

“Nuggets” For Today
(Study Notes on Pastor’s Sermon for today)

SERIES: “BLESSED: A REFLECTION ON THE BEATITUDES”

Sermon 3: “BLESSED are the Meek”

TEXT: MATTHEW 5:1-10

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Picture this with me: A horse, perhaps a wild horse – strong – powerful. Running up to speeds of around 50 km/h – sometimes faster. It can kill a man with a single kick. Some large horse breeds have been known to pull up to three times their own weight. That means they might pull up to 2,500 pounds or more!

What does this image of raw power and brute strength have to do with our subject of “meekness” this morning? Well, actually nothing as it is here. But keep that image in the back of your minds if you will, as we continue our series on the Beatitudes.

I. DEFINITION OF MEEK

➤ What “meek” does NOT mean.

I looked up the meaning online. It came back as: “*Submissive; Spineless; Spiritless*” Now if we were to pause there for a second, once again it seems like we have a contradiction in terms, doesn’t it, when Jesus says the meek shall inherit the earth. This is an idea that the world will find almost laughable. There’s no way, by the world’s economy / the world’s standards that those who are *submissive, spineless and spiritless* can inherit the earth. After all, look at history. Consider some powerful military leaders. Alexander the *Great* (not Alexander the *spineless!*) Richard the Lion heart; Ivan the terrible, etc. **Can you think of other “mighty” names of world leaders?** Whenever conquest / power / or achievement is recognised by the world, it is most often associated with strength, tenacity, trampling on others to get to the top. Meekness does not form part of the equation. Meekness is not seen as an admirable quality, at least not in a rights-driven culture, where everyone wants their own way, everyone has an opinion on everything.

But friends, in order to understand what Jesus is saying here, we need to revisit the meaning of this word “meek”.

Jesus was not using this word according to our modern understanding thereof. He was not saying – “*Blessed are the wimps, the wusses, the sissies*”.

Meekness must never be mistaken for “weakness”

So, if meekness ≠ weakness, then what does it mean?

➤ **What “meek” does mean.**

To answer that let’s consider another image. This time: a horse all bridled up. Ready to be ridden. Ready to go where its master wants it to go. To do what its master wants it to do.

Compare the picture with previous one. Is there any difference in the strength of the horse? *No*. Would anyone argue that the second horse is less powerful? *No*. Same horse. Same strength. Same power. What’s different? The power of the second horse is controlled. It’s channelled. It is guided by the one who rides it. *That which was wild, untamed, even dangerous, is now useful, and able to be used for good.*

Can you see where we are going with this? It can be applied to different situations. For example, there are some plants that are extremely poisonous. Poison - powerful and strong enough to kill – but when that power is harnessed; when it is submitted to the skilled hands and eyes of researchers and scientists, that which had the potential to be an instrument of sickness and death, becomes an instrument of healing, and life.

BIBLICAL DEFINITION

So, what did Jesus mean when he said *“Blessed are the meek”*?

The answer is in front of us. In picture form. A meek horse is not a weak horse, but rather a powerful beast that has been brought under the control of its master.

The meek man – is not one who is spineless, or wimpy. But rather as someone has put it, the one *who “has yielded his rights to God. He kneels that he may stand, he keeps silent that he may speak later. He has no need to insist upon his own way”*. Someone defined meekness in 3 simple words: **“Power under control”**. The meek man has enormous power, but knows how and when to use it.

II. WHAT DOES MEEKNESS LOOK LIKE?

Of course there are many examples in Scripture of men and women who exemplified what it means to be meek. But, interestingly, we are told that there are only **two** individuals in Scripture who are *directly* described as being meek.

✚ **One of them was MOSES (Read Numbers 12:3)**

Now if we are familiar with the life of Moses, we will know that he was one of the strongest figures in the Old Testament. He grew up as the Prince of Egypt; He killed an Egyptian slave river; He took on a face-to-face challenge with Pharaoh, and delivered the Message of God to him: **“Let my people go!”** He led 3 million plus Israelites out of slavery, and for 40 years in the desert, was their leader. Powerful traits of a powerful man!

What credited Moses with the title of being “*very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth*” – I believe, was that He was a man who lived his life in submission to the will of God. When God called him through the burning bush out in the backside of the desert – Moses gave over/he surrendered the control of his life to Almighty God.

Sure, he messed up at times. We see him sinning in his anger; we see him being disobedient when he strikes the rock after God told him to speak to it. However, through it all, we see glimpses of the meek Moses; the one who cried out to God time and again when those he was leading grumbled, murmured and complained against him; the one who didn't respond in anger when His brother, Aaron and Miriam gossiped about him and spoke against him for marrying a Black African woman. Instead Moses prayed for Miriam when she was struck with leprosy.

Meekness = power under control
Moses = a powerful man, under the control of His Lord!

You see friends, when you walk with God, the critics will have their say. The nay-sayers will have their “nay”, but in those moments when everything inside of you wants to say something in retaliation to defend yourself, that's when meekness has the opportunity to shine through. The life that is controlled by the Spirit of God, yields to the principle that Jesus taught in Matthew 5:44.

“Meekness is seen when you are under the gun, up against deadline, surrounded by problems, hip deep in alligators and no way to drain the swamp, and you feel yourself getting frustrated. If you don't have meekness then, you just don't have it at all.” (Ray Pritchard, American Pastor)

 **The other person described in Scripture as being meek, of course, is Jesus.**

Read Matthew 11:28-29

Interesting that the picture of a yoke is used here. An instrument which harnesses the power of an ox.

Jesus proved that He was Lord and Master over nature – walked on water; Lord and Master over quantity – fed 5000 plus with a 5 loaves and 2 fish; Lord and Master over distance – send His word and healed the centurion's servant (Matthew 8) Lord and Master over death – He raised Lazarus and he himself rose triumphant from the grave!

These and many more powerful faces of Christ we see in Scripture. What does the Bible say this powerful Saviour – who could raise the dead, cast out

demons, and calm a stormy sea, did when he stood before Pilate? Read *Isaiah 53:7*. _____

You see friends, Jesus knew when to speak and when to be silent. He had said all he needed to say by His words and by His actions. And now, when His time had come, he was fully surrendered to the will of His Father. **“Not my will but yours be done!”** Meekness = **power under control**. Jesus, God the Son, all-powerful Saviour – exemplifying meekness by yielding His all to His Father!

What does meekness look like in our own lives as followers of Christ?

We’ve already said meekness involves **submission to the will of God** - surrendering one’s entire being to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Another aspect of meekness is **Teachability**. The willingness to learn. Not being too proud to say, *“you know what? I actually don’t know everything. Maybe so-and-so does have a better idea than I have”*.

Then of course meekness also involves the aspect of being **gentle and kind to others**, being nice; not nasty; not putting others down, so that we can look and feel good. This does not mean being a doormat for others to trample on or allowing yourself to be bullied – *remember meekness is not weakness!* But it may mean at times making some sacrifices for the good of others.

OTHER REFERENCES TO REFLECT ON

- **Galatians 5:22-23** lists meekness as one of the **fruits** of the Spirit.
- **Colossians 3:12** includes it as part of the **characteristics** of the Christian.
- It is the basic attitude we are to have toward all people (**Titus 3:2**), especially those who **oppress** us (**II Timothy 24-26**).
- By a meek and quiet spirit a Christian wife may win her unbelieving husband (**I Peter 3:1-6**).

I close with the words of American Pastor and Author, AW Tozer:

“The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God’s estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and helpless as God declared him to be, but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is in the sight of God of more importance than angels. In himself, nothing; in God, everything. That is his motto.”

Amen

God bless as you walk with Jesus this week.

Pastor Wayne

