

Blessed Are the Meek

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the concept of meekness as exemplified by Moses and Jesus Christ, emphasizing the importance of meekness in inheriting the earth. Meekness is described as not being overly impressed by self-importance, defending God's glory, and caring for others above oneself. The sermon highlights the need for meekness in dealing with enemies, discerning when to share precious truths, and trusting the Lord's guidance. It challenges listeners to exhibit meekness as a transformation by the Spirit of God, reflecting Christ's character.

Scripture: Matthew 5:5, Numbers 12:3, Philippians 2:3, Matthew 21:5, Matthew 5:44, Matthew 7:6, Genesis 13:8, Luke 23:34

Topics: "Meekness", "Transformation by the Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

You can open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5, once again, Sermon on the Mount. We are right at the beginning of a series on one of our Lord's longest sermons, a sermon that is very often misunderstood, and it will be misunderstood if indeed, careful note, is not taken of the Beatitudes with which it begins. Beatitude, you may have heard of the beatific vision.

Basically, the B-E-A-T comes from the Latin. In the Latin Vulgate, you would see something like Beati, which basically is blessed. That's where it comes from.

We are going to look at the third Beatitude today, Meek, Blessed are the Meek, verse 5. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. So that's what we want to deal with. And in the future, I'm not going to promise you that I'm always just going to deal with one Beatitude per Sunday, but that is the way it's happened thus far, and I make no apologies for just dealing with this today, because I think it's necessary.

Meekness. Let's pray before we dive into it. Father, I want to handle your Word with faithfulness.

I pray that your Spirit would cause even revelation on my feet. I mean, show us, Lord, even if it doesn't come from my mouth, maybe it's a thought that will occur to somebody here. Something about these passages that the Spirit of God will communicate to us that will be profitable for our spiritual health.

That's what I desire, Lord. Not just simply to do our preaching thing and get it past us. Lord, we're diving into the Word of God, your Word.

The Word before which you would have us to tremble. And Lord, you are the God who says it's living and abiding. Lord, without you, it's a dead letter on a page of paper.

It's just ink and paper. But you can cause this to come alive. Come alive in people's minds and hearts, and it can be transforming.

Lord, you can cause our eyeballs to actually see certain arrangements of this ink on a page so that sentences are formed, and paragraphs, and thoughts, and they can be processed in our minds, and we can be affected. We can be moved. We can be transformed, even entirely regenerated through this Word of God.

That's what the Word of God itself says. And I pray, Lord, that when you do supernatural things through your Word, I pray that in Christ's name. Amen.

So I'm going to dare, hopefully one of these times they don't put alcohol in here or something. Rubbing alcohol. Anthrax or something.

Okay. Now, meekness. Blessed, you see it.

Verse 5, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Now, I would ask you, just instantaneously when you hear the word meek, what pops into your mind? I mean, we all have some image. Because I'm imagining the vast majority of you, you've read Matthew 5.5 before.

The vast majority of you, you're not strangers to Scripture. You've heard the term meek. You've come across it in Scripture.

What pops into your mind? You've got some image. I mean, when we hear words, words produce some kind of thought pattern, some kind of imagery in our minds. Meek.

Because the reality is, that aside from Christianity, I doubt people use this word. You don't see it in advertising. I doubt.

I mean, I don't know what all the advertising is in this country. But I highly doubt you see it on billboards. I highly doubt you see it in magazines.

It's not a word that is used. And the truth is, I'm afraid we don't know this term. Even those of us that maybe had some kind of thought, pop into our mind.

I wonder how accurate it actually is. What is meek? We don't use the term. We don't know the term.

And if you look at the passage, the verb in our English translations, in the first half of this, is not there in the original. Literally, what you have are two adjectives and a particle. So basically it says, blessed, that's an adjective.

The meek, that's an adjective. With an article in between them. And then in the second part, like I said before, there's no commandment.

This is just a state and a fact. Jesus asserts, the meek will inherit the earth. And he's not talking about out here.

He's not talking about you'll inherit this field next door here. He's not talking about this passing world. Because look, let's look right in the context.

Go down to 5.18. Right here in the context. 5.18, Assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away. Now look, God is not giving His children an inheritance that is passing away.

Our inheritance is incorruptible. So there is an earth that's passing away. But it's going to be replaced by an earth that doesn't pass away.

Again, look at Matthew 6.19. You see, earth gets used different ways, even right here in the Sermon on the Mount. In verse 19 of chapter 6, don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth, rust, destroy, where thieves break in and steal. You see again, it's passing away.

That's why you don't want to lay it up here. Things wear out here. Things get destroyed here.

Things get stolen here. Things corrupt here. This is a corrupting place.

This is a place that's passing away. And in fact, you know what Peter says? Peter very specifically talks about the fact that both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. But then he comes around and he says this.

Here's our expectation and here's our hope. We look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. So that's what he's talking about.

When he talks about the meek shall inherit the earth, this is what he means. And you know, we could spend a lot of time, I don't want to get so much in this. There is a real eschatological weightiness to this verse.

You know, one of the things that dispensationalism likes to really emphasize is there's got to be something coming with the Jews because of how much promise was made to the Jews concerning the land. You know what? Basically, this could be translated, blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the land. That's the idea here.

Folks, what you have to recognize is that when physical Israel had a physical inheritance of physical land over in physical Palestine, that was all a shadow. It was a shadow of what the meek are going to inherit. And so we don't... You know what? We will come to wrong conclusions all the time if we take the shadows for the substance.

Anyway, I don't want to spend a whole lot of time on that. Here's a question that I would... You see, what we want to do, what I really want to do when we go forth from here today is I want you to have a really good idea of what meekness is. Because, here's the thing, you know what Jesus has basically done here and what he's doing through all these beatitudes is he's saying this, look, if you're genuine, this is going to characterize your life.

Again, we all have to deal with this Sermon on the Mount. This isn't something any of us can just be casual about because what he's saying is, listen, you either inherit the earth or you don't. You either are going to have part in this new earth or you miss it altogether.

So this is life and death. This is in or out. There's no middle ground with regards to this.

And so what I really want to have happen is I want us to go forth from here with a really good idea about what meekness is so that we can all be confronted by the reality of what meekness is. Because the reality is that if it's void and absent, then you're not in the category of the blessed. That's the real issue.

And that's a major issue. So, one thing we cannot determine from Matthew 5.5 is what meekness means. This is not enough information.

But, hermeneutics 101, we compare Scripture with Scripture. But here's a question I want to ask you before we compare Scripture with Scripture. What can we learn about chapter 5, verse 5? I mean, look at it.

Though it doesn't define meekness for us, it does make several things very clear. For one, it makes this clear. Every individual who receives the inheritance of this new earth.

It's basically the paradise. This is where we're headed. New earth, you understand what this is all about.

Adam lost something. Adam lost paradise. You heard about paradise restored.

That's where this thing is headed. And it's going to be life abundantly. And it's altogether called an eternal weight of glory.

This thing is so great. You don't want to miss this at all. But the thing is that every single individual that will inhabit the new earth will be meek.

And there's absolutely no exceptions. Here's one of the things that's going to be true. In the new earth, when we look around, do you know what you're going to see everybody robed with? This beautiful adornment of meekness.

And we'll all see it. We'll all see it in one another. That's the world.

The new earth is a world of meekness. There's no getting away from that. But here's another thing.

Think about life here. That's life there. Life there, everyone is meek.

And we'll all see it and we'll all know it. We'll all be adorned with it. We'll all be robed with it.

But the reality is, every individual here in this world who genuinely has meekness is an inheritor, they are an heir of that coming world. Now if I had a lens, if say this was the meekness glass, and if I looked through it at you, you somehow showed up a certain color here. If there was genuine meekness, only those who had it show up in them are going to inherit.

This is life and death. This is a genuine Christianity tester, is what it is. So, and you know what? If this is characteristic of your life, Jesus says you're blessed.

And you know what it means if you're not in that category. To not be in the category of the blessed is to be in the category of the cursed. Now, let's move out from here.

Let's ask some questions about meekness in the broader scope of Scripture. I know this for a fact. Moses had meekness, because Scripture says so.

And you don't have to turn here, but just listen to this. This is the ESV rendering of Numbers 12, verse 3. Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all the people who were on the face of the earth. So our Greek term for meekness is found right here in the Septuagint, in the Greek Old Testament.

Same word. So we know he possessed it. And so what I'm going to do in a little bit, I'm going to actually look at some incidents in the life of Moses.

Because if Moses possessed meekness, then if we really want to know what it is, let's look at him. Because I'll tell you this, there are only two men in the Bible that are very specifically said to have meekness. And you know who they are, right? Who are they? Moses and who? Christ.

Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ. And you probably are very familiar with these verses as well.

Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek. That's a King James rendering. Meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.

So let me give you another truth. It's this one. Meekness is found in the fruit of the Spirit.

And that's key. You know this verse. This is the King James rendering of Galatians 5.22. The fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace.

You know these. Long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness. The very first word found in Galatians 5.23 is meekness.

And I recognize if you don't have the King James Bible, it may be translated a different way. But it's our word. Temperance.

Against such there is no law. Now here's the point. Meekness is not a natural quality.

That's my point in pulling that verse out. This is not something you're born with. This is not something natural to the sons and daughters of Adam.

It simply is not in that category. It's not a natural disposition. None of our children are born with it.

It's not native. What's native to us is sin and pride and unbelief. Not meekness.

Now we heard this verse. Now let's put these two thoughts together. We heard this in Romans 8. If I do not possess the Spirit, I do not belong to Christ.

If I belong to Christ, I possess the Spirit. If I possess the Spirit, that Spirit will work the fruit of the Spirit in every individual where He resides. And so the reality is this.

Look, I recognize this. We all may be at different places in our Christianity. There may be different levels of maturity.

I recognize that any of us can have bad weeks. I recognize there are fluctuations in the Christian life. But I also know this.

The Spirit of God is stronger than sin. That's why we heard what we heard. If you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. How can Paul be so dogmatic? Because he knows full well this reality. The Spirit of God is stronger than sin.

The Spirit of God is stronger than the flesh. The Spirit of God is stronger than the devil. Every single time.

The Spirit of God sanctifies the people of God. There's no question about it. If there is no process of sanctification in your life, you don't know the Lord.

Because that's what the Spirit does. He's a sanctifying Spirit. He's a Holy Spirit.

And He's responsible for the new man. And the new man, true righteousness and holiness. That's the reality.

That's what Scripture teaches. There's no getting away from it. Sin will no longer have dominion over us.

I'm not saying we run around in some glorious perfection in this life. But you know these truths. And I'm saying this.

Every genuine inheritor of this coming paradise of a new world, you can tell them by this characteristic, there is meekness. And it wasn't born into them. It is something that at some point in their life, where they look to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith.

This point in life where they became possessors of the Spirit of God. Where He began to do this work. Where He breathed life into them.

They were regenerated. This Spirit goes to work to produce a meekness. So that's my major point right here.

That this is not naturally inbred into us. And this is important. And it's important for this reason.

There are people who appear meek. But it's not meekness at all. There are counterfeits.

And by counterfeit, I'm not saying it's something necessarily ugly or bad. Listen, a person can be nice. Lost people can be nice.

And I'm not saying that's necessarily bad. But it's not meekness. And we don't want to confuse the two.

The fact is that it may not be meekness at all. You know what? You can have a person who's just agreeable. You get around people like that.

You ever been around somebody like that? They're just very agreeable. You can get around people who don't know the Lord at all. Who are just... They're man pleasers.

They don't want problems with anybody. They don't want conflict. They're just friendly.

There are people... And this is native. This is natural. Just different personalities.

People can be easygoing. The fact is you can have people that are just cowards. They're afraid of conflict with anybody.

And so they just avoid it. That is not meekness. We don't want to confuse those things.

There are people that are born nice. And it's just purely biological. And I was thinking about our dog.

You know, God brought us a dog. He's nice. He's got a good disposition.

But that's not meekness. That's not from the Holy Spirit. I know God created him.

And He created him with that personality. But it's not meekness. And you all know that.

Meekness is a quality that is an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. It is part and parcel of what the Spirit of God will work in an individual. It grows in the Lord's garden.

And it doesn't grow anywhere else. Meekness. Meekness.

Think with me. Meekness is not weakness. You never want to confuse those two.

Ever. Put weakness right out of your mind. It's not the person who fears conflict and just acquiesces to everyone.

It's not that person. Some people want peace at all costs. No controversy.

No arguments. Everything nice, peaceful, happy. And that's not meekness.

Now listen. What is typically considered to be the best scholarly Greek lexicon today is Bauer, Ganker, Arndt, and Gingrich lexicon. They give this definition.

And I think it's a good one. Now listen to it carefully. Not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance.

Now you want to get that. Not being overly impressed with your sense of your own self-importance. Now you can see this is very closely related to humility.

Because obviously people that think they're very self-important, that is an aspect of pride. And there's no question. There's no question that humility and lowliness, they're close synonyms of meekness.

But listen to meekness. It is not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance. Now I'm not so interested in what the BDAG lexicon has to say.

Because where I'm going to take you is to Scripture. And the two men we know for certainty have meekness. I want you to see this in action.

But I want you to see that what these guys are saying really hits the nail on the head. And one of the things you want to remember too is this. These beatitudes are not just in any random order.

There's a real pattern to them. One of the things that you want to recognize is that meekness flows out of the first two beatitudes. Because you know what those are.

Poverty of spirit. When somebody recognizes that they are bankrupt, that's the first thing. And then the second thing is they mourn over their bankruptcy.

They mourn over their sin. You know when you have somebody that really recognizes, the Spirit of God has opened their eyes, caused them to recognize they are nothing. They deserve hell.

And shows them their sin. You know what happens? That breaks a person. It breaks a man.

It breaks a woman. It breaks their pride. And so they're not demanding things for themselves.

Go back to the BDAG definition. Not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance. You know what happens when you recognize you are a sinner.

You deserve hell. You've been a rebel against God. You don't deserve the least of His kindness.

You're like the prodigal where you're just pleading mercy. Father please, I'm not worthy to be. You see the fight's gone out of him.

That's what's happening. It flows out of those two. You're not demanding for yourself anymore.

You're not protecting self. You're no longer thinking about how wonderful you are. And oh I've got to stand up for my rights.

But now listen. Meek people will stand up. You see that's one of the places where we go wrong.

When we just simply kind of put meekness over in this category of weakness. And kind of effeminate. And even gentle is just... I know there's a place for that word.

But you know what? The man or the woman who is truly meek. They will stand up for certain. Not for themselves.

Not for their own rights. Not because they think of how wonderful they are. But precisely because they're so amazed at the fact that God has dealt with them with such kindness.

The very fact that God has given them so much. So much will a man... I mean so much does a man come to the place where he has an appreciation for God. He has a recognition of God's glory.

He has something in him now wants to fight for God's glory. And I'll tell you. You see that Moses.

And you see that in Christ. Christ would make a whip and clear people out. That is not inconsistent with meekness.

But I'm afraid oftentimes we have that idea. Well that's not meek. I mean if you took snapshots of Moses.

When he's like leading the Levites to put a sword in his fellow Israelites. That doesn't look so meek. But I'll tell you what.

In both those cases they're not defending themselves. And they're not defending their own status. And their own rights.

They're not arguing for. And so we need to recognize here. That meekness is not in any way at odds with zeal.

Not any. Meekness doesn't consume itself with its own interest. It's not defensive.

You know what a great indication of pride. And the opposite of meekness. Is just self-pity.

If you ever really think about it. And you begin to dissect what self-pity is. It is a horrific demonstration of pride.

And self-absorption. Because you know what happens when you get the first two beatitudes. The self-pity goes out the window.

Because you're no longer walking through life. Moping around. Woe is me.

Because if you really come to the place of bankruptcy in your life. And poverty of spirit. And you mourn over that.

You recognize all you deserve is hell. So now everything is looking up. Because everything is good.

Because anything that you get is mercy. And the thing is. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. You've got to realize what you're getting out of this package. You're getting the kingdom of heaven.

Those who mourn they'll be comforted. Those who are meek. They inherit this coming new earth in which righteousness dwells.

You have to recognize what's happening. This person who comes to this point of bankruptcy. Because God has opened his eyes to see factually what he really is.

Or what she really is. Suddenly you're not all walking around. Pulling your tie tight.

Stiff necked. Or with your chin lifted high. Thinking you're some great God's gift to this world.

I mean suddenly you recognize everything for what it is. You recognize what I really deserve. And what I've gotten.

I mean what I really deserve is way over there. What I got is way over there. And you see you're no longer in a place to go around and strut your stuff all the time.

That's the issue. Man who's meek is finished. He's finished with just living for self.

In trumpeting self. The spirit of God breaks that. I mean that's what spiritual poverty does.

I mean true being poor in spirit. Everybody has a poverty innately. But men don't realize it.

They're righteous in their own eyes. So let's look at these living examples. Because we have two of them.

Turn now back in your Bibles to Numbers chapter 12. I mean if there was any chapter in our Bibles calculated to help us define meekness. It's this one.

Because the amazing thing is the Lord doesn't just tell us in a vacuum that Moses is meek. He actually tells us that Moses is meek right in a series of events where his meekness is being demonstrated. So it's just so helpful.

And let's look at it. Numbers 12. So first here's the account.

You may remember this. You know different people came against Moses. At one time he's up on the mountain.

And they're like it's for this man that led us out of Egypt. We don't know what's happened with him. Aaron make us a God.

I mean they're constant people. You've got different people. Korah leading this rebellion.

They're constantly griping against Moses. They're complaining against Moses. Moses who do you think you are? We're all holy in God's sight.

Who do you make yourself out to be leading? Well you know there was actually a day when the two closest to him even. Here it is Miriam and Aaron. They spoke against Moses.

This is the first thing. I'll tell you what. It's in this context that God is going to say he's the meekest guy on the face of the earth.

And you're going to see it from the meek reaction. Now here's the thing. You really want to test your meekness right at this point.

When somebody attacks you. When somebody persecutes you. When somebody speaks against you.

When you've got somebody against you. Now listen. You see in the Sermon on the Mount.

You know one of the things that you're going to be called to do? Love your enemies. You see it falls right in this category. You will never.

Again you have to recognize what the Sermon on the Mount is. It is a declaration of what's true in all the Beatitudes. And it's with that kind of reality in your life.

That now when Jesus comes over to actually go into the imperatives. In the Sermon on the Mount. That we even have any hope.

You've got to have this kind of thing happen in your life by way of the Spirit of God. If you have any hope of living this kind of life. Now look.

They're speaking against Moses. Because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married. Then you go to verse 2. They said, Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? You see they're attacking him.

You know what's very interesting? People attack God all the time. But they don't admit it. They attack God's servant.

And then they feel like. Well you know I'm not attacking God. I'm attacking this guy.

And I have a right to do that. That's very often what happens. It's interesting how often the people are attacking Moses.

Or Moses and Aaron. They don't directly come out and say they're attacking the Lord. It takes the Lord to stand up and say.

You know when they attack you Moses. They're attacking me. Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Okay now here you get it.

Now the man Moses. Verse 3. Was very. And yours may say humble.

The King James Version and the English Standards say meek. More than all the men who were on the face of the earth. So we know Moses is meek.

Because scripture itself tells us. Now let's watch the meekness in real life. We know he's been attacked.

Now notice verse 3. Because this is such a part of meekness. Brethren you have to recognize. That we very much as Christians.

Are in the same kind of place where Moses is. You know what's being said here. Basically in verses 5 through 8. Isn't Moses is a favorite.

Well you know what if we're Christians. We are privileged. We are among the privileged on the face of the earth.

But notice what's said. Lord came down. Verse 5. In a pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle.

And called Aaron and Miriam. They both went forward. Then he said hear now my words.

If there is a prophet among you. I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision. I speak to him in a dream.

Not so my servant Moses. See Moses is on another level. He's faithful in all my house.

I speak with him face to face even plainly. And not in dark sayings. He sees the form of the Lord.

Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses. Now this is very interesting. Because you know what.

You know what lost people do. If lost people have a place of privilege. And you attack them.

Ho ho ho. If they got money. They got power.

They got some kind of credibility in this world. They got some kind of notoriety. They've got some kind of position.

And you attack them. You know what they're going to do. They're going to use their position to take you out.

That's what the world does. He is in a favored position. And he's been attacked.

Now here's where the meekness is going to really be displayed. Verse 9. So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them. And he departed.

And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle. Suddenly Miriam became leprous. So there's judgment on those attacking Moses.

Now you might think Moses would be like. Yeah they got. She had that coming.

You attack me. See if she ever does that again. Nothing like that is coming from him.

Verse 13. Just the opposite. Moses cried out to the Lord saying.

Please heal her oh God. I pray. You see this is something entirely opposed to everything the world thinks.

You know what the world says. Just look at its movies. Blessed are those who get vengeance.

I mean that's it. Blessed is the one who protects his reputation at all costs. World thinks in terms of what? Strength.

Power. Ability. Aggressiveness.

Getting even. Making them pay. Can you imagine? He's pleading with the Lord.

She's attacked Moses. God brings swift judgment on her. And now Moses is the one pleading.

It's not Miriam pleading. It's not Aaron pleading to the Lord. Aaron pleads with Moses.

I recognize. But this is meekness. Now what I want you to do now is I want you to think of another incident that took place in the life of Moses.

Turn over to Exodus 32. In Exodus 32. This is where the people I already mentioned.

Where the people said well you know we don't know what's become of this man. God let us out of Egypt. Aaron fashion us a God.

Aaron says out popped a golden calf. Listen to what God says to Moses. Now you have to remember this.

Moses is still up on the mountain. You remember Moses is up there. He's got the first tablets of the Ten Commandments.

He has not come down yet. And God says to him, Moses they're stiff necked. They've broken my laws.

So Moses is still up there on the mountain. He's hearing this. God is basically informing him.

Now let's dive in about verse 10. Exodus 32 verse 10. Listen to this.

Therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them. And notice this. I will make of you a great nation.

Wow. Okay. Now you put yourself in Moses place.

Yeah these people you know they're wondering what happened to me. They just call me that man who let us out. Such disrespect.

God will wipe them all out. He's going to make a great nation out of me. The average lost person, they're all over that.

Do you know primarily why Moses is not all over that? Because you know what meekness is brother to all the time? A zeal for the glory of God. And you need to feel this. Look.

Individually, by nature, we, I'm not speaking just about, we know this. We're made of this stock by nature. The reality is this.

Individually each person in this world, man, women, children, they just naturally assume without even hardly a thought about it, that they are the center of the universe. And you know it's true. And something undoubtedly we're all still fighting.

I mean as the spirit of God works meekness in his children. This is something that has to die 10,000 deaths. but you know that's just the mindset of the world.

I am the center of the universe. And so when God comes along and says, I'll wipe them all out and make a nation out of you. You know the average guy in the world, they're like, yeah, I'm all over that.

Let's do that Lord. Notice this. He doesn't even think.

Do you notice Moses has zero dialogue with God about that thought. When Moses responds, it's like, it's not even in the discussion that you're going to make a nation out of me. Not at all.

You see, what he cares about is God's glory. Notice verse 11. Moses pleaded with the Lord his God and said, Lord, why is your wrath burn hot against your people? Now I'm not saying Moses is not driven by a desire for mercy to be shown to his Israelite brethren according to the flesh, even like Paul did in Romans 9. But I'll tell you his primary concern is God's glory.

And you see it right here. These are your people. Lord, these are your people.

Because you know what God had just said to him up on that mountain? Your people, Moses. They did this. Well, Moses comes back and says to him, they're your people.

And Lord, you led them out of Egypt. And you did that in the eyes of the Egyptians and the nations around. And they all saw it.

And if you bring them out here into the wilderness and you drop them all dead, you know what they're going to say? They're going to say bad things about you. That's exactly what's happening here. That's why he's pleading.

Your people you've brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand. Why should the Egyptians speak and say he brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from your fierce wrath. Relent from this harm to your people.

Your people again. Remember, see, he's going to plead with him now. You are God who makes promises.

And you made a promise to Abraham and to Isaac and to Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self and said to them, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens. And all this land that I have spoken, I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever. And then here's the thing.

Here's what you need to recognize. When he now comes off the mountain, notice what happens in verse 19. See why he's up there? He's pleading.

But you know what? When he sees the wickedness firsthand, and he sees God being dishonored firsthand, two things happen that I think are very noteworthy. One, he smashes those two tablets of the Ten Commandments. And he does it in anger.

He's fierce at these people. Notice verse 19. So when he came near the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing, so Moses' anger became hot.

He cast the tablets out of his hands, broke them in the foot of the mountain. But then you've jumped forward to verse 26. You see, this is not incompatible with meekness.

You know what the next thing is he does? Verse 26, Moses stood in the entrance of the camp and said, whoever's on the Lord's side, come to me. All the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him, and he said to them, thus says the Lord God of Israel, let every man put his sword on his side, go in and out from the entrance to entrance throughout the camp. Let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, every man his neighbor.

There's no weakness. But you see the death to self all the way through this. See, meekness does not defend self, but it will defend others, and it will defend God especially, and it'll stand up, and it'll get angry, and it'll show passion, it will show zeal.

There's no question about that. But here's the thing, there's no weakness in any of this. There's no selfishness.

And you can kind of see how his interests here move back and forth. You know, first he's pleading for them. He's pleading promises.

Then he sees it, and his indignation is riled. He smashes those things. He leads the Levites to kill.

But then you see him swing back. Again, no selfish bent. But you see him move back.

Notice this, verse 32. He moves back towards seeking mercy for the people, and he does it again with that same heart that Paul has in Romans 9. Lord, if you're not going to forgive them of their sin, blot me out of your book which you've written. Do you see meekness? I mean, I hope you see something that's unworldly, unnatural happening here.

This is meekness put on display. Do you know this? They attacked Moses repeatedly. I'm not going to have you turn to this.

Just listen to this. The children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron. They said to one another, let's select a leader and return to Egypt.

This is in Numbers 14. It says Moses and Aaron fell on their faces. Numbers 16.

The people gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, you take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy. Every one of them and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord? So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face.

Korah gathered all the congregation against Moses and Aaron in Numbers 16. At the door of the tabernacle of meeting, Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, separate yourselves from among the congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. Then they fell on their faces.

Numbers 20. Now there was no water for the congregation, so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. So Moses and Aaron fell on their faces.

Moses was on his face a lot, and it was when people were attacking him. People insulted him, attacked him, and Moses went to the ground on his face. Not because of them who were attacking him.

He went prostrate before the living God. Everything in him was pleading, don't destroy them. Moses, they're attacking you.

Did you see the self? You see how the self is dead? This, look, everybody who's going to inherit the new earth, something of this has changed in you. The Spirit of God is working something of this out in you. Jesus said this, this is the King James Version, Matthew 21.5, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold thy king cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a foal of an ass.

Now, let me ask you this, what's the classic example of somebody hurting Jesus, but rather than curses and threatenings, the Messiah comes back with meekness. Give me the classic example. Father forgive them, they know not what they do.

Listen, who's he talking about? Those who don't know what they do. The Jews didn't realize what they were doing, the Romans didn't realize what they were doing. Listen to this, when he was reviled, this is Christ, and this is his meekness on display.

He did not revile in return. I mean, see that's going to be one of the things, brethren, let me tell you something, there is a massive amount of thin-skinned professing Christians, easily offended, extremely selfish, and the fear is that the vast majority of those people don't know the Lord. I mean, one of the reasons you get a church made up of people like that, is because you get a church made up of very few regenerate people.

Thinned, skinned, easily offended. See, that's not meekness. What happens, can I tell you something? The meek person can afford, well let me say this, the Christian person can afford to be meek.

You say, what do you mean? I like that, I thought over and over, should I say that? Is that actually consistent with truth? To say it that way, because it feels a little bit awkward in my thinking, to say that a Christian can afford to be meek. I think that that is a good way to say it, because we actually have a parable, that says, okay, you got a guy over here, he's been forgiven like, what, 10,000 talents? Isn't that the parable in Matthew chapter 18? Was it 10,000 talents? This is a sum that is astronomical. And here the first servant is forgiven for that.

But then you got another guy, what was it, just a few denarii? That his fellow servant owed him, and rather than forgiving him, he grabbed him by the neck. And you see the master, he obviously is upset, because there's no meekness shown. You see, the point is that the first guy can afford to show meekness.

And you can afford it, because what happens is the Spirit of God actually lets us tally things. It's very difficult to hold something against someone else, when you recognize your debt was so deep, and Christ paid it all. And He not only paid it all, He put so much credit on top of that.

He added so much. I mean, you're going to sit with me on my throne. You're going to judge the world with me.

You're going to judge angels. You're going to have the new heaven, paradise. You're going to be wed to me.

You're going to see me as I am. You're going to be made like me, an eternal weight of glory. I count the sufferings of this present age, they're not even worth comparing to this glory that is going to be ours.

It's going to come out and literally consume us. Do you recognize that as a Christian, if you're thinking right, you can afford to be meek. This is exactly where Moses was.

Moses has it all. I mean, if you're a prophet, well, you might have a dream. If you're Moses, you get to see His form.

Your face is glowing. You can afford to be meek. Why? Because you've got it all.

Who can touch me? I mean, God's for me. And I want God to be glorified. And I don't want God to wipe these people.

I don't want God to show mercy. I want God to be good to His promises. I want the nations to see what kind of God we have.

And you see, when there's a proper understanding of things. Now, look, I just want to say this about Christ. Because one of the problems... He who is more meek than Moses is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I don't like the way that Christ is so often portrayed. And I think the Catholic influence is abominable at this point. You know what Scripture says? As we behold the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the same image.

I want you to be transformed. Jesus said, Learn of me, I'm meek and lowly. We want to learn of Him.

But we want to see what it is for real. I want you to behold that glory. I want you to think about the Christ of Scripture.

I'm not talking about religion. That's not what I'm presenting to you. I want you to think about the Christ of Scripture.

He was no pale, anemic, feminine Christ like is so often portrayed. Nothing like that. I'm talking about the Christ of the Gospels.

This is the Christ. Can you see Him? We're talking Middle East. Bright sun.

Dark, tan, bronze skin. We're talking about one who was a carpenter. He had carpenter's hands.

He grew up getting calluses in the workshop of Joseph. This is the Christ of Scripture. He went up and down those roads in Palestine looking for the lost sheep.

Back and forth. He was fearless. This is the Christ who had no problems walking into the temple and being filled with a zeal much like permeated Moses when he came down from the Mount Sinai.

And he saw those people. And he saw what they were doing. And he said, Levites, to your swords.

I mean, this Christ walks in and He says, the moneylenders, look at these people. And He goes over. And you know what? It wasn't just venting emotion.

Because you know what? It took some time to fashion that whip. There was something inside Him. And He could in a very calm fashion go over.

And I don't know what He made it out of. He could put these different things together. And He could tie this.

He could make this. And inside. I mean, this is the Christ of Scripture.

This is the Christ who is not afraid to show up at a wedding and put good wine on the table. This is the Christ who is not afraid to be seen with fishermen. And Mary Magdalene who had seven demons cast out of her.

And a woman of the city who was obviously a prostitute and came in and touched Him. He was not afraid to hang out with tax collectors, unpopular as they were. The lost.

The lonely. This is the Christ of Scripture. He's the one who stretched out those carpenter hands and would lay them on a child.

Yes, there was that. He could be gentle. He could be kind.

There's no question about it. But remember, He could fashion a whip. Yes, He could weep and wail over a city that rejected Him.

But this is the Christ. Up and down those dusty roads. He could fall asleep in the bottom of a boat in a storm and sleep like a baby.

What does that say? Not gentle, meek, and mild. That says He's brave. A man who can sleep in a storm.

And He could look those Pharisees in the face. And He could tell them how it is. And He could look at them and He would say, how are you going to escape the damnation of hell? You whited sepulchers.

See, He did not fear men. He did not fear the frowns of men. Christ is the example of meekness.

And He is the man's man. Don't dare make Him out to be some effeminate thing. He is not that.

And that is not what meekness is. Meekness is what you see in Moses. And it's what you see in Christ.

Yes, yes, meekness will be reviled and not revile back. Meekness will hang on a cross and have concern. Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they do. Meekness will not be all about self, but will in all the pain and suffering say, Mother, behold your son. Behold your mother.

I mean, this is meekness. Sometimes we find that in the middle of the night He was out praying. See, He was not so soft that He had to make sure He got His nine hours of sleep every single night.

He'd be up. He'd be out in the dew. This is the Christ of Scripture.

Not weak, not soft, not effeminate. He's meekness incarnate. He didn't defend Himself.

He trusted Himself to His Father. And you see, that's one of the things. If God is for you, who can be against you? You see, when God is for you, you can afford to be meek.

You can afford to take your reputation. This is one of the things that has often been said about John Wesley. He said, I can leave my reputation with the Lord.

You see, that's meekness. Where it's okay if people say cruel things, mean things, hard things. Brethren, this needs to be us as Christians.

You see, if we possess meekness, we're going to have a church where we're not easily offended with one another. You know how Paul said it? Basically, Paul summed this thing up as to what meekness looked like in the life of the church when he said this to the Philippians, let nothing be done through selfish ambition. You see, that's the opposite of meekness.

When we're all hung up on self, you remember Bauer, Danker, Barth, Gingrich. That's basically how they define this thing. Well, we could just let Paul define it for us.

It looks like this because it looks like Christ. You see what Paul says? Let the mind that was in Christ be in you. What mind did he have? A mind of meekness.

Let it be in you. What does it look like? Let nothing be done through selfish ambition. In other words, self-seeking pursuit or conceit.

What is that? That's how the New King James reads. It's basically conceitedness, exaggerated self-evaluation. It's thinking more highly of yourself than you ought.

Scripture deals with that in another place. Don't think more highly of yourself than you ought. Listen, we can recognize when God gives us certain gifts or certain abilities, certain capacities in life, but you don't want to think more highly of yourself than you ought.

And you don't want to think of yourself better than other people. This is how this is to play out in the church. But in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself.

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests. We should give ourselves to our own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God.

What he's basically saying is this. Christ is God. He didn't consider being equal to God as robbery.

He didn't feel like he was stealing anything from God that wasn't his due. He indeed is equal. But he made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, coming in the likeness of men.

Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death of the cross. So make no mistake. You don't have the power to make yourself meek.

However, that doesn't take away from the fact that Jesus said, come unto me. Come. And he said, learn of me.

I'm meek and lowly. And the thing is this. The Spirit of God is in the business of transforming us into that image from one degree of glory to the next as we behold the glory of Christ.

Study. You hear what Christ is saying. Learn of me.

Study Christ. You can study Moses, but more than that, study Christ. And the instruction of Scripture is you want that mind in you.

This is the real deal. The attitude of meekness. And here's the thing.

I come back to the Sermon on the Mount. I just end with this. Sermon on the Mount.

You know what you're going to be told? Love your enemies. Talked about that already. You know what else you're going to be told? Don't cast your pearl before swine.

Wow. You see the tension here? On the one hand, you've got somebody over here. I'm not giving the Gospel to that guy anymore.

That doesn't sound very loving. That doesn't sound very meek. Nope.

It goes hand in hand with meekness. You see, it goes hand in hand with defending God's glory. It goes hand in hand with righteousness.

You see, what does it take for somebody to say, that person's a dog? It takes discernment. But it's not weakness. It's not just being a man pleaser.

It's not just, I'm going to acquiesce to everything and everybody. No, it's none of that. You see, I'm living for the glory of God.

I don't have to be all stuck up and hung up on myself anymore. But I can hear, when somebody is basically taking the pearls and the precious things of God, and that which is holy, and they're treating it in a way. See, we need this meekness all the way through this sermon.

It's going to be equally needed. I mean, so what do you think? We're at the end. We have to be confronted by this.

Because in the end, only the meek are going to inherit the earth. And so, I just ask you this. Would those around you, not just be able to say that you're nice, but would they be able to recognize, that there has been a death blow to self in you? Now, that's the real issue.

There's been a lot of people throughout history, that have not necessarily been the nicest people, who God saves. And He breaks this. And suddenly, they begin to care about other people.

Suddenly, they begin to care about God's glory. You see, that's really where it's demonstrated. All you got to do is look at somebody's life.

Can you see in them, that they have a concern for God's glory, that rises above self. And they have a concern for others. You know, meekness.

Meekness. Have you ever read where David said his enemies, those that were attacking him, he said, when they got sick, I fasted for them. Yeah, see that's meek.

Oh, Abraham. That's a very meek thing to say. Lot, there's not room here for both of us.

And you know what Abraham, Abraham had been given the covenant. Abraham's the uncle. He's the elder.

Could have been really appropriate to say, Lot, take your lot and get over there. Because this is where I want to be. That's not what he did.

He said, Lot, if you go that way, I'll go that way. If you go that way, I'll go that way. That was extremely meek.

You see, what he's doing is trusting the Lord. That's so much a part of this meekness. I can trust the Lord with where he's going to take me.

I don't have to get bent out of shape. Why? Paradise is before me. I can afford to be meek, if you can say it that way.

But like from the parable, I think that's exactly the point that the master is making to this servant, is how could you not do that after what I've done for you? I mean, if we really have an idea and we can see this for what it is, we recognize, I don't have to go around self-pity, angry when I get slighted, when people don't treat me right, people don't treat me with respect. I'm just going to sulk. I'm going to pout.

I'm going to show them. Yep, you will. And I'll tell you, you'll wake up in hell because that's exactly what Jesus is teaching here.

Blessed are the meek. See, they're the ones that are blessed. And to be outside that realm, we need to learn of Christ.

This really needs to be something to characterize. He's the teacher. Learn of me.

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