

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

Part Four

“Blessed Are The Meek”

We continue with our verse by verse study of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest Preacher who ever lived. Here we have Jesus presenting the perfect picture of what we call the “normal Christian life”; the standard for what it means to be a born-again child of God.

The Sermon opens with 8 Beatitudes; not “Do-Attitudes; the Christian faith is not about what we DO, it is about who we ARE.

All begin with the word “Blessed”, which means “happy, prosperous”; then comes an attitude or disposition of the heart, followed by a promise...

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Tonight we, look at the 3rd Beatitude:

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Matthew 5:5

I. Introduction

A. Summary of the Beatitudes

1 Each begins with “Blessed are those”, or “Blessed are they”; not everyone is “Blessed”; these “Be-attitudes” describe the inner attitudes or nature of those who are born again.

2. There is a logical sequence and order here; look at the first 3:

a. Everything begins with being “poor in spirit”; a sense of spiritual need and a dependency on God to meet the need

b. Those who are poor in spirit; mourn over their sins and the sins of the world

c. And now this 3rd; Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the earth.

d. How do we connect these first 3?

POOR IN SPIRIT-My attitude toward myself

THEY THAT MOURN-My attitude toward my sin

THE MEEK-My attitude toward *others*

e. Testimony: One of the great things about verse-by-verse Bible study is that we preachers have to deal with passages where we have struggled. I confess this sermon is difficult for me because this has been a battlefield in my personal journey!

- Blessed are the poor in spirit; those who always want more of God. Check!
- Blessed are they that mourn over their sin. Check!
- But uh oh; here comes “Blessed are the meek”; for me that gets more challenging!

“These Beatitudes become increasingly difficult. Meekness is more difficult, more humbling and even more humiliating than anything we have looked at up to now. Why? Because this one concerns our attitude toward other people.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

3. It seems quite natural to *me* to be poor in spirit and to mourn over *my* sins; but not so natural with meekness because it involves how I relate to *other people*. As one Pastor said to me years ago...

“I love the church; it’s the people that drive me crazy.” (?)

4. Up to now, it’s been all about me; but meekness is a *relational* term; it has to do with my attitude toward others; not just in the world, but in my home and in the church.

“To live above with the saints we love, well that will be all glory.

But to live below with the saints we know, well that’s another story!”

Dudley Hall

5. Meekness speaks to how I relate to my wife as a husband; as a father to my children; as a Pastor to God's flock; as a Believer to the world through the day.

6. The right attitude toward others is meekness. So now you might well ask...

II. What Does It Mean To Be "Meek"?

A. Definition

1. We rarely hear the word "meek" these days; and the idea of "meekness" carries a negative context:

a. We think "meekness" means "weakness"

b. If I am to be meek, it means I'm willing to be someone's doormat or punching bag, like a willing victim of abuse.

Modern Western culture does not hold meekness to be a virtue, in contrast to the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world, which placed a high premium on it.

Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

c. In our day, we associate "meekness" with weakness or effeminacy, but....

These connotations were not always predominant in the world; ancient Near Eastern kings were not reluctant to describe themselves as meek in the same context in which they described themselves as mighty kings.

Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

2. The term "meek" translates a Greek word that means "mild" or "humble" in how we relate to others.

Meekness= a calm temper of mind, not easily provoked.

Easton's Bible Dictionary

a. From Nelson's Bible Dictionary...

An attitude of humility toward God and gentleness toward men, springing from a recognition that God is in control. Although weakness and meekness may look similar, they are not the same. Weakness is due to negative circumstances, such as lack of strength or lack of courage. But meekness is

due to a person's conscious choice. It is strength and courage under control, coupled with kindness.

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

3. Jesus self-described Himself as “meek”:

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew 11:28-29

a. King David described God as meek!

"You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your gentleness (same Hebrew word as “meekness”) has made me great.

2 Samuel 22:36 NKJV

4. When it comes to the fruits of the Holy Spirit, we think of love, joy, and peace, forgetting that...

Meekness is one of the 9 fruits of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:23.

a. When we think fruit of the Spirit, we think of love, joy, peace, and faith; we usually leave meekness out because we think of it as weakness. But it's actually the opposite!

Meekness is compatible with great strength, with great authority and power. The great defenders of the truth were meek men willing to die for the truth if necessary.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

b. True meekness is not in the natural man; it is something supernatural that we have from the Holy Spirit.

5. To be meek means to be humble; to be gentle; especially as a response to life when things are not going well!

6. Let's move on from dictionary definitions to what it looks like.

III. What Meekness Looks Like

A. Moses

1. The first mention¹ of meekness in the Bible refers to Moses.

Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men on the face of the earth.

Numbers 12:3

a. The context of the verse: Aaron and Miriam, Moses' own brother and sister, had risen up against Moses to challenge his authority over Israel! But instead of striking back at them, or defending himself, Moses waited on the Lord, who personally came down into the situation and vindicated his servant, even striking Miriam with leprosy.

b. Later, Korah and his sons rose up to challenge Moses' authority, publicly accusing Moses of evil motives...

And when Moses heard it, he fell on his face.

Numbers 16:6

c. Personal Testimony: I was so impressed with the meekness of Moses that when I went into the ministry I made up my mind that if I was ever publicly challenged about my leadership, I would follow the model of Moses. In 1995, it actually happened! And God vindicated me. (Listen to audio message for full story).

d. Instead of retaliating or defending himself, Moses showed meekness by trusting the Lord; and then...

...and the ground suddenly split open beneath them. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the men, along with their households and all their followers who were standing with them, and everything they owned. So they went down alive into the grave, along with all their belongings. The earth closed over them, and they all vanished from among the people of Israel.

Numbers 16:31-33

2. Meekness means that you submit yourself to God: You don't strike back.

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" says the Lord.

¹ Here we employ the Biblical hermeneutic of the "principle of first mention", which means that the first time any particularly important topic or subject in the Bible is mentioned is of particular importance in understanding the topic or subject.

Romans 12:19

a. How different from the culture today! (How many movies are about revenge?)

3. Meekness doesn't insist on its own rights; there is no sense of entitlement.

The man who is meek does not promote himself. He does not insist on his rights, does not make demands for his position, his privileges, his possessions, or his status in life.

David Lloyd-Jones

a. We live in a culture of self-promotion and celebration of celebrity. Consider the constant stream of "Awards" shows.

b. We live in a *litigious* society, which means "excessively inclined to litigate" or to take one another to court!

***Last year, not counting criminal cases, over 15 million civil lawsuits were filed in the United States!** One legal website says, "Unfortunately, many people are filing frivolous lawsuits hoping to come across a big paycheck."

c. Look how many people fighting over their rights: Constitutional rights; civil rights; abortion rights; criminal rights; women's rights; even animal rights. Some are just, some are weird; the point is everyone is pushing their cause to the front and a lot of it ends up in court.

4. I went online and discovered that 1000's of lawsuits are filed every year where Christians are suing Christians! Our motto today could be...

"In God we trust; see you in court."

a. This happened in the early church in Corinth, rebuked by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:

Actually, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

1 Corinthians 6:7

5. In this church there was meanness instead of meekness!

B. Look to Jesus As The Perfect Model of Meekness

1. In the incarnation:

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, **did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,** but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8 NASB

2. In His submission to His parents.

And He went down with his parents to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them...

Luke 2:51 NASB

3. We see the meekness of Jesus in His ministry; continually submitting to His Father's will.

4. Finally, even in His trial, He went like a "lamb to the slaughter", as prophesied by Isaiah...

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.

Isaiah 53:7 NLT

AND AT THE END OF HIS MEEKNESS, HE INHERITED THE EARTH!

IV. Application To Our Lives

A. What Does Meekness Look Like For Us?

1. Meekness is our "Be-Attitude" in our relationship to others; especially when we are done wrong for doing right.

For God is pleased with you when you do what you know is right and patiently endure unfair treatment.

1 Peter 2:19

"I would put it like this. We are to leave everything-ourselves, our rights, our cause, our whole future-in the hands of God, and especially so if we feel we are suffering unjustly."

David Martyn-Lloyd Jones

2. Meekness does not retaliate!

For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered* for you. He is your example and you must follow in his steps. He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone.*

He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.

1 Peter 2:19-23 NASB

Meekness is power completely surrendered to God's control.

3. In the great "love chapter" of 1 Corinthians 13, we see that meekness is an essential element in Christian love. (5 verses)

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind, *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails...

Is it not one of the greatest curses in life as a result of the fall-this sensitivity about self?

Confession of the Meek

Our Confession of Meekness

We are patient and kind toward others; we are not jealous of others; we do not envy when others seem more blessed than us. We do not brag about our blessings. We are not easily provoked, because we refuse to take account of the wrongs we suffer; we bear all things; we endure all things. So it is we inherit the earth.

4. If we can bring forth this fruit of the spirit, many blessings flow!

Benedictions To The Meek

The "meek" were the special objects of the Divine regard, and to them special blessings are promised. (I.S.B.E.)

The meek shall eat and be satisfied.

Psalm 22:26

The meek God will guide in justice and will teach His way.

Psalm 25:9

Yahweh will lift up the meek.

Psalm 147:6

He will beautify the meek with salvation.

Psalm 149:4

And in the end, you will inherit the earth!

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:5

We have received the Holy Spirit, and this is the claim of every Christian, we have no excuse if we are not meek. It is not something that you do and I do. It is a character that is produced in us by the Spirit. It is the direct fruit of the Spirit. It is offered to us and it is possible for us all. What have we to do? We must face this Sermon on the Mount; we must meditate upon this statement about being meek; we must look at the examples; above all we must look at the Lord Himself. Then we must humble ourselves; we must finish with that self which is the cause of all our troubles

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones