

## Adult Group Study Guide for August 23, 2020

Series: "Us Vs. Them"

Message: "Gentleness of God"

Goal: To use our secret weapon (gentleness, the 8<sup>th</sup> fruit of the Spirit) to heal divisions.

Key Verse: *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*  
- *Ephesians 4:2*

1. We live in a highly polarized "us vs. them" world. What are some of the contributing factors to this polarization? How can gentleness be used to disarm conflict? (Proverbs 15:1; Titus 3:1-2)
2. What comes to mind when you hear the word "gentleness." It is a weakness to be gentle? Read Matthew 11:28-30. What does Jesus tell us about himself in these verses? How does the gentleness of Jesus affect your readiness to go to him in times of need?
3. Read Luke 19:1-10. Who was Zacchaeus? How did Jesus relate to him? Jesus was called a friend of sinners by the Pharisees in an effort to mock him. (Matthew 9:9-13 and 11:16-19) What did this mockery reveal about their attitude toward other sinners? Click on this link to watch the song by Casting Crowns, "Jesus, Friend of Sinners": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY6VAy9y\\_iQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY6VAy9y_iQ) What is the message of this song?
4. Jesus criticized the Pharisees for looking down on other people. (Read Luke 18:9-14) Why is it so easy to get caught in this trap? What are some examples of divisions that happen within the church when we start judging others? What can we do to counter this tendency? (Matthew 7:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:24-26)
5. Read Matthew 23:1-12. Why is it important to practice what we preach? What changes when we call each other brothers and sisters? Why should we humble ourselves?
6. Read John 1:43-51. What was Nathanael's attitude when he first heard about Jesus? What did Jesus do to help Nathanael to change his mind? What happens when we realize that Jesus knows everything about us? How will that change what you do this week?