



Read this excerpt taken from Dane Ortlund's book, 'Gentle and Lowly',¹ slowly through, perhaps a few times. If it's helpful, print it out so that you can highlight the sentences that impact you the most. As you read, ask Jesus to show you a particular truth that you may need to know today. Thank Him for things that you find especially powerful.

“Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

Consider the thousands of passages that have been written by theologians over the past two thousand years on all these things. But in only one place--perhaps the most wonderful words ever uttered by human lips--do we hear Jesus open up to us his very heart:

“I am gentle . . .”

The Greek word translated “gentle” here occurs just three other times in the New Testament . . . (Matthew 5:5, Zechariah 9:9, 1 Peter 3:4). Meek, Humble. Gentle. Jesus is not trigger-happy. Not harsh, reactionary, easily exasperated. He is the most understanding person in the universe. The posture most natural to him is not a pointed finger but open arms.

“ . . . and lowly . . . ”

The meaning of the word “lowly” overlaps with that of “gentle,” together communicating a single reality about Jesus' heart. This specific word lowly is generally translated “humble” in the New Testament, such as in James 4:6: “God opposes the proud by gives grace to the *humble*.” The point in saying that Jesus is lowly is that he is accessible. For all his resplendent glory and dazzling holiness, his supreme uniqueness and otherness, no one in human history has ever been more approachable than Jesus Christ. No prerequisites. No hoops to jump through. The minimum bar to be enfolded into the embrace of Jesus is simply: open yourself up to him. It is all he needs. Indeed, it is the only thing he works with. Verse 28 of our passage in Matthew 11 tells us explicitly who qualifies for fellowship with Jesus: “all who labour and are heavy laden.” Your very burden is what qualifies you to come. No payment is required; he says, “I will give you rest.” His rest is a gift, not transaction. Whether you are actively working hard to crowbar your life into smoothness (“labour”) or passively finding yourself weighed down by something outside your control (“heavy laden”), Jesus Christ's desire that you find rest, that you come in out of the storm, outstrips even your own.

“Gentle and lowly.” This, according to his own testimony, is Christ's very heart. This is who he is. Tender. Open. Welcoming. Accommodating. Understanding. Willing. *If we are asked to say only*

¹ Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020, 17-21)



one thing about who Jesus is, we would be honouring Jesus' own teaching if our answer is, gentle and lowly.

If Jesus hosted his own personal website, the most prominent line of the "About Me" dropdown would read: GENTLE AND LOWLY IN HEART.