

Victorious Meekness

Sermon on the Mount Vol. 4

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Matthew 5:5

The **Pharisees** dominated the training of rabbis and held nearly total control over what was taught week by week in the synagogues. If you asked anyone in the crowd who was the most spiritually mature, they would direct you toward the nearest Pharisee. They wanted a king who would validate them for their zeal to show how righteous they were by keeping minutia of spiritual rules and regulations they came up with. The **Pharisees** and what they taught were the primary targets of this sermon. It was a bombshell to this crowd when Jesus stated the theme of this entire sermon.

Matthew 5:17–20: *Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that **unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.***

The people as a whole eventually rejected Jesus because He did not fulfill their messianic expectations. They first rejected, then hated, and finally killed Him because, instead of approving their religion He condemned it, and instead of leading them to independence from Rome He disdained revolutionary acts and offered a way of even greater subservience.

Same outline today as with each Beatitude so far:

I. **Who Is Blessed?**

The first three beatitudes:

Matthew 5:3-5: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. **Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.***

Gentle is the way the NASB translates the key word here, but I'm going to stick with the translation **meek** favored by almost every other English translation of the Bible. The word means *mild, patient, gentle, or tender-hearted*. It describes a person who doesn't retaliate, doesn't resent, doesn't get bitter, and doesn't strike back in anger or revenge. The word occurs four times in the New Testament.

Matthew 5:5: *Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall inherit the earth.*

Matthew 11:29: *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am **gentle** and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.*

Matthew 21:5: [Quoting Zechariah 9:9]

*SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION,
'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU,
GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY,
EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'*

1 Peter 3:4: . . . *but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a **gentle** and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.*

From those four uses, you see that:

1. Meekness is a **characteristic of true believers**.
2. Meekness is a **characteristic of Jesus Himself**. Therefore it is an aspect of being like Christ.
3. Meekness is **precious in the sight of God**. That means it is a quality God values highly.

Another form of the word occurs more often in the New Testament, and it reinforces the idea that meekness is the **opposite of pride, selfishness, obstinacy and inflexibility**—all of which come naturally to us as characteristics of the flesh.

1 Corinthians 4:21: *What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of **gentleness**?*

Galatians 6:1: *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of **gentleness**; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*

1 Timothy 6:11: *But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and **gentleness**.*

Meekness is not cowardice. The meek are **neither cowardly nor weak**. The meek don't lack will, they don't lack a sense of duty, or of commitment. The meek **are** capable of very strenuous action in behalf of others. Jesus said we should come to Him **because** He is **meek**: *Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, **for I am gentle** [meek] and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.* But this same Jesus showed great anger on some occasions.

What we deduce from the example of Jesus (and you would see the same in prophets and others in the Bible) is that **the Lord became angry because of correct motivation**. The appropriate anger of a meek person is **not petty anger** over **silly personal offenses**. Neither is it unreasonable anger that results from losing control of your human passions. The Lord's anger was always a holy reaction against what is wrong.

Ephesians 4:26: *BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, . . .*

Meekness is not passive acceptance of all the sinful acts and evil practices in the world. It's also not grasping for peace at any cost. **Meekness is anger controlled by God**. It stands for truth; it stands for God; it wants God's glory to show; it is knowing to do good—and doing it. Meekness does not act out of self-interest, but it acts boldly in the interest of God and His truth in the world.

II. What Does The Blessing Include?

Matthew 5:5: *Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall **inherit the earth**.*

They is an emphatic pronoun, which gives the meaning **they and they alone—no one else**. God's way of doing things is the opposite of the world's way.

Inherit the earth has an obvious millennial connotation. The earth belongs to the Lord, but for now it is largely under the control of Satan. That will be changed in the future, and those who are to reign with Christ will **inherit** what is rightfully His—**the earth**. According to Revelation 21:7, even the **new heaven and new earth** are part of the inheritance of the saints.

1 Corinthians 3:21–23: . . . *For all things belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.*

Psalm 37 is a parallel to the thought here. In that context, the subject is Israel and their inheritance of the land of Canaan. In that Psalm the meek are cautioned not to fret or become impatient or overanxious over the apparent success of the ungodly in the world.

Psalm 37:1–22:

1 Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers.

2 For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb.

3 Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.

4 Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.
 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday.
 7 Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.
 8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.
 9 For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.
 10 Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there.
 11 But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.
 12 The wicked plots against the righteous And gnashes at him with his teeth.
 13 The Lord laughs at him, For He sees his day is coming.
 14 The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow To cast down the afflicted and the needy, To slay those who are upright in conduct.
 15 Their sword will enter their own heart, And their bows will be broken.
 16 Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many wicked.
 17 For the arms of the wicked will be broken, But the LORD sustains the righteous.
 18 The LORD knows the days of the blameless, And their inheritance will be forever.
 19 They will not be ashamed in the time of evil, And in the days of famine they will have abundance.
 20 But the wicked will perish; And the enemies of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures, They vanish—like smoke they vanish away.
 21 The wicked borrows and does not pay back, But the righteous is gracious and gives.
 22 For those blessed by Him will inherit the land, But those cursed by Him will be cut off.

It's easy to see how to apply the first three beatitudes.

1. How do you feel about your spiritual condition? It's popular these days to say things like *"I'm spiritual, but not religious."* That's one of those good-sounding ways to deny what the Lord taught in the first beatitude. **Do you understand you are beggarly poor in spiritual things?**
2. How do you feel about your sin? The basic difference between a Christian and an unsaved person is the attitude toward sin and toward Jesus Christ. **Do you love the Lord and cringe from your sin? Or do you love your sin and cringe from the Lord?** If you don't want to spend time with the Lord in His word, there is a very good chance that you are afraid of something you know you will find there. If your sin makes you mourn, you will indeed be comforted.
3. How do you feel about yourself? Are you the most important thing in your life? Meekness says *"I'll not defend myself, but I'll die defending the Lord."* Meekness shows itself in humble obedience to God's word. **Meekness means to be finished with me for good.** If you are meek, all your efforts now will be rewarded in your millennial and eternal inheritance as you reign with Christ forever.