

MATTHEW 5:5: “BLESSED ARE THE MEEK...”

INTRO.:

1. When was the last time you heard someone say, “If you really want to succeed in life, try being meek?”
 - a. Or, “If you want to rise to the top and get somewhere in life, you must display a lot of meekness along the way?”
 - b. I am sure that if you have heard it at all, it was not outside some church building’s walls.
 - c. The fact is that meekness is not a characteristic that we really desire to be noted for.
2. The world’s philosophy of success tells us that we need to:
 - a. Be Assertive or aggressive.
 - b. To go for the throat.
 - c. Do whatever is necessary to get what you want.
 - d. Use your power to get what you deserve.
3. So, imagine the reaction of the disciples when Jesus said, “*Blessed are the meek...*”
 - a. We tend to think of being “*Meek*” as being Wimpy, Weak, Sickly and Cowardly.
 - b. Meekness is not one of those qualities we want to put on our resume.
 - c. Meekness is not one of the words you hear on the TV commercial for the Marines – “The few, the meek, the Marines.”
4. No doubt when Jesus said, “*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth,*” more than a few eyebrows were raised by those who heard Him.
 - a. His statement ran contrary to the current mood of the religious leaders of His day.
 - b. To their way of thinking, the only way to inherit the land was to overthrow the Roman government, and that certainly could never be done by being meek.
 - c. It would take a massive show of force and a great deal of aggression to accomplish such a monumental task.
 - d. They could not see this task as accomplished by a person who was meek.
5. The fact is that meekness is not a characteristic that is promoted much in any society, including our own.
 - a. In fact, the world’s philosophy is just the opposite.
 - b. The world tells us that the more we assert ourselves, the more we organize and manifest our powers and abilities, the more likely we are to succeed.
 - c. But the problem is that it never works that way.
 - d. Just ask:
 - (1) The Texas millionaire who speaking of his life said, “I thought money could buy happiness. I have been miserably disillusioned.”
 - (2) The famous movie star who said, “I have money, beauty, glamour, and popularity. I should be the happiest woman in the world, but I am miserable. Why?”
 - (3) Or the great statesman who once said, “I am an old man. Life has lost all meaning. I am ready to take a fateful leap into the unknown. Can you give me a ray of hope?”
6. God wants His people to be happy, and in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gave us the formula for real happiness.
 - a. But as we see in this beatitude as well as in the whole sermon, Jesus states that this happiness comes only when we adopt a radically different lifestyle, or approach to life.
 - b. A few weeks back we began to look at this sermon and started by looking at the beatitudes.
 - (1) In the first beatitude Christ said that the road to true happiness begins with being “poor in spirit.”
 - (a) Here Christ emphasized our need to humble ourselves before God.
 - (b) He said that we must realize our need for salvation and that we cannot save ourselves.
 - (c) And the realization of this fact will bring us to Christ.

- (2) Then in the second beatitude, Christ required a mourning over our sins, which will lead us to repentance.
7. This AM we come to the third beatitude in Matt. 5:5.
- Here Christ said that since we believe that only God can help us overcome sin; and since we have truly mourned over our sins; the next step to true blessedness is to totally submit to God's will.
 - Here Christ calls for us to submit to all that God requires of us if we want to be truly blessed.
 - He calls for us to be ready to do all that is required of us for our salvation.
8. This AM let us look at what Christ had to say in this beatitude, and then make some practical applications to our daily lives.

LESSON:

- I. As we begin to look at this beatitude, the first question we are led to ask is, "What did Christ mean when He used the term "*meek*?"
- A. When we use the word "*meek*" today we usually think of it as a contemptible trait, rather than an admirable one.
- We picture a meek person as one who is spineless or weak.
 - He is the one who is on his hands and knees begging.
 - In cartoons, he is the one who is begging, "Oh please don't hurt me."
 - Meekness, or gentleness, is usually thought of as a characteristic of a coward, or a mark of unmanliness, rather than manliness.
 - The person who is meek we usually picture as one who lets others take advantage of him and walk all over him.
 - Meekness suggests the idea of weakness and surrender, rather than strength and courage.
 - Thus the last thing the average person in America would want to be called is "*meek*."
 - This being the case, we are led to ask, "What did Jesus really mean when he used this term?"
- B. To understand what meekness means, let us first look at the opposite of meekness, or what it is not:
- It is not timidity.
 - It does not describe the person who is unwilling to stand up for what is right when the group he is with wants to do wrong.
 - It does not describe one who is unwilling to stand for the truth for fear of the displeasure it may bring him.
 - NOTE:
 - Even though Jesus was meek, He was not timid.
 - Rather than go along with the false teachers of His time, He challenged them.
 - And the first century Christians, following His example, were no weaklings.
 - It is not surrendering of one's rights.
 - Christ did not give up His rights when He was struck while on trial (Jn. 18:23).
 - Paul did not give up his rights as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37).
 - It is not being easy-going, or indifferent to the truth.
 - There are many who would seek peace at any price – Ecumenical movement.
 - Such people are willing to compromise their principles in order to avoid having a disagreement with anyone.
 - NOTE: Only when we can get people to realize that meekness is not weakness will we be able to get them to add this trait to their lives.
- C. What then is, "*meekness*?"
- There is no exact English equivalent to the Greek word: PRAUS.
 - Words like "*lowliness*" & "*gentleness*" more closely approach it's meaning; but even then they fall short and are inadequate of really describing the word.

- b. Meekness is more than just being gentle or lowly.
2. The Greek word was originally used to describe “a horse which had been broken and harnessed.”
 - ILLUST.:
 - a. A man sees a beautiful wild stallion running free on the range.
 - b. The animal is obviously full of power and energy; but it is useless so long as he is wild.
 - c. He does not know how to pull a load or carry a man.
 - d. Now suppose the man catches the horse and puts him in a corral.
 - e. Ultimately, he calms the animal enough that he can get a bridle and saddle on him.
 - f. Now an expert rider mounts the horse to ride it as it bucks and runs.
 - g. After a while, it becomes obvious to the horse that the rider is in control and the horse is “broken.”
 - h. He has been tamed, brought under control, and is made useful for a purpose.
3. Meekness then describes power under control.
 - a. Power out of control and unharnessed is useless.
 - (1) An unbroken colt is useless.
 - (2) Medicine that is too strong will harm rather than cure.
 - (3) Wind out of control destroys.
 - (4) And emotions out of control can also destroy.
 - b. For such power to be useful it must be harnessed, guided, and controlled.
 - c. ILLUST.: Colorado River
 - (1) In the Grand Canyon it is useless and out of control.
 - (2) But with the use of Mead Dam its power has been harnessed and controlled.
 - d. And such is true with the life of the one who is meek.
4. Thus the meek person is one whose stubborn will has been tamed and brought under control.
 - a. Just as the wild stallion was tamed and brought under its owner’s control; so also the meek person is one whose spirit had been tamed and brought under God’s control.
 - b. Meekness is training the wild animal within us (fleshly lusts), so that it can be controlled and put into work in God’s kingdom.
5. A meek man, therefore, is not a weak man; but rather a strong man who has submitted his life to the control of God.
6. Meekness is a disposition of spirit where we are willing to accept God’s will without disputing.
 - a. It is submission to His divine control.
 - b. It is the conquering of the carnal mind and bringing it into a state of true spirituality.
 - c. It is the conquering of our fleshly lusts, thereby making our body pure and useable in service to God.
 - d. The foundation of meekness then is total submission to God.

II. With this definition of meekness in mind, let us look at 2 men in the Bible who stand out as examples of meekness.

A. Moses.

1. Numb. 12:3 tells us, “*Now the man Moses was very meek, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.*”
2. This statement comes near the end of His life, so we need to go back to really understand what is being said.
 - a. When we first meet Moses as an adult, we find him with a fiery temper – In anger he killed an Egyptian.
 - b. But now after 40 years in the wilderness as a shepherd, and another 40 years leading the children of Israel things have changed.
 - c. Rough, tough, fiery Moses God now said was “*Meek.*”
3. What did God mean by this?
 - a. He meant that Moses had learned how to submit to God’s will without a single complaint.
 - b. All his energies, temper, and leadership abilities were harnessed so that God could use them.

4. Moses was no milk-toast character, no spineless person, as he could blaze with anger – Broke tablets and ground the golden calf to powder.
5. But Moses had learned how to keep his anger on a leash only to be released at the right time and then only for God's glory.

B. Christ.

1. Matt. 11:28-30: (Read).
 - a. Here Christ calls for us to come learn of Him and His meekness.
 - b. Thus, what was He like?
2. Jesus was no wave of the sea, tossed to and fro by every wind that blew.
3. He was a man of strong determination, strong words, and strong actions.
4. He could be moved to intense anger by false teachers, false deeds, and false religion as seen when He overturned the money changer's tables and drove the animals out of the temple (John 2:14-15).
5. He was not a cowardly man; rather a courageous leader.
6. When he was wronged, He did not seek vengeance – rather He forgave.
 - a. Before Pilate he could have called down 12 legions of angels to keep Him from being handed over to the Jews (Matt. 26:53), but He did not.
 - b. But His meekness was seen in His willingness to submit to God's will (Matt. 26:39ff; 2 Pet. 2:21-23).
7. Thus as Christ calls for us to come learn of Him, He calls for us to submit to God as He did.

III. In my study I picked up 5 lessons on what meekness is that I would like to share with you:

A. 1st: Meekness is being teachable not unreachable.

1. Meekness is about having a teachable spirit.
 - a. Meek people do not pretend that they know it all.
 - b. They look for opportunities to continually learn.
2. Faithful Christians are constantly look for opportunities to learn more about Jesus.
 - a. Jesus wants us to learn as much about Him as we possibly can.
 - b. Jesus wants us to be teachable.
 - c. In fact look at what Jesus said in Matt. 11:29: *“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*
 - (1) It is interesting that in this verse Jesus says, *“Learn of me.”*
 - (2) He wants us to know more of Him.
 - (3) He wants us to be teachable – not unreachable.
3. James 1:21 says: *“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”*
4. Every day we need to pray, “Lord, teach me more about You today. Lord, help me to learn something today that will make me more useful in Your kingdom.”
5. How about you?
 - a. Do you have a desire to learn more?
 - b. Are you teachable?
 - c. Are you reachable?

B. 2nd: Meekness is become gentle not judgmental.

1. Happiness comes when you accept people the way they are.
 - a. While they may not have reached your standard of perfection, you welcome them and love them anyway.
 - (1) Others should not have to obtain your standards of perfection before you will accept them and love them.
 - (2) Jesus said we are to treat them with gentleness.
 - b. The Message Bible paraphrases Rom 14:1 by saying: *“Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but*

weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.”

- c. Paul put it this way in Gal. 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.”*
 2. How do you react when someone you know messes up their life?
 - a. Do you say, “I told you so? I could see that coming. You blew it. How could you be so dumb? How could you be so stupid?”
 - b. If so, that is not a sign of meekness.
 - c. Meekness is treating people gentle not judgmental.
- C. 3rd: Meekness is being an actor not a reactor.
1. This point here is about taking the initiative when bad things happen.
 - a. Rom. 12:17a: *“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.”*
 - b. Rom 12:21: *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*
 2. How do you respond when evils come your way?
 - a. What is your normal reaction when people hurt you?
 - (1) Retaliate? -- Get even? -- Stab them in the back?
 - (2) Or do you love the person? -- Forgive them? -- Treat them with kindness?
 - b. The point is that meekness is a matter of choice.
 3. Do you remember how we defined meekness earlier in the sermon?
 - a. Meekness is power under control.
 - b. When you fly off the handle, you have lost control.
 - c. When you tell someone, “You make me mad.” You are admitting that you have lost control and that they have control of your emotions.
 - d. All you are doing is reacting to the world around you in a negative way.
 4. Jesus said that as His disciple you do not have to react like that – you can act.
 - a. You can take control.
 - b. You can show meekness.
 - c. We can either react to people - or we can take control of our emotions and act in love toward people.
 - d. The choice is ours.
- D. 4th: Meekness is become understanding not demanding.
1. All of us want to be first.
 - a. All of us want to be on top.
 - b. To illustrate this point let me ask you: How many of you want to be in the longest - slowest line at the super market? (Not me.)
 - c. When things do not go your way, how do you behave?
 - (1) Are you understanding or are you demanding?
 - (2) Do you take out your frustration on those around you or do you look for the opportunity to learn from the situation?
 2. I read an illustration about patience a while back.
 - a. What the author said was that if we ask God for patience - He does not give it to us immediately.
 - b. Instead what God gives us are opportunities to learn patience.
 - c. In other words - if we pray for patience - He places us in situations where we can learn patience.
 - d. Patience is a learned ability, and so is meekness.
 3. Notice Phil. 2:3-5, again as the Message Bible paraphrases it: *“Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.”*
 4. Did you notice that in this passage Paul give three things to do and three things not to do.
 - a. Here are the three don’ts:

- (1) Don't push your way to the front.
 - (2) Don't sweet talk yourself to the top.
 - (3) Don't be obsessed with getting your own way.
 - b. Here are the three does:
 - (1) Put yourself aside to help others.
 - (2) Forget yourself and lend a helping hand.
 - (3) Think of yourself as Christ thought of Himself.
 5. The major lesson of this scripture is that I have a choice.
 - a. I can choose to be rude and crude - or I can choose to be patience.
 - b. I can choose to be helpful or hurtful.
 - c. I can choose to be a blessing - or I can choose to be a pain in the neck.
 - d. I can choose to be self centered - or I can choose to look out for others.
 - e. I can choose to be understanding - or I can choose to be demanding.
 6. The choice is mine, and the choice is yours.
 7. Meekness is all about making the right choice.
- E. 5th: Meekness is becoming tender without surrender.
1. It is a simple fact that you cannot please everyone 100% of the time.
 2. The story is told of an older preacher who was instructing some young preacher students.
 - a. He said he was going to tell them how they could please 100 % of the congregations they would work with.
 - b. At that point one of the young students spoke up and said that was impossible.
 - c. He responded by saying, "It is a fact. 50 % are happy when you come - and 50 % are happy when you go. So that is 100%"
 - d. But the real point he was trying to make is that we cannot please everyone no matter how hard we try.
 3. A test of maturity is how you handle disagreeable people.
 - a. Meekness is not compromising your convictions.
 - (1) You can be tender without surrender.
 - (2) Meekness is not weakness, but it is handling conflict with gentleness.
 - b. The key point is that we need to pick our battles carefully.
 - (1) Do not argue over something that does not matter.
 - (2) Do not fight over something that does not make any difference.
 - (3) But when something does make a difference - be tender without surrender.
 4. In Proverbs 15:1, Solomon said: "*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*"
 5. Meekness is learning to disagree - agreeably.
 - a. Meekness is learning to get along with people even though you do not see everything eye to eye.
 - b. Meekness is learning you can agreed to disagree - and still respect each other because of it.
 - c. Some of you may remember a slogan that was coined during the Restoration Movement that states: "In matters of doctrine, unity. In matters of opinion, liberty. In all things, love.
 - d. That is what Jesus is talking about here.
 6. As Paul points out in both Romans 12 and 1 Cor. 12 we are all a part of the body of Christ and we each come into the body with different backgrounds, talents, abilities, etc.
 - a. But God has placed each one of us in the body as He chooses for the common good of the body.
 - (1) He has placed us here to get to know one another, and to help one another.
 - (2) He has placed us here to serve Him and to serve one another.
 - b. But as we are a part of the body we are not all going to be the same or think exactly the same – In fact we are not supposed to be.
 - c. There is supposed to be diversity, but there is also supposed to be unity.
 - d. And that is where meekness comes in.
- F. To summarize what we have said, because Jesus is our Lord:

1. We can be teachable not unreachable.
2. We can be gentle not judgmental.
3. We can be an actor and not a reactor.
4. We can be understanding not demanding.
5. We can be tender without surrender.
6. We can be all these things because Jesus Christ is our Lord and our Savior.
7. He is our teacher, and we can learn from Him how to be meek.

IV. When we become meek, then Jesus promises, “*We shall inherit the earth?*”
--What did Jesus mean by this statement?

A. Did He mean:

1. We would inherit the new heavens and earth of 2 Pet. 3:13 & Rev. 22:1? -- NO!!!
2. We would inherit the physical earth as promised to Israel in Psa. 37:11, and as some Millennialist teach? – NO!!!

B. What did He mean then?

1. The person who possesses and demonstrates meekness in their life will enjoy both the abundant blessings of God and the healthy respect of men around them.
2. The person who lives this type of life has heavens glories awaiting him and in this life he will enjoy all of God’s blessings like no other person can.
 - a. Eph. 1:3: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*”
 - b. John 10:10: “*I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly.*”
 - c. 1 Cor. 3:21-23: (Read).

CONC.:

1. As you examine your life, can you truly say you have demonstrated the spirit of meekness toward God and your fellow man?
2. Have you, as James said, received the word with meekness and become a doer of the word?
3. Have you willingly submitted your life to God’s control by means of your obedience to the gospel?
4. Or are you resisting God?