

The blessed meek

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[0 : 00] Now we turn to Matthew chapter 5 and we take up verse 5. Matthew chapter 5, verse 5. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

We have been going through these beatitudes, looking at what Jesus tells us in his Sermon on the Mount. And this is the third mark that Jesus gives to us of what Christian character is like.

He tells us that a Christian man is a man who is poor in spirit. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And then he goes on to tell us that a Christian man is a man who mourns and who grieves over sin. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

And now he goes on to say, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. And this, as we have said, is the third characteristic that Jesus gives us of what it is to be a Christian.

[1 : 22] To be a Christian means that you are a meek person. Now this virtue of meekness immediately raises the question for us, what does Jesus mean by being meek?

What is meekness? Does it mean spinelessness? Does it mean weakness?

Does it mean subservience? Because these are some of the things that we associate with meekness. As soon as we talk about a man or a woman being meek, we are inclined to think, Oh, that's a man who's weak.

Or who's pretty spineless. Or who is pretty subservient to other people. Is this what Jesus meant when he said, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth?

Was Jesus saying, Blessed are those people who are spineless? Blessed are those people who are weak? Blessed are those people who are subservient?

[2 : 32] Is that what Jesus was saying? Of course not. This is what Richard Glover, the Baptist commentator, says in his commentary on Matthew.

The world, he says, thinks meekness, a respectable name for weakness. The limp spirit which has not nerve to resist.

Which seeks the shade because it cannot shine. Now that's not what our Lord meant by meekness. But let us look at some of the famous men that are mentioned in the scriptures who were meek men and let's understand what it is like to be a meek man.

I suppose that the most outstanding example that we have of a godly man who at the same time was a meek man was Moses.

If we turn back to Numbers chapter 12 verse 3, this is what we read about Moses. Now it says the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.

[3 : 52] And when it tells us that, does it mean that Moses was spineless? That Moses was the groveling type of man? That Moses was a weak man?

Very far from it. We only need to go back to read some of the incidents in the life of Moses to understand that Moses was far from being a groveling man.

And very far from being a spineless man. Just you think of him going in to confront Pharaoh.

Just you think of his insistence before Pharaoh that Pharaoh must let the people of God go. Did he go in front of Pharaoh's subservience?

Did he go in front of Pharaoh in a spineless manner? No, he faces up to Pharaoh and he says, Pharaoh, in God's name you must let this people go.

[4 : 57] And no matter how Pharaoh refused to let the people go, Moses went in back again and again and again.

A meek man but not a weak man. Or think of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai after he had been given the Ten Commandments inscribed by the finger of God upon the tablets of stone.

and how his anger knew no bounds when he saw the people of Israel dancing around the golden calf that they had made.

This calf which was a throwback to the religion that they had seen and learned in Egypt. And here they were dancing around this golden calf.

And Moses in his anger he dashed the tablets of stone and he broke them. Was he a meek man? Yes, but he wasn't a weak man.

[6 : 08] And not only did he do that but he demanded that that golden calf should now be ground to powder. water. And he ordered that that powder made from the golden calf should be cast into the water that they drank.

And he insisted and he made them drink of that water. It was as if Moses was saying to them I'll never let you forget this. Why did you do it?

Why did you turn your back upon God the way you've done? Well then what does it mean when it tells us that Moses was a meek man?

Well we have to go on and read the story of Moses and read about him how in the presence of God when he is pleading for his own people the people of Israel he says to God have mercy on them.

blot my name out of the book of life if you want to. Do what you will with me but spare these people.

[7 : 21] Now we're beginning to see a meek man a man who has discovered that to be a godly man you've got to lose yourself you've got to be self effacing there can be no pride in you but you're not weak.

Or let's take another case indeed let's take our Lord himself the Lord Jesus doesn't he describe himself as a meek man take my yoke come unto me he says O ye that weary and are heavy laden I will give you rest then he goes on to say this take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest to your souls ah but look at Jesus you won't find any weakness in Jesus you won't find any subservience in Jesus you won't find Jesus the kind of person who goes groveling about and we say that with reverence so when he said

I am meek and lowly what did he mean he meant I am a man of peace I am a peace loving man come to me and I'll give you this quality that you need in your life which is peace and rest and quietness you know how Jesus himself could show anger he went into the temple when he saw the temple being profaned by wicked men in the name of God they were profaning it he made a whip and he used a surprising degree of violence upon these people who were profaning his father's house and he pushed them out of the house of God he cleansed the temple he said my father's house is a house of prayer you have made it a den of thieves and yet

Jesus says I am meek and lowly in heart because he wasn't weak but he was meek again you listen to Jesus as he speaks to the scribes and the Pharisees and as he castigates them for their life of sin he says to them and puts to them this question how he says can you escape the damnation of hell but remember that in the person of Jesus and in the life of Christ there is nothing abrasive there is no spirit that is domineering there is nothing of arrogance about Jesus he is meek and lowly he has this peace to give this quality of life to give to any individual who may come to him blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth or take again another person

Abraham we go back again now Abraham was a meek man but he was by no means weak do you remember when the strife broke out between the herdmen of Abraham on the one hand and the herdmen of Lot on the other over respective grazing rights what were they going to do at this crisis or in this crisis here were Lot's herdmen and they were saying no this is our these are our watering places we have a right to this part and here were Abraham's men and they were saying we have equally a right to this part we have every right to be here as well as you and at last Abraham came up and he said to Lot look why should there be this squabbling among us the whole land the whole land is before us oh

[12 : 22] Lot he said look around you where do you want to set up where do you want to go as far as I'm concerned Abraham would say in our modern jargon I'm easy if you want to go to the south part you go if you want to go to the north part you go I'll fit in wherever you don't go you see he left the choice to Lot and what he showed at that particular time about his life was this that he was a courteous man and not only was he a courteous man but he was a considerate man and these are the ingredients in meekness that you are the kind of person who is prepared to show courtesy and consideration and let's not forget this that although

Abraham was that kind of man he wasn't going to allow Keder Leamer and his men to take away the freedom of Lot and the freedom of others and so you find Abraham standing up for the rights of

freedom even if it meant taking up the sword now what I've been trying to say is this that meekness is not weakness meekness implies gentleness Jesus was gentle no man was ever as gentle as Jesus and that true meekness meekness also is humbleness of mind man just just like Moses who was the kind of humble self effacing man that we have described and to be meekness also means considerateness and courtesy as we have discovered in Abraham who was a considerate and a courteous man now when a man begins to exercise these qualities in his life when he begins to show courtesy when he begins to show considerateness when he begins to show humbleness of his own self when he's not self opinionated when he begins to show gentleness that is when a man is really in control of himself that is when he is now beginning to exercise self control and self discipline over his life and that's what makes a Christian and so a Christian man is a self controlled man he knows when to be angry and he knows when to refrain from being angry he knows when to exercise clemency and he knows when it's not right to exercise clemency he is in control of himself he is in control of his opinions he is in control of his passions so that a meek man a Christian man who is a meek man is neither on the one hand excessively angry nor on the other hand to use the word of professor

Berkeley he is neither angerless ness he is neither shows angerless ness so a Christian man is like that he doesn't think highly more highly of himself than he ought to think he is in control of himself and of that man Jesus says oh how happy he is blessed blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth but what did Jesus mean by saying they shall inherit the earth well maybe it is that our Lord is pointing us back to the psalm that we read together psalm 37 where the psalmist has a lot to say about those who are meek and those who inherit the earth and there in psalm 37 among other verses verses 22 29 34 verse 11 this is how he sums how we can say the psalmist sums it up he says this the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace it means doesn't it that if we have the

Lord's blessing with the portion of the earth that God gives to us whether that portion of the earth be great or whether it be small in a sense we have inherited the earth you see to inherit anything means to come into possession of it when some kind benefactor bestows something upon you or upon me when we come into possession of that it is ours our benefactor has given it to us and he has given it to us with his blessing and with his approval and you see when God gives us of the earth with his blessing and with his approval it means we are entitled to that perhaps it may not be much but as the psalmist says in psalm 37 a little that a righteous man hath a little that a righteous man hath that has been given to him by God is better than the riches of many wicked people you see there is a sense in which a person thinks that he possesses all things and yet he discovers in the end that what has happened to him is this the all things have taken possession of him oh he thought he was in possession of all the things that he had but then he comes to understand and to see that it's not a case that he is in possession of all the things that he has but all the things that he has have now taken possession of him that was the case in the rich man that Jesus tells us about along with

[19 : 45] Lazarus here was this rich man he had an abundance all that his heart could wish all that he could desire but as Jesus tells us he didn't really have these things because of death he had to leave them all behind and he had to go to the poverty of hell the poverty of hell hell hell hell is a poor place there are no riches in hell there is nothing in hell and it's to that place that the rich man went whereas

Lazarus he got his crumbs that fell from the rich man's table but he had the blessing of God with these crumbs and when he left this world it wasn't to the poverty of hell that he went but to the riches of the paradise of God that he went blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth but we can say that these words of Jesus they shall inherit the earth have what we call eschatological overtones by that I mean that these words point us away beyond this present human dimension to God's eternal dimension let us think of what Peter says in his second epistle chapter 2 verse 13 where he speaks about a new heaven and a new earth we he says according to promise look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness and if you read that chapter of second Peter you will see there how the apostle is telling us that this present world is under sentence under the sentence of

God to pass away if we turn to Revelation chapter 5 it tells us there by the other apostle John that he saw Jesus loosing the scroll of God's eternal purposes and as he wept much because there was no man able to unloose the seals of that scroll at last he saw the lion of the tribe of Judah who came

forward and he was now going to loose the seals what does it mean it means doesn't it that he saw Jesus as the only one who could put into effect God's eternal purposes written down on God's eternal scroll and when he had taken the book the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the lamb and they began to sing a new song thou art worthy thou was slain you see this is the song that has to do with Jesus thou art worthy thou was slain thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred people and tongue thou hast made us kings and priests unto God and we shall reign on the earth you say to me does it say that is that what is going to happen to

God's people that they are going to reign on the earth that's what it says in that new world that God is going to bring to pass in that new world order there will be no crying no pain no death no tears all things will have passed away all things will have become new but the question is who are the people who are going to inherit that new world order who are the people who are going to be in that new earth blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth the meek ones they are the ones who are going to be there the poor in spirit they are the ones who are going to be there the mourning ones they are the ones who are going to be there and I ask you will you be there will you inherit the earth is your name in the lamb's book of life is this quality of life characteristic of you meekness is Jesus saying to you ah you are one of my meek ones blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth and so I leave it there and I just say this to you before we dismiss the service this morning my friend walk in the ways of God surrender yourself to Christ and to his lordship place yourself under the powerful control of the

Holy Spirit say to God today oh God help me to walk in your ways say to Christ today oh Christ come into my heart and make my life what it ought to be pray that the Holy Spirit might come in and indwell you and control you and give you the power that you need to live the Christian life if you do then you are one of God's meek ones and if you do that the God who clothes the lilies of the field the God who feeds the birds that fly in the sky is the God who will meet all your needs while you inherit this earth while you live in it and everything that God will give to you will come with his blessing and with his approval every piece of food that you eat and that you put over your mouth onto your tongue that will come to you with

[27 : 58] God's divine approval and with his blessing and you're entitled to it and in that sense you've inherited the earth and then of course waiting you will be the new heaven and the new earth where you will live and reign with Christ seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth let us pray O Lord our God we pray thee that this other quality of life may be characteristic of us meekness may we have the poverty of spirit that we have spoken about on a previous occasion that poverty of spirit that makes us absolutely and utterly dependent upon thee may we have that grief over sin which is also characteristic of thy people may we mourn and may we also have this quality of life blessed are the meek and may we O

Lord inherit the earth may we rejoice in the good things that thou hast to give us and that thou dost give us with thine own approval and with thy blessing and may we look forward to the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness and where thy people will reign on the earth as kings and priests unto God hear us and take away our sins for Jesus sake amen