

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE

Misunderstood Meekness

TEXT: Mt. 5:5

INTRODUCTION:

Mt. 5:3-5 ³ “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
⁴ Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
⁵ Blessed *are* the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.

The Apostle Peter was never known for being subtle. What he says he says plainly, and that is true of his practical instruction on how we should dress for church. In fact, he is not just talking about how to dress for church, but for work, school, or for just hanging out.

¹ Peter 3:3-4 ³ Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— ⁴ rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

Peter turns our attention from the outside to inside. He says, don't just fix your hair, put on nice clothes, and jewelry. Put a jewel in your heart that God can see and loves. Adorn your inward self with the precious jewelry of meekness.

That is the literal translation of Peter's instruction. He uses the same word Jesus uses when in the third beatitude our Lord taught the qualities of a blameless heart like God desires to find so He can show Himself strong in our lives and bring us abiding joy.

Peter says that the jewel of the heart is a meek and quiet spirit.

Jesus says, “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.”

Probably the most misunderstood and therefore least used of all the beatitudes is this one on meekness. This morning my desire is to answer one question: **What is meekness?**

Let me try to answer the question in 3 ways.

I. BY EXAMINATION OF THE WORD

- A. Praus, Prous, Proutees – only appears 16 times in the N.T. and in its O.T. counterpart only 15 times.

It has a rich background of meaning among Greeks

used to describe a broken horse as opposed to a wild one.

used to speak of the taming of wild animals.

used to contrast a gentle breeze to a violent hurricane.

Among people it is the opposite of a bad temper; one who is embittered or ever-complaining.

- B. What it does not mean:

Some dictionaries define meekness as deficient in courage.

Many envision meekness as the equivalent of weakness.

Some think it means “one who is easy to get along with.”

Mr. Nice Guy

The Compromiser (trying to keep everyone happy)

A Charlie Brown, one who is wishy-washy in convictions.

Never gets angry – little emotion

These are common things often generated in our minds by the word meekness. None of them accurately describe the word meekness.

We can better understand if we look at some examples of meekness.

II. EXAMPLES OF MEEKNESS

- A. Consider Moses

Num. 12:3 KJV (Now the man Moses was very **meek**, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Note that I had to switch to the KJV here, because often time even the translators

missed the fine points of the meaning of this word. And while it is correct to say that Moses was humble, that is not what this text says. It says he was meek. And he offers us a clear example of what meekness really is.

Think of Moses

Before Pharaoh— “Let my people go”

Before the people at Mt.Sinai when they made and worshipped the golden calf. He ground the idol into gold and made the people drink it! Then he sent the Levites out to slay 3,000 men guilty of leading the people into idolatry.”

At Korah’s rebellion in Num. 16.

Does this sound like Moses was weak, cowardly, Mr. Nice Guy, and a compromiser? Like one who is wishy-washy and bland?

No – but he was meek!

B. Consider Jesus (Mt. 11:29)

Recall Jesus

To the Pharisees

Mt. 23:27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men’s* bones and all uncleanness.

To the disciples

Mk. 9:42-48 ⁴² “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. ⁴³ If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— ⁴⁴ where

‘Their worm does not die
And the fire is not quenched.’

⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— ⁴⁶ where

'Their worm does not die,
And the fire is not quenched.'

⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— ⁴⁸ where

'Their worm does not die
And the fire is not quenched.'

Consider Jesus, Who twice went to the temple and in anger over-turned tables and drove the profiteers from the tables with a whip.

Does He sound like one cowardly and weak whom everybody thought was nice? One never too far on one side or another, but always in the compromising middle?

No – Not Jesus – but He was meek!

I've been preaching now _____ minutes on what meekness is, and I still have not told you. But I hope now you know what it is not and by example are prepared for

III. THE EXPLANATION

Meekness is “strength under control.”

It is “power held in submission.”

- A. Moses was strong – physically, mentally, spiritually. But he had his strength under control.

Num. 12 – Miriam and Aaron murmur against Moses. Moses could have had the congregation wipe them out. Moses said not a word in his own defense.

Tell story

Strength under control never defends self!

- B. Jesus was strong – He grew in wisdom, stature, relationship with God and man. But He never used His strength nor the power available to Him to defend Himself.

In Gethsemane

Mt. 26:53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?

12 legions of angles (72,000 angels) In 2 Kings 19:35, one angel slew 185,000 Assyrians

Before Pilate

He tells the governor the he has no power over Him except what has been given him, yet He makes no defense nor attempts escape.

In Isaiah – “Like a sheep before his shearers... He opened not His mouth”

Power in submission does not defend self!

C. What does it defend?

We have seen today both Moses and Jesus white hot with fierce anger. What were they defending? They were defending God.

1. Moses

Num. 16:11, 28-30 ¹¹ Therefore you and all your company *are* gathered together against the LORD. And what *is* Aaron that you complain against him?” ²⁸ And Moses said: “By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for *I have not done them* of my own will. ²⁹ If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me. ³⁰ But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD.”

Moses was not concerned for his own position, honor, glory, prestige, or physical well-being. He was consumed with preservation of honor, glory, command, and word of God.

Korah was no threat to him personally. He would have been glad to go back to Midian or alone to Canaan. But Korah was challenging God’s decision that Moses was to lead and while he lifted no finger in self-defense, he became a wall of fire thru which Korah would have to pass in order to circumvent God’s plan.

2. Jesus

He would allow them to beat the flesh from His back and drive spikes through His innocent hands without anger, malice, or revenge.

But when they made a mockery of worship and preyed upon innocent victims in God’s own house, His anger glared like coals in a strong wind, and He

drove them violently from the temple because He was defending God.

John McArthur – “Meekness says I’ll do nothing to defend myself. I’ll die defending God.”

Meekness is having strength and power God has entrusted to us and never using it for selfish benefit, but always for God’s glory.

CONCLUSION: Do you see why meekness comes third in the beatitudes? It’s hard enough to be poor in spirit yourself and mourn over your sin.

But when meek, you have to be able to hear others point them out and make no defense.

Like one preacher said, “I can cry out to the Lord and say ‘I’m a terrible sinner,’ but if one of my members comes up to me and says, ‘You’re a terrible sinner,’ I want to punch him in the nose.

The first step to getting it is to acknowledge the lack of it and ask God for it.