

## **The Beatitudes- Matthew 5:1-12**

A study

Rev. Charles R. Biggs

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### **"Blessed are the Meek, for they Shall Inherit the Earth."**

Today's study from the Beatitudes is about the meek. Who are the meek? Normally when we hear the word "meek" we associate it with "weak". But the meek are far from weak, actually they are strong in the LORD in the way all should be! As Martin Lloyd-Jones has written, being meek is "a humble and gentle attitude to others based on a true estimate of ourselves." Being meek is to know who we truly are, and to live a life based upon this knowledge.

Being meek, then is all about we as sinners saved by grace, having a true estimate of ourselves before God and others. Meekness is not thinking of ourselves higher than we ought, as the Apostle Paul teaches in Romans 12.

**Romans 12:3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.**

Being meek is constantly asking oneself "What is it that I have, that I have not been given by God?" (1 Cor. 4:7). Meekness is never weakness, but a true understanding of the grace that has been held out to believers by faith.

### **The Weakness of the World; the Meekness of Christianity**

In contrast to the meek, the world and the culture around us demand their so-called rights. They think that God owes them something and that they should be given lots of money, happiness, health and everything their heart's desire! They live their lives with expectations that what they have been given and what God has ultimately provided to them in his common grace, they somehow deserve. This is not meekness, but weakness.

Because of the fall and our separation from God, we all have a tendency to think that each day that we have been given, as well as each breath we take is something we should expect. We are often startled by our frail humanity when we are choked, hurt in an accident, have a brush with death, or are reminded that

we are dust in some way or another (Ps. 103). Ultimately, it is because by nature we are not meek people. We are weak and expectant people. We are weak, and do not realize that our great weakness is found in our great need for God. And because we have such great needs and do not realize it because sin clouds our understanding, we are weaker than we could have ever imagined.

When God allows something to challenge our humanity, or our strength, we are reminded of how helpless and frail we are in the big scheme of life. When we get sick with a disease or suffer from an ailment, we feel helpless and look around us for help. Usually, once we recover (if God has granted that we do), we often so easily forget those who helped us when we were weak, and we especially forget God! When troubled times come, some in this world turn to God for help and prayers, but if God allows them to recover many do not come back to thank him and to live for him out of gratitude. This reality Jesus found out when he healed ten lepers and only one came to thank him (Luke 17).

### **Lifeblood and the Blood of Life**

If we ponder our human flesh (skin), we realize that we are sometimes a mere knife cut away from our life bleeding out of us. We are "flesh and blood" people living in God's world, dependent creatures upon his grace and gifts, yet we often live our lives with the illusion of our own self-sufficiency (as if we somehow got our life from ourselves!?). We all so easily forget that except for the preventive (not prevenient) grace of God, we are only an accident away from our life blood bleeding out, or for a bodily organ to stop functioning, and we would see our deaths.

I'm not trying to be morbid, but when we hurt ourselves in a small way with just a small scratch, we bleed. When we bleed, what is happening in reality is that a little bit of our life is oozing out. By God's grace he preserves our life so that we might look to Him and His kindness extended to us in Christ Jesus and in humble repentance turn to him admitting our need of physical help, but most all spiritual help.

The hope of all men is to look away from their sins, to repent, and to turn to the God who took upon human flesh so that his life blood could ooze out on behalf of those who believe! Jesus Christ shed his blood so that we might be cleansed from our self-sufficient rebellion against God Almighty! Jesus' blood was shed, he lost his life, so that he could offer life to us. What we as sinners had earned was death. As Paul says in Romans 6:23, "the wages of sin is death."

But in His grace, God united our frail flesh to his divinity, so that we might be saved from self-sufficient and proud living. He became flesh so that we might partake in his divinity; he became like us so that we could ultimately be like him (1 John 3:2-3). God, who has life in himself, came to die so that we might have eternal life in Him (John 5:24ff; 15:1-7). He came so that we might be meek!

### **Meekness, Not Weakness!**

Do we really think about our humble condition, our real state before the Living God? If we do live this way, with this thought in mind because of what Christ has done for us, then we are truly meek and will continue to learn meekness as we are even more ever dependent upon him as we live! This is the mindset of the meek!

But how do we live out this meekness in a fallen world? Allow me to suggest two important ways. The first, is meekness to others. As Christians, humility should not be something we merely talk about, a kind of abstract goal we would like to reach one day. It should be a reality because of who we are united to the Living Christ and because of what he is doing (present tense) in us by His Spirit!

We show meekness to others particularly in considering others better than ourselves (Phil. 2)! This meekness can be shown visibly by example when a man overlooks the offense of another because they know how offensive they can be; It can be shown when an intellectual can listen and learn from others sometimes, rather than merely being the one always speaking and teaching others.

Considering others better than ourselves can be ultimately shown day by day when we reserve our rights, or our desires and wants, for the sake of extending love to another. It is when we put another first, even though we so desperately want to be first, and do this for the sake of love! In the family, it is sharing with others even though they don't deserve it; in the workplace, it is letting sarcastic and rude comments go by without offending you; in friendships, it is overlooking an unintentional offense of another, because you know how little you know your own sinful heart.

We thank God for the *rights* we have in this world, but we do not always have to use them. For the sake of love, we "lose our rights" in order to place others first. We need to remember that our primary call is not to our so-called *rights* in this world, but as Kingdom people to lose our rights and to take up our cross and follow a king who did not demand equality with God (Phil. 2: 5-11).

Be warned: In culture of self-assertion, you may be called "weak" if you reserve your rights and do not "speak up" like every other special interest group under

the sun, but you are in good company with a Savior many thought to be too weak to save! "He saved others, why can't he save himself??!" They asked as Jesus hung on the cross!

There are so many ways the Holy Spirit can teach His people how to put other people and their needs FIRST! And, in doing so, you place Christ first because you do it out of love and an understanding that you have been given great position in God's Kingdom, yet it was not something you deserved - it was all of grace!

### **Meekness and Repentance**

The other way of showing meekness, is a kind of repentant attitude that is lived throughout our Christian life. As we learned with those who mourn, it is a total humbling reliance and dependence upon the Living God through a day-to-day life of *repentance*. What this means is that, it is never patting oneself on the back for the righteous things one has done, nor ever presuming that the fruits of the Spirit somehow come naturally from us! It is simply a humble reminder that the gospel is not merely for unbelievers, but also for Christians. We constantly depend upon the grace and mercy that has been given and we know that as we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, that it is God who works in us to do and to will according to his good pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13).

The Prophet Isaiah describes this kind of lifelong meekness well in Isaiah 30:15-18:

**Isaiah 30:15-18: For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." But you were unwilling,<sup>16</sup> and you said, "No! We will flee upon horses"; therefore you shall flee away; and, "We will ride upon swift steeds"; therefore your pursuers shall be swift.<sup>17</sup> A thousand shall flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you shall flee, till you are left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.<sup>18</sup> Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.**

Isaiah wanted the people of God to know that our strength was in "quietness and trust" in the Living God. The people of God in Isaiah's time wanted horses, swift steeds in order for them to know and appreciate their strength, but God wanted them to find their strength in total and humble dependence upon Him! God wants His people to meekly place their trust in the power of God, not in themselves. Even in salvation, it will be in "repentance (returning) and rest" and not in anything they have done or accomplished. From the time we are saved, until the time Jesus returns, we are to live this kind of meek life, totally dependent upon the Lord's lovingkindness to us!

### **"S-E-L-F- - R-E-S-P-E-C-T"**

The opposite of meekness is ultimately SELF. Self-centered, self-sufficient, self-motivated, self-taught, self-respect, and all the other "self's" that our hearts conjure up with the illusions that we truly are the masters of our tiny little

universes! We think we are gods, little lords, masters of our little piece of land and we somehow got where we are on this little space of land by our own blood, sweat and tears!

Some think as tiny lords in their little kingdoms, that there is absolutely nothing that they cannot do; they gain the whole world and then many lose their souls. Some build up their names and reputations in their tiny kingdoms because they want to be revered, respected...feared, yet at the end of the day, all of their striving and self-centeredness to establish their kingdoms against any other would-be self-centered and tiny kingdoms, their little kingdom one day becomes their grave! How foolish we are sometimes! What is it that we have, that we have not received?

Yet, in the midst of our struggle to gain and to establish our self-centered kingdoms, God in his His grace invades our sinful hearts by His powerful Holy Spirit, causes us to surrender with the Apostle Paul and ask: "Who are you LORD?" (Acts 9). And if and when this wonderful work of God happens, we realize that all of our plotting and self-centered conniving, seems quite empty and hopeless. We realize our great need of dependence upon the Living God. We realize just how much He has done for us and in our great gratitude we desire to walk humbly before him.

### **Trespassers or Inheritors on the Earth?**

We desire meekness for the first time! An offense is no longer as offensive. Our rights don't mean as much anymore. We open our clouded eyes from our restless dreams of conquering our tiny kingdoms only to realize that it is a rather small plot of ground in this big universe and that it rightfully and really belongs to the Lord God Almighty! We realize that we are only here because he has allowed us to be on his property. We should be shot as trespassers, but we are welcomed not merely as guests, but as sons who will inherit the earth!

Then we realize: All this time, I tried to conquer God and establish my tiny kingdom against all other men- - How futile! All of this time, it belonged to him anyway, he has clothed me in His best robes as my father, and that I do not have to forcefully take hold of this tiny kingdom, but by inheritance he will give me the earth!

What a revelation! What all men are so desperately trying to steal for themselves and set themselves up against the LORD and His anointed would be given to them by inheritance through faith in Jesus Christ, the one who owns the heavens and the earth! Because Jesus earned the deed, the title to this grand earth, God will give this place to all those who are his children! God will renew all things and it will be as he planned from the foundation of the earth!

God will give them the earth! The dominion over the earth that was lost in Adam's sin has been regained by Jesus Christ for his own! God will grant by

inheritance and not force, the whole earth! And most importantly, God will be with them, and He shall be their God!

"Blessed (truly) are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!"

***Soli Deo Gloria!***