

May 3, 2020  
The Sermon on the Mount (4)  
**Meek Does Not mean Weak**  
Matthew 5:5  
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Today we are going to focus on Matthew 5:5 in which Jesus said, *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."* Jesus says that an authentic Christ-follower is someone who is meek. This statement doesn't make any more sense in our culture today. This text is completely contrary to the thinking of our society. Our society does not respect meekness anymore. Instead we honor strength, power, ability, self-assurance and aggressiveness. If we were to develop our own version of this beatitude, we would say "Blessed are the aggressors." We are expected to be aggressive, at least to be pro-active, in everything we do from business to sports to politics. Most of us think that meek means weak.

Think about your work situation. What is your boss or co-workers trying to get you to become? Is meekness one of those characteristics they expect from you? Is that one of elements for your promotion or success? I don't think so. Our culture does not value meekness. Our world has taught us that if we want to be someone important, if we want to go somewhere, and if we want to inherit our share of the earth, then be aggressive, be a winner, be confident, but don't be meek!

I would like to point out two things Jesus was not saying in Matthew 5:5. First, He doesn't refer to weakness. The word "meek" is *"praus"* in Greek. According to William Barclay *"praus"* was one of the great ethical words of the Greek culture. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, considered *"praus"* to be a virtue. And he said that like any virtue, *"praus"* or meekness exists between two extremes, too much or too little.

Proverbs 25:28 refers to the virtue of the meekness of self-control and says, *"Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control."* In other words, without meekness, we've got power but no control over it. On the other hand Proverbs 16:32 says, *"Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."* It is saying that meek people, self-controlled people, are very strong people. So, meekness is not a synonym for weakness. To be meek doesn't mean spineless or to be timid! Meekness refers to power, but power under control.

In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that blessed is the person who is not self-controlled, but rather God-controlled. He says that a meek person is someone who, moment by moment, yields his/her power, life, and will to the will of God. True meekness has to do with inward discipline, not outer weakness.

What is the blessing for the meek? They shall inherit the earth. The blessing of the meek doesn't refer to real estate. Jesus didn't say if we are meek, if we yield our will to God's control, we'll be rich because then we'll inherit this earth. He didn't say, "Be a meek believer, because if you do, I'll reward you with oil wells or real estate holdings in downtown Chicago."

He says that when we yield every moment to God, no matter what comes in life, we can control the situation. When we learn to trust God completely, the world is ours. The Psalmist says, *"In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can a mere mortal do to me?"* (Psalm 56:11, NRSV) The world belongs to the person who has control of his/her emotions. This kind of meek individual controls and rules the situation, no matter how tough the situation may be, because he's not controlled or ruled by it. If we are a truly meek person, we are no longer a victim.

I would like to tell you about a meek person who showed love and forgiveness. After WWII, Korea was divided into North Korea and South Korea at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel in order to take over from the Japanese occupation and control. The Soviet Union took over northern Korea, while the United States occupied southern Korea. The Soviet Union tried to establish a communist government in their area, while the United States planned to establish a democratic government in their area. While the Soviet Union successfully got rid of all democratic or nationalistic groups and people in the north, many communists still existed in the south. Finally, they rose in revolt in Yeosu City and Suncheon City, the south-western area of Korea, against the interim US military regime and the Korean government. They killed many people and occupied several police stations and municipal offices. During this incident, Rev. Son Yang-Won's two sons were killed by a communist friend. Finally, the Korean police officers and soldiers suppressed the riot and he was arrested and got the death sentence. Rev. Son overcame his grief on the loss of his beloved sons and his anger toward the killer. He visited the court and appealed to forgive his son's killer. Finally, his appeal was admitted and the communist was released. Knowing that the killer no longer had his parents, Rev. Son adopted him as his son.

Rev. Son could have responded in anger to the killer of his beloved sons. But due to his Christ-like meekness, he controlled himself, forgave him, and even adopted him. He "ruled" that situation because he embraced this attitude. I think this is what Jesus was talking about that day.

In His sermon Jesus says that "*makarios*," blessedness and happiness, comes to people with self-control. We get self-control by giving our moments to God, no matter how difficult they may be. This is where we get the power to respond the way Rev. Son responded. Genuine happiness in life comes from allowing God to control our days. God's indwelling Spirit does not make us weak or cowardly. 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "*God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*"

By meekness we will inherit the future earth, the new heavens and the new earth that Jesus shall establish when He returns. In that day the proud shall be cast down. But the meek shall inherit the earth. They shall receive the final creation of God. They are the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. They now dwell with God in Jesus Christ. And in the day of days, God will give them all that He has. God will not give them a resort in Hawaii or Cancun and an apartment on the 96th floor of the John Hancock. All of these will crumble down. But God shall give to the meek glory, a place to live with God and to enjoy Him forever, while all the proud and the self-seeking shall know only His displeasure and curse in hell.

Does anyone mistreat you? Is life rough for you right now and mistreating you? Does it burden you in some way? Accept Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11:28-30 where He said, "*Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light.*" Trust God for that situation. Give it to God. Ask God for the power to forgive people, even if they don't ask for your forgiveness. I believe that when God's people walk in meekness and when we embrace the attitudes of humility and gentleness, we find great peace, freedom, and rest! When we embrace this attitude in life, we do indeed "inherit the earth."

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