

Teaching Sound Doctrine

Lord Teach Us Pt.4

“Blessed Are the Meek”

The Sermon on the Mount is truly the masterpiece of the ages. It was delivered by one whose ability, as a teacher was so great that he was frequently called "The Teacher." We cannot question the clarity, sincerity, practicality and authority by which he spake. Concerning this great sermon, the multitude said, "He taught as one having authority." (Matt. 7:29.) Jesus began this sermon with a series of blessings or "beatitudes." Our lesson today will deal with the third of these - "Blessed are the meek."

Meekness Defined

The Greek word translated "meek" in our lesson is defined by the authorities: "Meek, gentle, kind, forgiving, Matt. 5.5; mild, benevolent, humane." (Analytical Greek Lexicon, P. 340.) "Gentle, mild, meek." (Thayer, p. 534.) "Gentle, kind, not easily provoked, ready to yield rather than cause trouble: but not used in the Bible in the bad sense of tamely submissive and servile." (Cruden's Concordance, P. 424.)

So when the Lord pronounced a blessing upon the meek, he had in mind that character that would be kind, gentle, forgiving and humble; one who would "go the second mile" and "be defrauded" rather than possess the spirit of personal retaliation. As we shall see later, he does not expect the meek to allow truth to suffer and be perverted at the hands of unholy men, but rather to defend it and "fight the good fight of faith."

1: Meekness is the attitude of the disciple to the teacher when teaching; or the son to the father when exercising his parental authority; or the servant to the master when giving him orders. Meekness is first and foremost applicable to the relation of man to God. Meekness toward God necessarily issues in meekness toward men.

Meekness is patience in the endurance of injuries with the belief that God will vindicate us and with the attitude that we are willing to wait for that time. Both

Jesus and Paul set fine examples of meekness or patience in the endurance of suffering, willing to wait the Father's good time to vindicate them. Some look upon meekness as cowardice or the surrender of our rights to others, but it takes more courage to be meek than it does to fight for our rights. A deeper appreciation of the meaning of meekness can be seen when we consider that it is associated with lowliness (*Eph 4:1-2 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*), or as a quiet spirit (*1Pe 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*), and gentleness. (*Tit 3:2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*)

Meekness Exemplified

Moses: Concerning this great man of God we read, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." (*Num 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)*) The meekness of this man consisted

(a) Not in the absence of temper, but in the control of it. The word rendered "meek" is the word used by the Greeks to describe a colt when it has been harnessed and broken.

(b) Not in timidity, but in able and aggressive leadership of God's people.

(c) In forbearance toward his enemies and oppressors.

(d) In submission, without complaint, to God's plan even though it thwarted his personal ambition. (See Deut. 34.)

Jesus: From a study of Deut. 18:15 and many other passages we learn that Jesus was to be like Moses in many ways. Meekness was a characteristic of both. Meekness and lowliness of heart are the only qualities that he claimed for himself. "*For I am meek and lowly in heart.*" (*Matt. 11:29.*) In his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, he is described as being meek. "*Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, Meek, and riding upon an ass. And upon a colt the foal of an ass.*" (*Matt. 21:5.*) This was a fulfillment of prophecy.

In 2 Cor. 10: 1, Paul speaks of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ."

As diametric as it may seem, and as hard as it may seem for us to comprehend it, the Book says that Christ possessed the characteristics of both the lamb and the lion. First, let us consider him as a lamb. When John saw Jesus coming unto him, he said, "*Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.*" (*John 1: 29.*) In his unjust trial and crucifixion on the cross, he fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy, which described the slaughter of a lamb. The passage

referred to (Isa. 53.) described his vicarious death, his submissiveness, his humility and meekness. No animal could better demonstrate those characteristics in Christ than a little lamb.

But let us not forget that he was also *"the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah."* (Rev. 5:5.) Under some forms of attack he was a lamb, but when the enemies of God began to pervert and fight against Truth, he turned lion in his opposition to their evil works. Hear him as he rebukes the scribes and Pharisees. (Matt. 23.) Six times in that chapter he called them "hypocrites" and once he referred to them as "blind guides." At one point He called the serpent and vipers *Mat 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* Of course he knew the hearts of men, but this doesn't sound too much like a lamb, does it? Why did he thus speak? Because he was fighting sin and hypocrisy. His action in the temple of God (*Mat 21:12-13 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*) is another example of his firmness in dealing with sin.

Remember, it was in the Sermon on the Mount that he pronounced a blessing upon the meek. But in that same sermon he pointed out the one way to God (*Mat 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*; We see the same in *Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*). We are also warned against false prophets (*Mat 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*) Christ condemned all who would call him "Lord, Lord" but obey not the things, which he commanded. Since he left us an example that we should follow him (I Pet. 2:21), we conclude that we are to do the same today, and such is not "fighting" or "judging" but the work of true meekness and love.

As we sum up the life of Jesus, we find the following:

- (a) Toward the fallen he was not harsh, but gentle.
- (b) He was not a spineless man, but a courageous leader as was Moses.
- (c) He suffered much wrong, but did no wrong; he was not vengeful, but forgiving.
- (d) Like Moses, he yielded to God's will though it led to his death. (John 5:30)

Meek is NOT weak

Paul: Another great character in whom we see a true picture of meekness was

the apostle Paul. Like Moses and Christ, he was meek but firm. Paul gives us this description of himself: *"Now I Paul myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage toward you."* (2 Cor. 10: 1) Note that he claimed to possess the two outstanding characteristics of Christ - meekness and lowliness. I am confident that he was both in the fullest sense that it is possible for a human to be. Yet in verse 2 of the same chapter he said he was bold and in verse 3 he said he (and all Christians) are engaged in war. Can one be meek and lowly and at the same time be bold and aggressive? Certainly he can. In verse 5 he describes the type of war in which he and all Christians are engaged. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

In 1 Cor. 4:21, Paul asked the Corinthians: *"What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?"* Here again we see both the lion and the lamb. In Paul's letter to the Galatians (5:23) he listed "meekness" as a fruit of the Spirit. In addition to being meek himself, he taught his brethren to be. But we see from this same letter that meekness did not preclude firmness and aggressiveness. In verse 8 of the first chapter he called down the anathema of heaven upon those who would dare pervert the gospel of Christ. In verses 4 and 5 of chapter two we see that neither he nor the Galatians compromised with nor tolerated the work of Judaizing teachers. In verse 11 of the same chapter we see Paul in his meekness as he resisted and condemned Peter to his face. And he did not call him off into a corner and whisper it into his ear for verse 14 shows that he reprimanded him "before them all." Some brethren of today think it is wrong to publicly call names and rebuke brethren for their false teaching, unscriptural works and liberal attitudes. But it is not. If Paul could do so and be meek, so can we. The same principle can be seen in his letter to the Ephesians. In Ephesians 4:2, he admonished them to be meek, but in verses 10-17 of chapter six he told them to put on the armor of God and fight the fight of faith. And yet all of this is in harmony with true meekness.

Meekness Vs. Weakness

One may be meek and militant at the same time. As we have seen by numerous examples in this study, one does not have to be weak in order to be meek. Weakness is not meekness and meekness is not weakness. One may be truly meek and yet be strong in those things, which demand strength. Or one may be very strong in some ways and lack true meekness. Jesus was meek, yet he had power over self, the heavens, the earth, sin, sickness and the gates of Hades. Violate the principles of his Father's will and he was the Lion of the tribe of Judah; revile and abuse him personally and he was the lamb dumb before his shearer. The man who is truly meek is not interested in getting praise for himself, but in seeing God's will done regardless of the cost to him for he knows

that herein lies not only his strength but that of the church and all righteousness. No, one does not have to have a backbone like a wet noodle in order to be meek.

The Reward

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The promise connected with this blessing has been the object of much discussion and controversy in the religious world. The Premillennialist reads it and finds comfort in thinking it helps substantiate the theory of premillennialism. He interprets it to mean that Christ will reign with the meek on this literal earth for one thousand years. But it does not mean that. In 2 Peter 3: 10 we read: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Since this shows that the literal earth shall be destroyed, obviously Christ did not mean the meek shall inherit this earth.

Among the lower forms of life, the meek are inheriting the land, while the vicious are vanishing. Among the nations of the earth, the meek are surviving while the cruel and lustful are fading. The Old Testament promised that certain ones would inherit the earth. (See Psalms 25:13; 37:9, 11). To those under the Law, such a promise referred to the land of Canaan, and the land came to be looked upon as a type of all blessings. It seems the Lord had reference to his spiritual kingdom, of which "the land" of Canaan was a type. The meek shall not become the actual title-holders of the land (Luke 12:15); but they shall come into the real enjoyment of the things of God; they have a greater capacity for enjoyment. Divine protection and contentment are theirs. Eventually, they shall enter the heavenly land or country; that spiritual "earth" whose builder and maker is God.

Let us therefore be meek: In the reception of the word (Jas. 1:21); in teaching the word (2 Tim. 2:25); in restoring the erring (Gal. 6: 1); in reciting a reason for the hope we entertain in our hearts. (1 Peter 3: 15)