn the world but to restore it. Does that statement surprise you? Why or why not?
7. We might not use the word condemnation every day, but we regularly face judgment, criticism, and evaluation from others and even ourselves. Where do you experience criticism, judgment, or condemnation in your everyday life?
8. What would it look like for our small group to be gentle with one another and others?
9. If Jesus were to write you a love letter, what do you think it would say? This week, let's reflect on the Matthew and John passages and write out what we think Jesus might say to us. Next week, we'll share any insights we've gained.

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**Points to Keep In Mind**

1. It is impossible to know what Jesus wrote in the dirt. For some interpreters, Jesus was simply drawing to give himself added time. Others think he may have been writing a list of sins that the men in the crowd had committed or a list of the women they'd committed sins with. The traditional view is that Jesus may have written words from the prophet Jeremiah about those "who have forsaken the Lord having their names are written in the dust" (Jeremiah 17:13).
2. The following article might be helpful guide for a discussion on gentleness: "Gentle" or "gentleness" appears over twenty times in English translations of the Bible. In Proverbs we find two striking images of gentleness in its disarming power: "A gentle tongue can break a bone" (Prov 25:15 NIV) and "a gentle answer turns away wrath" (Prov 15:1 NIV).

"Paul, the formerly zealous persecutor of the church, recognizes that gentleness does not come naturally for many. He explicitly lists gentleness as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23), a virtue that is planted and flourishes where God dwells by his Spirit. It is to be "put on" with other Christian virtues such as compassion, lowliness and patience (Col 3:12). Gentleness is Paul's preferred means of dealing with the church at Corinth: "What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of Gentleness?" (1 Cor 4:21). In speaking of his ministry among the Thessalonians, Paul's gentleness takes on maternal imagery: "like a nurse taking care of her children" (1 Thess 2:7). If gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit, it is certainly a quality to be sought in church leaders (1 Tim 3:3; 2 Tim 2:25; cf. Heb 5:2). Even sinners are to be restored to the community with gentleness (Gal 6:1). The picture of believers, individually and corporately, is of a gentle people who follow in the footsteps of their gentle Lord and master. Clearly this is not a gentleness that is naive or spineless but a gentleness that lives with principled firmness like the innocence of doves lives with the shrewdness of snakes (Mt 10:16). *Leland Ryken et al., Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 325–326.*

3. Some may want to know about the origin of John 8 and the note that appears in most Bibles. This story does not appear in the oldest and best manuscripts of John. Some scholars believe it was not a part of the original document. However, this story was added in later from a pool of stories similar to the Synoptic Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) drew their content.
4. Encourage the group to reflect on the passages and to write out what they hear God saying to them through these passages. Where and when do they feel condemned, and by whom? What might Jesus want to say to them instead?

**Additional Questions and Resources**

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? [communitychristian.org/baptism](http://communitychristian.org/baptism)