



Blessed Are The Meek for they will inherit the earth

Matthew 5:5

Many years ago, there used to be a reality TV show called *The Apprentice*. For multiple seasons, Tracy and I would watch it weekly to discover who would do best in their given tasks, beat others, and eventually be the next apprentice in one of Trump's businesses. I don't want to talk about the show itself, but I do want to mention something that bothered me every week – and still bothers me to this day. It was the intro to the show. Yes, the intro played the song *Money, Money, Money*. But my big problem wasn't that. My problem was with some words that were typed on the screen: It's not personal. It's business. Even all those years ago, I remember using that phrase as an illustration in a sermon, saying how inaccurate that statement is because we as human beings are created to love God and to love others. Nothing can *not be personal* because God created us as personal, interactive beings. But, if the goal of life is your personal success, making more money and gaining more power, then you can say, "It's not personal. It's just business." Of course, what that really means is, "I am only thinking of myself personally, and you're in my way." In the desire to attain and climb higher in success, to gain our dreams, we act like we believe we are of utmost importance.

I think we all know this. I was reading a story about this last week. A young lady in college was in a play, and as she sought to gain more roles, she quickly learned that many prominent actors and actresses had to step on a lot of people to get what they wanted. One time a Christian spoke with her about humility and meekness and she scoffed at it. She would not believe *this* Beatitude because she didn't seek meekness being blessed. Nor did she see the meek getting success in this world. This is exactly the same way that the philosopher Frederick Nietzsche thought. He re-write this Beatitude by saying, "Assert yourself! It is the arrogant who take over the earth!"

In practice, so many people function the opposite way from Jesus' words. I would add that "meekness" is probably not a term most often used in the Church either. Again, I want to read to you from a sermon preached 60+ years ago by Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Tell me if you think it sounds like the American church, too. ". . .this Beatitude comes. . .in the form of a very striking contrast to much thinking within the Christian Church at the present time. For is there not a rather pathetic tendency to think in terms of fighting the world, and sin, and the things that are opposed to Christ, by means of great organizations? Am I wrong when I suggest that the controlling and prevailing thought of the Christian Church throughout the world seems to be the very opposite of what is indicated in this text? . . . **'Blessed are the meek', not those who trust to their own organizing, not those who trust to their own powers and abilities and their own institutions. Rather it is the very reverse of that**" (Lloyd-Jones, *Studies on the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 53).

I think that we Christians can be quick to point our fingers at the world and say, "Yeah, they're not very meek," but I wonder how often we take the weapons of this world to try to enforce Jesus' Kingdom on the world. Yet, as Lloyd-Jones states, we are to act in the very opposite way. Remember that Jesus is primarily speaking to his disciples in this sermon. These disciples are blessed because they have turned to Jesus. Now, Jesus calls them to live out their identity. As blessed ones, embrace the poverty of spirit, embrace mourning, embrace meekness. This is what it means to live blessed. And, to be blessed means

that you are in the highest possible state of blessedness possible! If you have turned from your sins and turned to Jesus for forgiveness and reconciliation with God, you are blessed. Now, by his grace, we are called and empowered to live out these realities of the blessed condition. So, today, we're going to investigate this Beatitude (i.e. – this statement of blessing). We'll consider what it means to be meek and then what it means to inherit the earth. To conclude the sermon, I'll ask questions for your own personal application. So, let's jump in to discover more what it means that **The meek are blessed because they will inherit the earth.**

1. What does it mean to be meek?

If you are to look at the Merriam-Webster's dictionary definition of "meek," you'll find three definitions. Two of them are maybe more common ways we understand this word. One definition is "deficient in spirit and courage." Another definition is, "not violent or strong." So, you hear Jesus' words and you might wonder, "Is Jesus saying that those who are physically weak and deficient of courage the blessed ones?" Is meekness the opposite of having power or the opposite of physical strength and courage? No. The other definition in the dictionary follows most closely to the biblical definition. It's this: **enduring injury and patience without resentment** (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/meek>).

In ancient Greek, there's a record of a man writing to a woman who I believe was his fiancé. He was traveling and found a horse for her. As he was describing the horse, he spoke of the horse's strength and abilities and how wherever the horse is directed, it does exactly that with all of its power. This man then stated this horse was a *meek* horse. I love the very basic definition of meekness, which is **power under control.**

Meekness doesn't mean that you have no power. Meekness means that the strength you have is lived under the control of another. Of course, as Jesus states these Beatitudes with spiritual realities, we understand that meekness here is referencing power under the control of God. And this is how the rest of Scripture exemplifies meekness.

Look at Abraham. Here was a man who had much wealth and power. Yet, when confronted with which land to take, he actually gave the opportunity to his nephew, Lot, to take whatever land he wanted. That's an example of meekness because Abraham trusted the Lord and he didn't waive his rights as the blessed one to take the land he wanted.

Think of Moses – a man trained in Pharaoh's court, but he chose to leave the pleasures of Pharaoh's court to work for Israel's rescue from Egypt. God worked through Moses in powerful ways, and Moses had much authority. Yet, Moses is described in Scriptures as the most meek man on the earth (see Numb. 12:3). Why? Look at how submissive he was, through so many trials and difficulties. You can trace this principle of power under the control of God in people like David, Elijah, Elisha, the apostle Paul, and even saints throughout the ages. Therefore, I love this longer definition of meekness: **Meekness is essentially a true view of oneself, expressing itself in attitude and conduct with respect to others** (Lloyd-Jones, p. 57).

Spiritual bankruptcy deals with how you view yourself. Mourning deals with how you view yourself and this world as hopeless without Christ. This world is under the curse. Meekness then takes these realities and looks outward. If you truly know your spiritual bankruptcy and are mourning, then meekness will be expressed as well. You won't treat people with hatred or retaliation. You'll treat them with love and concern for their eternal welfare! Why? Because God has treated you that way. You and I, left to

ourselves, deserve God's just punishment. And yet, he's given us eternal kindness, grace, mercy, peace – all glorious promises for eternity. He's blessed us in Jesus! Therefore, just as he does not direct his anger towards us, so we don't direct our anger towards others. We are kind and humble under God's sovereign care of us.

This reality of meekness is fully fulfilled in Jesus himself. Later in Matthew, Jesus is recorded as saying this: ²⁸ **Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.** ²⁹ **Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**¹ In this translation, we read, "gentle and lowly." The word for "gentle," is the word for "meek." Jesus, who actually is perfect and all-glorious took on the form of sinful humanity and lived in the weakness of humanity (never sinning, but taking on limitations). He, who is God in the flesh, could rule with an iron rod and destroy all sin and sinners. Yet, he came in this world and says, "Come to me. . . I am meek." Think about that. Why does he say "meek?" Because his power is under the control of God. His power isn't a power that is zealously chaotic. Jesus isn't saying, "I'm so angry and I'm going to burn against you." No. Instead, I'm submissive to the Father who came to welcome you to the Father's arms. This is meekness. Do you know this love? Have you been drawn into Christ's arms? Do you know when you turn to Jesus in need of his forgiveness and grace, whether you have never trusted him or you have been a believer for decades, that he doesn't spurn you or turn you away or hit you over the head? He is meek. He is compassionate.

2. What does it mean to inherit the earth?

You might say, "Ok, this sounds nice and rosy, but why would I do this?" What if business competition cuts corners to be more successful than your business? Can you cut corners? What if people won't listen to you unless you exert your power in ways that God doesn't condone? I mean, it's ok as long as we can justify it, right? Wrong. Think of Jesus, as described in Philippians 2. He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. We are commanded to have this same mind to not assert our authority and to also humble ourselves.

As blessed ones then, let's look at the blessing we receive. I pray that this blessing would humble us and cause greater resolve in our hearts to live out the grace of meekness in our lives. As Kingdom Citizens, may we reveal a different way of living in this world – showing the world there's a greater Kingdom to live for.

Alright, so what's the blessing? Answer: they will inherit the earth. What does that mean? Does that mean that if I live with power under God's control, I'm going to succeed in all my business dealings and that I'll be successful in America and experience the American dream? That's how some people want to take this. Listen to someone like Joel Osteen and that's exactly what he'd say. But it's not just someone like him. I've heard people in our kinds of circles who would say that. Just follow God and he will "bless you" with money and a savings account, etc. No! You are already blessed in Christ. You may follow Christ and lose your savings and lose position in your job. Yet, within the blessed state in Christ, you have an inheritance. That inheritance is *the earth*.

Immediately, our minds should be drawn to Psalm 37:9, which says, **"For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land."**² In motivating and encouraging God's children

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mt 11:28–29.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 37:9.

to trust the Lord, David says that the evil will be cut off, but those who *wait on the Lord* will inherit the land. This “land” promise goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. They were given Eden and they were to work and till the land until the glory of the Lord filled the land until the waters cover the sea. Adam and Eve sin and they’re kicked out of Eden. They still are to live off the land, but the curse is against them. Then God makes a promise to Abram. Through Abraham all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, and God also makes a promise of land to Abrahams offspring. This term for offspring include a national Israel, but as Paul says in Galatians, this also refers to one who is to come – the Messiah. You see, Israel had land and they were to worship God and obey him, but they failed as well. They consistently went their own way, but they were to obey so that the glory of the Lord would cover the land as the waters cover the sea. Then Jesus came, and right here, Jesus says to his disciples that all who trust him inherit the land. This isn’t simply talking about Israeli borders in the Middle East. This is talking about the fulfillment of the promise. The glory of the Lord will cover the land as the waters cover the sea. Those who trust Jesus may not experience material success in this world, but for all eternity future, they will live with the Lord. As Revelation says, “The dwelling place of God will be with man.” There will be a place of no mourning, pain, sorrow, death.

This land fulfillment actually fulfills the Old Testament idea of *Shalom* – which is *peace*. Oh how human beings long for peace. People labor in their lives to get to a level of peace in their homes, neighborhoods, towns, nations, and even the world. There is only One who will bring complete peace and harmony – Jesus himself. And therefore, those who have turned to Jesus find peace with God, peace with others and someday they will live in a world with perfect *peace*.

Think of the contrast of Jesus’ Kingdom with the kingdoms of this world. Every nation and society has the stains of unjust blood. And societies advance in various hidden, sinful ways. Yet, every past powerful society throughout the ages has died. And those that remain today – even America – will be done away with. Why? Because Jesus’ Kingdom reigns, and someday Jesus will bring his Kingdom of peace, and we who trust Jesus will finally be *home*.

Because of this glorious hope and promise, we should be compelled all the more to live meekly. Jesus is in control. Every event in my life, every perceived failure that I experience or thwarting of my success in this life, doesn’t change the promise that I will inherit the earth! Therefore, we ought to live in such a different way that we show the world that there is a King we live for!

Recently, I came across a statement from an author who said, “I don’t want to live in a nation governed by Critical Race Theory. I don’t want to live in a nation governed by the Constitution of the United States. I want to live in a new world ruled by the risen Messiah and his Bride. Until then, I’ll be a sojourner wherever God puts me” (Eric Schumacher, Twitter 6/9/21). To inherit the land means Jesus’ Kingdom is what we long for, and no earthly kingdom satisfies. Everything is broken, but Jesus has made us whole in him!

With this, let me ask you a few questions to call you to apply this beatitude to your heart. Before I do, I want to reemphasize something. I don’t want anyone here to think, “This is what I will do in order to be blessed by God.” No. You are blessed. We are now to live in light of our identity. Blessed are you *because* you have this! So, live it out. That said, if you don’t live these out, you ought to ask yourself, “Do I actually have a relationship with Jesus himself? Do I want him?” I say this because the clear implication of the Scriptures is that God promises to grow in obedience those who love him. Jesus himself says that if we love him, we will keep his commandments. Why? Because the summation of the commandments is *love*.

With this understanding, let me ask you a few questions:

1. Do I have a spirit of retaliation? Meekness means power under control – as it relates to the people around us. Meekness is expressed through humble love and care and compassion towards others. Part of the fruit of the spirit is meekness. But, so often, I think people have a sinful propensity towards retaliation. Do you have an “I’m going to make that person pay” attitude? If someone puts you down, are you quick to mock? Maybe you act this way with your spouse? Maybe with your children? What about with co-workers or neighbors? What about driving down the road? What if someone makes claims about you and those claims hurt. You feel they’re not correct. Are you immediately defensive?

I want us to process this more because meekness also has a right view of self. Because we are weak. Because we are human, and not God. Because we are sinners who have been forgiven – meekness says, “But for the grace of God, there go I.” Meekness says, “You have made a claim about me that hurts, but the reality is that you don’t know the half of my internal sinful heart. So, really, you can’t come close to saying how wicked my flesh actually is.” This is meekness. Again, if you want examples of this, look at David who wouldn’t retaliate. Look at Paul who said, “The more I love you, the less I’m loved.” Yet, he continued to love. This is meekness. And this leads me to the second question.

2. Am I longsuffering with others? Remember that “longsuffering” is one of my favorite older English words. The modern word is “patient,” but longsuffering means that I suffer long with others. Why would I do this if the strong inherit the earth? I wouldn’t. I’d simply say, “It’s not personal, you’re just not my type. Longsuffering means that we suffer long for the welfare of others. Now, this doesn’t mean that we stay in situations of abuse. It’s not helpful for another person to continue in their sins. But we must pray that we be concerned about the souls of people – and God will grant this if we understand the goodness of our Savior and his love for us!

3. Am I meek in the midst of trails? “Ok, but what about if someone really hurts me emotionally? Or, what if government becomes really corrupt?” I will simply let the Spirit’s words speak to us through Peter: **But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.** ²¹ **For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.** ²² **He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.** ²³ **When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.** ²⁴ **He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.** ²⁵ **For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**³

“But I must defend myself?!” Why? This world is not our home. This land isn’t our longing. Our great defense before God is settled. If you’ve trusted in Jesus and are God’s child, you have a home – and it’s not this one. Jesus sees to it that you and I will inherit the land. No need to pridefully defend your reputation. But maybe you’re still clinging to this world because you don’t really believe the world to come is more wondrous. So, let me ask you a final question:

4. Do I rejoice in my inheritance? This past week, a pastor friend told me a story about a friend of his (who is also a pastor). This pastor was on an airplane, sitting next to a man who said he was a lawyer. That lawyer was focused on divvying out inheritances. Sometimes, he has to search for people in the

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Pe 2:20–25.

inheritance because their location is unknown. On this particular airplane ride, he was coming back from England. There was a very large inheritance from a very wealthy American Family, and the nearest kin to receive a large inheritance was a distant relative in England. This lawyer found that found the relative in a courthouse – working as a janitor. The lawyer asked her if she had heard of this particular family. She said “yes,” and she even said she heard there was some sort of distant relation. He then proceeded to tell her that she had come into quite a bit of wealth. She couldn’t believe it. And actually, this lawyer said to this pastor, sometimes it’s quite sad when people literally cannot process the inheritance they’ve received. They don’t get it. Upon hearing this, the pastor said something like this to the lawyer: That’s what my job is, too. I try to tell people about the inheritance Jesus gives. And, it can be sad how God’s children don’t understand all that God has given to them. But I remind them over and over and over again.

Ventura, do you remind yourself, rehearse to yourself, the inheritance you have? Thank God that he doesn’t say to us, “It’s not personal. It’s just business.” He is very personal and gives us all blessings in Christ! So, as Colossians 3 says, **“²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”**⁴ Having our minds set on Christ will affect our attitudes and behaviors towards the world. We will be astounded by God’s grace to people like us, and we will want to share that grace to others!

Now, as we conclude our study of this Beatitude and even contemplate these application questions, no one here should say, “Oh yes! I do all these things. I’m pretty good!” We are all, left to ourselves, spiritually bankrupt. I believe these Beatitudes are all intended to lead us to depend on Christ all over again – every day, every moment. If you walk away saying, “Wow, that’s good. I’m glad I do this,” you’ve missed it. But if you’re led to Christ: to thank God for his mercies towards you and then to pray that you would love and follow him – praise God! So, ponder the implications here today and look to the Lord. And, if you’ve never trusted Christ, please talk to someone here today before leaving. We’d love to share with you what it means to be a Christ-follower.

In all of this, let’s never forget that **The meek are blessed because they will inherit the earth.**

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Col 3:1–4.