



Good Hope Baptist Church

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The Beautiful Attitudes pt. 3-

Meekness is not Weakness

Matthew 5:5, "Blessed [approved of God] are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

The idea of meekness has taken a real beating in popular culture. I heard about a guy named J. Upton Dickson who started an organization called "Dependent Organization of Really Meek and Timid Souls - DOORMATS. Their motto was "The meek shall inherit the earth - if that's OK with everybody." Their organizations symbol was the yellow traffic light.

In our society, people associate meekness with weakness. We think of meek people as, well, doormats. We think they are indecisive, pushovers, cowardly, milquetoast. We don't look upon meekness as a desirable quality. Can you imagine someone listing meekness as an admirable quality on their resume?

Contrary to this popular view, Jesus listed meekness as one of the chief qualities for a kingdom citizen. It is a quality He looks for in those who name His name and associate themselves with His kingdom.

Meekness is the opposite quality the world applauds. The world applauds the search for power, wealth and glory. Meekness is no the way political elections are won. Have you ever seen a meek politician? Elections are won by telling everyone why you should be elected and saying everything negative you can think of about your opponent. Polls consistently show that an election is won by your opponent having a 35% negative rating, not because you have a positive rating. You win by spreading fear regarding your opponent. Meekness would never do that, neither would it proudly boast of one's personal virtues. Meekness will not get you elected to office. Meekness in today's society achieves nothing. [R. T. Kendall, 36]

Blessed are the gentle (meek)

The third beatitude is the most paradoxical and startling statement in the entire Bible. It would appear to be totally illogical, absolutely contrary to reason, and all human experience. The philosophy of the world, of business, education, government, etc. is "Blessed are the arrogant, the pushers, the CEO's, the powerful, the rich, and the highly educated." The well born or blessed are the Bill Gates, Donald Trumps, Ted Turners, or the Mafia. But Jesus the Son of God who is the truth and never lies says "Blessed are the Meek."

MEEKNESS IS NECESSARY FOR THE FOLLOWING:

1. To **RECEIVE** the Word of God in the heart – James 1:21-25
2. To **RESTORE** the Fallen Brothers and Sisters – Galatians 6:1
3. To **REACH** out to the Lost or Skeptics – 1 Peter 3:15
4. To **RETAIN** the Unity of the Local Church – Ephesians 4:2-3

I. WHAT MEEKNESS IS NOT:

1. Meekness is not **TIMIDITY**.
2. Meekness is not **COWARDICE**.
3. Meekness is not to be **DOCILE**.
4. Meekness is not to be a **COMPROMISER**.
5. Meekness is not to be a **DOOR MAT**.
6. Meekness is not to be **LAZY**.
7. Meekness is not to be **EASY GOING**.
8. Meekness is not trying to **PLEASE EVERYONE**.
9. Above all, meekness is **NOT WEAKNESS!**

II. WHAT MEEKNESS IS:

1. Meekness has an Old Testament background. The Bible of Jesus was the Old Testament. He wrote the Old Testament. The 3rd Beatitude is a quote from Psalm 37:11, "But the meek shall inherit the earth." Read this Psalm and you have a description of the meek – vss. 1-11, 27, 29, 37.
2. The Greek word *Prutes* gives insight. The term has been translated many ways: meek, gentle, considerate, humble. Meekness includes the virtues of humility and teachability. Warren Wiersbe writes, "The Greek word that is translated 'meekness' was a familiar word to the people in Jesus' day. It was used to describe a soothing medicine. A patient who is wrestling with a fever is given medication by his doctor to quiet him down and relieve the burning so that he can sleep. The word also was used by sailors to describe a gentle breeze. Have you ever been exhausted on a hot day and then felt a cooling breeze blow on your body? It is refreshing... It was used [by farmers] to describe a colt that has been broken. Every colt has to be broken, or it cannot fulfill its function on the farm. Somebody has to break the colt so that its power can be channeled into constructive work." He continues, "Look at these three illustrations: medicine, wind and a cold. What do they all have in common? Power! Medicine has power to work in the body to calm nerves. The wind also has power... If you have ever watched a cowboy on a bucking bronco, you know that a horse is a powerful animal. But the medicine, wind and horse must keep their power under control, otherwise they will do damage. The proper dosage of medicine can produce healing, but an overdose may kill. A summer breeze is a delightful thing, but a hurricane destroys. A broken horse can give both work and pleasure to his master, but a horse out of control is dangerous. All of these have power, and when that power is under control, it is called meekness." [pg. 69, Live Like a King]
3. Meekness in a nutshell: POWER UNDER CONTROL or a person rightly related to God (1st and 2nd beatitudes) and rightly related to himself and to others. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones defined it as ***"a gentle attitude toward others which is determined by a true estimate of ourselves."***
4. **EXAMPLES OF MEEK PERSONS IN THE BIBLE:**
 - A. **ABRAHAM** – He gave Lot the choice land without a complaint (Gen 14).
 - B. **MOSES** – He forsook all in order to put God and His people first (Hebrews 11:24-25). Was known in Numbers 12:3 as the meekest man on earth.
 - C. **DAVID** – Thought King he suffered Saul's unjust treatment.
 - D. **JEREMIAH** – He kept preaching an unpopular message when the whole world was against him.
 - E. **JOHN THE BAPTIST** – John 3:30
 - F. **PAUL** – The more he loved, the less he was loved, but how did he respond? 2 Corinthians 12:5 says, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. Paul was gentle to the churches (1 Thess. 2:7)
 - G. **JESUS** – The supreme example and embodiment of meekness (see Philippians 2:8). **Matthew 11:28-30** reads, "Come to Me, all *you* who labor 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 [i.e. rightly fit] and My burden is light." Note the word "yoke". In the days of Jesus an older experienced ox would be yoked with a younger ox. The older ox was the trainer of the younger ox. Jesus yokes Himself to us whereby He trains us to be meek.

"Meekness" or "Humility" is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.

III. WHAT ARE THE REWARDS FOR BEING MEEK? "They shall inherit the earth."

THE PRESENT FULFILLMENT – The meek already "inherit" the earth in this way (receive full benefits). The truly meek is always satisfied and also contented. He also fully appreciates, appropriates and enjoys the wonders of creation. Millions of people walk on the beach and watch the waves come and go. But a few do far more than watch. They stand in awe, pray and worship and experience the presence of the Holy Spirit, receiving the full benefits God intended. Many see the snow as it brightens our earth. But God asks in Job 38:22, "Have you entered into the treasures of the snow?" Only the meek can enter into this

treasure. Paul expresses this truth still better in 2 Corinthians 6:10, "...having nothing yet possessing all things." 'All things are yours', everything; 'whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.' All are yours if you are meek and truly Christian; you have already inherited the earth."

THE FUTURE FULFILLMENT – Paul expresses this truth in 1 Corinthians 6, "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?" You are going to judge the world, you are going to judge angels. You will then have inherited the earth. In Romans 8, he puts it this way. We are children, 'and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' That is it; we are going to inherit the earth. 'If we suffer', he says to Timothy, 'we shall also reign with him.' In other words, 'Do not be worried about your suffering, Timothy. You be meek and suffer and you shall reign with Him. You are going to inherit the earth with Him.' But I think it is all to be found in those words of our Lord in Luke 14:11: 'Whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.'" [D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pg. 71]

"The meek shall inherit the earth." You inherit something because somebody dies and leaves a bequest to you in his will. In this case, it is we who die – die to self – that we might grow in meekness; and as we grow in meekness, we share the rich inheritance that we have in Christ. [Warren Wiersbe]

IV. BECOMING MEEK – There are three paths to Christlike meekness:

1. Realize that a gentle, teachable spirit is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23).
2. Yoke ourselves to Jesus, for he was the incarnation of meekness (Matthew 11:28-30).
3. Give close attention to the progression of thought in the Beatitudes, for it provides us with a three-step ladder to meekness.

HOW CAN I KNOW IF I AM MEEK? The man who is truly meek is the man who is amazed that God and man can think of him as well as they do and treat him as well as they do. [Martyn Lloyd-Jones]

Let's take a little meekness test. I am going to give you some sets of character traits. You choose which ones best fit your attitudes and responses.

Proud or Humble
Overbearing or Teachable
Tender or Hard-hearted

When criticized do you....

Listen, evaluate, accept worthwhile correction. Or Get angry, withdraw, or quarrel.

When a relationship is damaged do you....

Sulk, blame the other person, isolate yourself. Or Seek reconciliation, ask forgiveness, repair the relationship.

A.W. Tozer said, "The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God's estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and helpless as God declared him to be, but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is in the sight of God of more importance than angels. In himself, nothing; in God, everything. That is his motto."

The logical sequence in these beatitudes: One leads to the next. The result of seeing our sin, blushing because of it and then repenting, is to become meek. It makes us put our hands on our mouths, as Job experienced (Job 40:4). Seeing our sin leaves us stunned, and the consequence is seeing how unjust it is to be self-righteous and defensive. [R. T. Kendall, 36]

Extra Teaching Helps

FUNNY: No one wants to be meek today – it sounds so weak. I once heard about a little boy who became frustrated with his mother one day because she kept referring to him as her “little lamb.” Finally, the four-year-old couldn’t take it anymore and said, “Mama, I don’t want to be your little lamb. I want to be your little TIGER!” [p. 38, When All Else Fails, Read the Instructions]

Max Lucado, in *Applause of Heaven*, reminds us that if God can use ordinary inanimate objects (just everyday things) then God can use us. Lucado recalls how God used the staff of Moses to lead the people of Israel to freedom, the hurled stones of little David to turn back a giant, the saliva of Jesus to heal a blind man. He points out that when we freely offer to God what we have, whatever it may be, through the miracle of God’s grace the mundane can be made majestic, the dull divine, the humdrum holy. He reminds us that when it comes to serving God, the key is not the ability, but the availability. And then Lucado writes:

Blessed are the meek... Deliriously joyful are the ones who believe that if God has used sticks, rocks and spit to do his will, then He can use us. We would do well to learn a lesson from the rod, the rock and the saliva. They didn’t complain. They didn’t question God’s wisdom. They didn’t suggest an alternative plan. Perhaps the reason [God] has used so many inanimate objects for his mission is that they don’t tell him how to do his job! [p. 39-40, When All Else Fails, Read the Instructions]

I once read an article about the training of Arabian stallions. Day after day, hour after hour, the stallions are taught to obey the master, to trust him completely, and to always respond promptly to his call. The master has a whistle, and then he sounds the whistle, the stallions are trained to stop, no matter what the circumstances, and come immediately to the master. Then as a final test, the stallions are placed in a corral in the desert, midway up a hillside. At the bottom of the hill is a beautiful oasis with crystal blue waters. The stallions stay in the corral for several hours under the blazing desert sun, until they are frantic for water. Then the master stands at the top of the hill, and the stallions are released from the corral. Of course, they all head straight for the water. But just before they reach the water, the master blows the whistle. The horses who ignore the master’s call and go on toward the water are considered not ready and must have further training. But the stallions who turn, despite their terrible thirst, and come immediately to the master are considered well-trained and they graduate. They trust the master completely. They put his will before their own. [p. 41-42, When All Else Fails, Read the Instructions]