

## The Beatitudes

### Blessed Are the Meek

Matthew 5:4

## Introduction

We are continuing our series on the teachings of Jesus, and today we're going to study the third beatitude, 'Blessed are the meek. The teachings of Jesus are a real paradox compared to our human wisdom and thought patterns. Jesus seems to turn everything upside down. He says:

- The last shall be first.
- It's better to give than to receive.
- To die is to live.
- To lose is to find.
- To be rich, you must be poor.
- To be strong, you must be weak.
- To rule, you must serve.

Life in the Kingdom of Heaven is very different from life in this world. The people who listened to Jesus give these teachings wanted a change. They were looking for a Messiah who would miraculously restore the kingdom of Israel. They believed that God would raise up a Messiah that would wipe out the Roman rule in Palestine. Even the disciples believed this. In Acts Chapter 1, they asked Jesus, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom again to Israel?" Their connection to this world blinded them spiritually.

Jesus' response is John 18:36, 'My kingdom is not of this world, but is in the hearts of men.' He's speaking to a group of people that felt the kingdom should be taken by force! Let's read again the words he speaks to this crowd of people in Matthew Chapter 5, "Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: **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 meek, For they shall inherit the earth.** (Matthew 5:2-5 NKJV)

What kind of meek and mild followers will make a difference in a culture that promotes power and might as the key to true success. Who are the meek, and how can they possibly inherit the earth!

## I. The Meek

1 Corinthians 1:26, "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble *are called*. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty."

(1 Corinthians 1:26-27 NKJV)

Meekness is not weakness or indecisiveness. It is not timidity or being unsure of yourself. It is not mild-mannered or hesitant to act or speak. It is not cowardice or spinelessness. It is not peace at any price. It is not lacking confidence or being shy. It is not introverted or simply well-mannered. It is not politically correct or socially inept.

The Greek word for meekness means 'to be gentle and humble, considerate, and courteous.' It was used in three different ways.

1. Doctors used it to describe a soothing medicine for pain.
2. Sailors used it to describe a cool fresh breeze that refreshes.
3. And farmers used it to describe a horse that was useful for riding or plowing.

Meekness is power under control. Meekness knows how to direct force and energy in the right direction. Thank God for modern medicine, and who doesn't enjoy a cool breeze on a hot day! Meekness is strength and energy channeled in the right direction. Paul describes it in Philippians Chapter 2 in the life of Christ as self-emptying, humility, and brokenness before God to accomplish God's ultimate purpose.

As followers of Christ, the effect in us is a willingness to acknowledge our sinfulness and recognize the power of Christ to change us. In a spiritual sense, it is having everything even though you possess nothing. In a literal sense, it is having nothing even though you possess everything.

The Discovery Bible says that meekness is the character of one who has the passion of resentment under control, and who is therefore tranquil and untroubled. "The influence of the meek and self-controlled is in the long-run greater than that of the impulsive and passionate. Their serenity helps them to find the maximum of true joy in all conditions of life; for to them the earth is not a stage for self-assertion and the graspings of desire, but an "inheritance" which they have received from their Father."

Psalms 37 says, "Fret not because of evildoers." Meekness causes us to do just that! Meekness influences our attitude about life. It causes us to consider the effect our attitudes and behaviors will have upon others.

Meekness also influences your attitude towards the word of God. James 1:19 encourages us to receive the engrafted word with meekness. When the Holy Spirit convicts and challenges us, meekness will cause us to accept it and do something about it.

Meekness also influences your attitude towards others. When we see the value in others and respect their God-given gifts, it dramatically improves our attitude and behavior.

Meekness even affects your attitude towards those you disagree with! 2 Timothy 2:24 says, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to

teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do his will.*" (2 Timothy 2:24-26 NKJV)

Would you say you are even-tempered and full of self-control? Or do you fly off the handle if something doesn't go the way you think it should? Are you a person who creates tension and strife or diffuses it? Do you react with hostility and anger or with assurance and poise?

## II. The Inheritance

I read somewhere that the US Postal Service posted on its Web site this warning: If you receive a notification in the mail from an 'estate locator' saying that there is an unclaimed inheritance waiting for you, beware. You could be the target of a slick con artist." Why? Because thousands of people received a notice in the mail saying, 'A relative of yours has died and left you an inheritance.' People use schemes like this to prey on people's natural desire to receive an inheritance. Maybe that long-lost rich uncle you never knew has died and left you a fortune! They say if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is!

But the Bible commends those who truly provide an inheritance. Proverbs 13:22 says, "One who is good will leave an inheritance to his children's children." Jesus' words in this beatitude echo those of King David in Psalm 37:11 "The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

So what kind of inheritance do you think you will receive? Do you think you'll "Inherit the earth"? That's an interesting thought! But how can we be sure that this is not just another crafty scheme designed to deprive us of something we already have? The earth is God's wonderful creation. He made it. He owns it. And he can give it to whoever he chooses. He writes in Psalm 2:8, "Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession." (Psalms 2:8 NKJV)

The apostle Paul described Jesus as the one "whom [God] appointed heir of all things." (Hebrews 1:2) When Jesus said that the meek "shall inherit the earth," he did so in good faith, and he has the proper authority to fulfill his promise.—Matthew 28:18.

The crucial question is, How will this promise come true? Today, it seems that the aggressive and the high-minded are gaining the upper hand and taking what they want. Where do the meek come into the picture? Serious problems plague the earth, and its resources are being exploited by the greedy and the shortsighted. If Jesus made the promise, there will definitely be something worth inheriting!

God created the earth for a specific purpose. In Isaiah 45, the prophet writes, "For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth

and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other." (Isaiah 45:18 NKJV)

God's purpose for the earth is to be our eternal home and His headquarters.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God by breaking the command that gave them, they turned their back on the one who provided them with everything they had. (Genesis 3:6) And they lost their beautiful Paradise home not only for themselves but for the rest of us as well. (Romans 5:12) But did the first couple's disobedience change God's purpose in creating the earth? God could have annihilated them. But Psalm 105:8 says, "He remembers His covenant forever, The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations." (Psalms 105:8 NKJV)

God is always faithful to his word. He will make sure that the promise of inheritance is not only available but also restored in all its splendor. In Revelation 21:4, John tells us that in the promised new world, God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4 NKJV)

What Jesus promises is an earth that truly is a Paradise. The transformation of the earth into a paradise will take place under a government that exercises its dominion from heaven. In the kingdom of Heaven, Jesus is the King! First, the Kingdom of Heaven will "bring to ruin those who have ruined the earth." Then, as the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ will fulfill these prophetic words spoken by Isaiah, "Of the increase of *His* government and peace, *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:7 NKJV)

Those who have chosen citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven will inherit the New Heavens and the New Earth. So Jesus knows what he's talking about when he says, "Blessed are the meek," or, "Happy are the spirit-controlled ones since they will inherit the earth."

In his New Testament Wordbook, William Barclay states, "There is gentleness in the word meek, but behind the gentleness, there is the strength of steel." God gives us a mental disposition that enables us to endure injury without resentment or thought of retaliation. It results from having a good relationship with God, and that relationship becomes a source of strength for us.—Isaiah 12:2; Philippians 4:13.

God has a special blessing of inheritance for you if you act in faith instead of reacting to your circumstances. And the benefits are enormous! Jeremiah writes in Chapter 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV)

### III. The Blessing

The blessing begins with yielding your will to the will of God. It begins by allowing the Holy Spirit to help you and direct your life. The Holy Spirit helps us to learn how to rule our emotions instead of letting our emotions rule us. The Holy Spirit will teach you how to direct your energies in a disciplined and productive manner.

It's a blessing not to overreact to things! The blessing of meekness keeps us from giving in to extremes in our attitudes and behaviours. Our new life in Christ helps us learn how to lay aside harsh attitudes and judgments towards others. When we become spirit controlled we learn to be even-tempered and we begin to find that faith flourishes before us. Those who think they are self-made and self-sufficient see no need to trust anyone else. But the meek know they need help and are quick to acknowledge and accept God's guidance and supervision.

The meek have a unique ability to see life from a broader perspective and find it easier to trust God's timing in things. It is the meek person who discovers that God is near to those of a contrite heart and a humble spirit. It is the even-tempered person and humble in will that experiences the abiding presence of Christ in the most chaotic of times. Even a poor person with very little material possessions can gain a great eternal inheritance because of faith in Jesus Christ.

Who do you go to when you need advice? People don't go to the conceited or arrogant. They don't confide in the self-important or self-promoting. The blessing of the meek is that they are approachable, self-giving, and self-sacrificing. Their warmth and genuine compassion cause others to seek them out. They know the voice of God. They exercise the fruit of the Spirit. They enjoy the blessing and peace that goes beyond knowledge.

It is the meek who really have learned to enjoy God and His Creation. So many are just too busy to inherit the blessings that God causes to shine upon the earth each day. A sunrise, a beautiful sunset, fragrant flowers, the beauty of the earth. The meek pause for a moment here and there to be enriched by the beauty and blessing of God's handiwork.

Too often we put a great emphasis on attaining goals and achieving success and pursuing a course of action that we have little or no time to enjoy the journey. The blessing of life is not be preoccupied with motivation or making your mark – it is enjoying the inner assurance of God's abiding presence that makes you aware of his hand of blessing all around you.

For the meek the burden of work is transformed into a labour of love. Their service is given in joy for the Master – not as a job for the boss. The meek do not strive. They are not obsessed with reaching the top because they know they're already there! They are not threatened that someone will take their place because they are secure in their relationship with God. Their gifts always make room for them.

They do not engage in pettiness or subscribe to the “pecking order”. They are content to follow the Holy Spirit’s leading in their life.

The meek enjoy the blessing of not needing to try to impress others. They do what they do to the best of their ability and give God the glory for whatever they do accomplish. The purpose of the meek is to fulfil the purpose of God. As a true citizen of heaven they bring a little bit of heaven into every encounter and situation of life.

What you have is God’s gift to you – what you make of it is your gift to God. The meek live under the control of the Holy Spirit. It is reflected in their discipline, in their gentleness, and in their obedient submission to God’s will.

## **Conclusion**

Jesus teaching on being meek is not just good moral advice. It is a quality of character present only among those who recognize their complete lack of resource apart from the divine presence of God. There are a lot of good people in the world who are even-tempered, who live good lives, who share with the poor and work to relieve the oppressed. But that does not make them meek!

The kind of meekness Christ teaches about is the kind that acknowledges God as the source of every blessing and the supplier of every need. The meek Jesus is talking about are faithful stewards. They know nothing in this life belongs to them. They see themselves as the stewards of what God owns. And they feel blessed to serve Him!

According to the world, nice people finish last! According to Jesus, the meek inherit the earth. The world says push hard and try to the best of the best. Jesus says, “Do your best and enter into my rest!”

Whenever you’re around the meek you feel as though you just been in the presence of God himself. There’s a sense of peace and confidence and guidance that just puts you at ease and fills you with hope. If you can hear Jesus calling you today, you will hear him saying: “Come unto me, all of you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your soul!” (Matthew 11:28-29)