Blessed are the Meek

We continue our study through the greatest sermon by the greatest preacher who ever preached – the Sermon on the Mount. What makes the Sermon on the Mount so unique - separate even from Jesus’ other sermons? It is not that all Jesus taught on the Mount was brand new; in fact, much of the Beatitudes were touched on in the Old Testament. Jesus’ ability to encapsulate the gospel of the Kingdom’s nearly 138,000 New Testament words makes this sermon so remarkable. In order to do this, He distilled the gospel down to a series of the most fundamental elements. By boiling down these Kingdom principles, we can absorb the mind of Christ in a series of brief truths.

Do you remember the prophecy regarding the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:33? The Spirit said “I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts…” So, how can we do our part with that here? David helps us further with Psalm 119:11, “Your word I have hidden in my heart. That I might not sin against You.” How can we reap these spiritual benefits? We expedite these processes – writing God’s law on our hearts and hiding God’s word in our hearts – by memorizing Scripture. And the Beatitudes are a great place to begin!

“Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth,” but first, enjoy our song…

Let’s revisit the meaning of the word “blessed.” It is found fifty times in the New Testament and carries the idea of being happy or favored. The Amplified Bible has for “blessed” “happy, blithesome, joyous, spiritually prosperous-- with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions.” No matter what the world may say, no matter what our material prospects may be, if we are living for the Lord, we are favored; we are blessed. This awareness alone will promote our well-being. In light of this truth, it was interesting to read the results of a February, 2006 Pew Research Poll. A Pew Center article titled, “Are We Happy Yet?” cited their poll as follows: “People who attend religious services weekly or more are happier (43% very happy) than those who attend monthly or less (31%); or seldom or never (26%). This correlation between happiness and frequency of church attendance has been a consistent finding in the General Social Surveys taken over the years.”

A pew research global study presented by Joey Marshall on January 31, 2019 found that "Actively religious people are more likely than their less-religious peers to describe themselves as “very happy” in about half of the countries surveyed. Sometimes the gaps are striking: In the U.S., for instance, 36% of the actively religious describe themselves as “very happy,” compared with 25% of the inactively religious and 25% of the unaffiliated.

https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/31/are-religious-people-happier-healthier-our-new-global-study-explores-this-question/

Millions seek happiness by living together instead of getting married. Despite the fact that “The number of cohabiting unmarried partners increased tenfold between 1960 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau),” a Pew Research report says “….Married people (43% very happy) are a good bit happier than unmarrieds (24%) and this too has been a consistent finding over many years and many surveys...for men as well as for women, and for the old as well as the young…”

(http://pewresearch.org/pubs/301/are-we-happyyet)
More recently, according to a new study by The Office for National Statistics in the UK, the earlier findings still hold true. Married couples are happier than everyone else, whether they’re single, divorced, widowed or separated. The study analyzed data from 286,059 people between October 2017 to September 2018 and found that marital status, their health and economic activity were the top three things people said made them most happy.

• Married couples rated their life satisfaction 9.9% higher than widows and widowers.

• Married couples were 8.8% happier than higher than divorced or separated people.

• Singles, however, only reported being 0.2% happier than those who are divorced.

An article titled: “How Do You Measure Up as a Man?” in the Raleigh, North Carolina, News & Observer stated shared the following criteria: 1. His ability to make and conserve money; 2. The cost, style and age of his car; 3. How much hair he has; 4. His strength and size; 5. The job he holds and how successful he is at it; 6. What sports he likes; 7. How many clubs he belongs to; 8. His aggressiveness and reliability.

Man considers himself blessed if he makes good money, drives a nice car, has a prestigious job and address, has personal charisma, and good looks. Compare that to Jesus list: Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers and those persecuted for righteousness’ sake. Those two lists look nothing alike! No wonder the Bible says in James 4:4, “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” These great spiritual truths come only from God.

As noted previously, what made Jesus’ sermon great was not that all of His teaching was new. Jesus’ impact came from boiling down great spiritual truths and organizing them with beauty and simplicity. Such is the case with this beatitude. Hear David in Psalm 37:7-11, “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 brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret--it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” Then notice that Jesus says in Matthew 5:5, “Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.”

So what exactly does it mean to be meek? I’ve heard when taking a test you should always go with your first guess. That may work most of the time, but not always.

• How long was the Hundred Years War? One hundred and sixteen years!
• When do Russians celebrate the October Revolution? November!
• What was the first name of King George VI? Albert!
The same kind of mistaken impression is often made regarding the term “meekness.” My high school football coach in Deer Park, Texas, would quote this Beatitude. But when he said “the meek shall inherit the earth,” he meant that the timid and cowardly would find their facemask embedded in dirt. Although I got the point, that colorful metaphor was nonetheless a misapplication of Jesus’ message.

And, so today, meekness is commonly associated with weakness. The devil could have said of Jesus on the cross, “Meek is weak”, but the Biblical word meek describes a virtue that points to great power. In 1 Peter 3:4, the Holy Spirit teaches godly wives that the “ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.” But, you are mistaken, gentlemen, if you think meekness is an attribute only for the godly woman!

Consider a number of translations of Matthew 5:5: ·
“Blessed are the gentle, because they will inherit the earth.” Christian Standard Bible
“Happy the meek -- because they shall inherit the land.” Young’s Literal Translation
“Happy are the gentle: for the earth will be their heritage.” Bible in Basic English

Let’s add now the testimony of prominent Bible scholars.

J. W. McGarvey declares, “His hearers were full of hopes that, as Messiah, he would glut their martial spirit, and lead them to world-wide conquest. But the earth was not to be subjugated to him by force. Those who were meek and forbearing should receive what the arrogant and selfish grasp after and cannot get.”

Adam Clarke writes, “Happy…those who are of a quiet, gentle spirit, in opposition to the proud…Scribes and Pharisees and their disciples. We have a compound word in English, which once fully expressed the meaning of the original, viz. gentleman; but it has now almost wholly lost its original signification. Our word meek comes from the old Anglo-saxon meca, or meceea, a companion or equal, because he who is of a meek or gentle spirit, is ever ready to associate with the meanest (lowliest-BH) of those who fear God, feeling himself superior to none…"

Albert Barnes explains, “Meekness is patience in the reception of injuries. It is neither meanness, nor a surrender of our rights, nor cowardice; but it is the opposite of sudden anger, of malice, of long-harboured vengeance. Christ insisted on his right when he said, "If I have done evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" John 18:23…. And yet Christ was the very model of meekness. It was one of his characteristics, "I am meek," Matthew 11:29. …No man endured more, and more patiently, than he…. (He) bore it patiently. (He) did not harbour malice. (He) did not press (His) rights through thick and thin, and trample down the rights of others to secure (His) own.” Barnes adds, “Meekness is the reception of injuries with a belief that God will vindicate us. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," Romans 12:19. It little becomes us to take his place, and to do what he has a right to do, and what he has promised to do.”

Matthew Henry: “The meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to his word and to his rod, who follow his directions, and comply with his designs, and are gentle towards all men (Titus 3:2); who can bear provocation without being inflamed by it; are either silent, or return a soft answer;
and who can show their displeasure when there is occasion for it, without being transported into any indecencies; who can be cool when others are hot...They are the meek, who are rarely and hardly provoked, but quickly and easily pacified; and who would rather forgive twenty injuries than revenge one, having the rule of their own spirits."

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: "Towards men this disposition is the opposite of high-mindedness, and a quarrelsome and revengeful spirit; it ‘rather takes wrong, and suffers itself to be defrauded’ (1Co 6:7); it ‘avenges not itself, but rather gives place unto wrath’ (Ro 12:19); like the meek One, ‘when reviled, it reviles not again; when it suffers, it threatens not: but commits itself to Him that judgeth righteously’ (1 Pe 2:19-22)."

A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament cites Wycliffe’s translation that predates the King James Version by two hundred years, "Blessed be mild men." Robertson then notes that meekness “…is the gentleness of strength, not mere effeminacy.”

What does meekness look like? Remember when Lot seized the most fertile-looking land and left Abraham the leftovers? Abraham allowed it without complaint. That’s meekness! Moses, the greatest leader in the Old Testament was labeled by scripture “very meek, above all men” amidst a fascinating story in Numbers 12:3 where his siblings, Aaron and Miriam, were rude and insulting over Moses marrying an Ethiopian. Instead of taking matters into his own hand, Moses turned the matter over to God. When God punished Miriam with leprosy, instead of cheering her punishment with approval, Moses pleaded with God to heal her. That’s meekness!

In 2 Samuel 16:5-14, when Shimei cursed and threw rocks at King David in front of his army and bloodthirsty general Abishai, David did not unleash his fury, but restrained Abishai who was chomping at the bit to separate Shimei’s head from his body, “Let him alone…It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day." Now that’s meekness!

When the Christian is commanded to “Put on meekness” in Colossians 3:12, it implies that he must check his heart around those who rub him the wrong way.

A. W. Tozer aptly said, “The meek man is not a human mouse inflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather, in his moral life he may be as bold as a lion…. He knows that he is as weak and helpless as God declared him to be, but paradoxically, he knows that in the sight of God, he is of more importance than the angels. His motto: in himself, nothing; in God, everything.” So, the meek man is not an egomaniac, but willingly takes the lower seat. Instead of “meek as a lamb”, we should say “meek as a tamed, mighty stallion.”

When the Greek word translated "meek" was commonly used among Jesus’ Greek contemporaries, a soldier wrote of a silver stallion he bought for his sweetheart, “He’s the most magnificent animal I have ever seen, but he responds obediently to the slightest command… He allows his master to direct him to his full potential. He’s truly a meek horse.” We’re talking about power under control.
A hurricane is power OUT of control. Power out of control creates hostility, hatred, hard feelings, and discord. Remember this in evangelism! Consider 1 Peter 3:15, “always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with MEEKNESS and fear…” Merely giving a defense does not satisfy the command. If we seek the Biblical standard, we must give a defense with “meekness and fear” (power under control) or, as the New American Standard reads, “gentleness and reverence”.

Some of us need to be bolder and more assertive with the truth; some of us need to use more restraint - bridling our tongues, controlling our emotions. As for helping an erring brother, Galatians 6:1 reads, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness (“meekness” – KJV), considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” Until I can confront with meekness or gentleness, I need to can my plan to confront; I'm disqualified.

Now what about the phrase “inherit the earth”? What is that all about? Look back through human history. Perhaps some wars were fought on principle, but many more were fought over dirt—real estate. Look at what has been happening in the Middle East – forever! Alexander, Napoleon, Hitler, Saddam, Kim Jung Un: they were all motivated by the quest to grab a little more land. And, for many in the United States, life is one big game of Monopoly. Their philosophy? Nice guys finish last. Jesus says, in contrast, “Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.”

The meek are the true heirs. This is not a foothold for millennial theories that place Jesus on an earthly throne. In the following Scriptures, listen for the word or idea of “inherit” and its object:

Matthew 19:29, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”

Matthew 25:34, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"

1 Peter 1:4, “to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled... reserved in heaven for you…”

In Matthew 5:5, Jesus wasn’t referring so much to the American Dream as he was to the hope of heaven. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:8, “godliness is profitable for ALL things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” So, the blessing here is two-fold: it points primarily to eternal reward, but not to the exclusion of earthly blessings. Moses, for instance, was the meekest man in all the earth, and yet, he never entered the earthly Promised Land. Jesus was “meek and lowly in heart,” but had no place to lay his head on earth.

Barnes writes, “It is probable that here is a reference to the manner in which the Jews commonly expressed themselves to denote any great blessing….Our Saviour used it in this sense; and meant to say, not that the meek should own great property or have many lands, but that they should possess [special] blessings. The Jews also considered the land of Canaan as a type of heaven, and of the blessings under the Messiah. To inherit the land became, therefore, an expression denoting those blessings. When our Saviour promises it here, he means that the meek shall be received into his kingdom, and partake of its blessings here, and of the glories of the heavenly Canaan hereafter.”
In 1 Peter 2:9, Christians are called “a royal priesthood.” We are kings and priests in a spiritual sense and not in a literal carnal sense. Remember how Matthew Henry described the meek? He said, “The meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to his word and to his rod, who follow his directions, and comply with his designs…”

Have you demonstrated meekness by obeying the gospel?

Call us for a free copy of 1288, “Blessed are the Meek.” You may also request at no cost the Truth Frees Bible study course. Watch videos, hear audio, or read transcripts of 500 gospel messages at LetTheBibleSpeak.com. Do us a favor and visit, like, and share the Let the Bible Speak Facebook page. Subscribe to our YouTube channel to view the weekly message at your convenience. We say with the apostle Paul in Romans 16:16, “the churches of Christ salute you.” Until next week, goodbye and may God bless you.

Are you searching for the truth of God's word and have a sincere desire to learn about the Bible? Do you want to know what the Bible says about salvation and about Christ and His church? If you are looking for Bible Founded discussion on these topics and many others, then please accept this invitation to explore "Let the Bible Speak" and then contact us for additional studies.

We are members of the church of Christ as found in the New Testament. We are not members of a denomination or earthly religious organization. We are a brotherhood of believers, joined by a common bond, Jesus Christ. We try to live and worship following the patterns found in the New Testament.

(For manuscripts of other sermons visit: www.LetTheBibleSpeak.com)

COPYRIGHT © Let The Bible Speak. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

IMPORTANT COPYRIGHT NOTICE:
Express permission is granted to distribute any video, audio, or transcript of any broadcast message as long as the material is: unedited and attribution is given to Let The Bible Speak; a hyperlink to LetTheBibleSpeak.com is included for electronic distribution; a text reference is included to www.LetTheBibleSpeak.com for printed distribution; and the original author receives attribution. An irrevocable, world-wide, royalty free license for distribution is granted as long as such distribution has the intent of: supporting the truth as presented; giving glory and honor to God; and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.