

Grace, mercy, and peace to you as we continue the fifth leg of our Lenten journey on the road from **“Dust to Glory”**. Our text is from Jesus’ words in **Matt. 5:5**—*“Blessed are **the meek**, for they will **inherit the earth.**”*

Suppose the company you work for wrote a description of the ideal person to be its new **CEO**. Do you think **“meekness”** would be on the list? In the next presidential election, do you think the candidate would garner many votes whose campaign theme is, “Vote for **ME**; I’m **MEEK!**”? Or when a congregation needs to fill a pastoral vacancy, how excited do you think the **Call Committee** would be about a candidate who says his primary leadership quality is **MEEKNESS**?

Perhaps you’ve heard of the organization called the **“Dependent Order of Really Meek and Timid Souls”**? When you make an **acrostic** of the first letters of its **name**, you have the word **“Doormats”**. These **Doormats** also have an official **insignia**—a yellow **caution** light. Their official motto is: *“The meek shall inherit the earth...if that’s **OKAY** with everybody!”*

A man by the name of Upton Dickson **founded** the society after he wrote a pamphlet called **“Cower Power”**. So, is **THAT** what Jesus means in this evening’s beatitude—that God’s people are **blessed** if they have the personality of a **doormat**? Not **hardly**, but perhaps we can find the answer by asking two simple questions: *“What Does True Meekness **Mean?**”* and secondly, *“What Does True Meekness **Gain?**”*

As for its true **meaning**, keep in mind that words have a way of **changing** meanings over the years. For example, back in 1900, **“rap”** meant to strike or hit. In **1930** it meant the punishment for a **crime**; in **1960** it meant a **discussion**; and since the **1990’s**, it’s meant a kind of music I happen to find personally **annoying**...even so-called **“Christian rap”**. Thus, what a word meant way back in **1611 A.D.** when the King James Version of the Bible was written might just be different from the meaning of the same word **today**. And yet, I shouldn’t have been so surprised when I saw that the Merriam and Webster Online Dictionary defined **“meek”** as **“deficient in spirit and courage”** and **“being not violent or strong”**. But the **lexicographers** couldn’t have been more wrong!

Part of the problem is that not all ancient Greek words like **“praus”** (prah-oos) have a direct equivalent in **English**, so it’s best to look back at how the word was **originally** used. In classical Greek three different types of people tended to use it: **doctors, sailors, and farmers**. The **doctor** used this word **“meek”** to describe a **soothing medicine** that would take away pain. The **sailor** used it to refer to a **gentle breeze** that brought refreshment to the sailors. The **farmer** used this word of a wild horse that had been **broken** and was then able to be **useful** in farm work. In other words, **“meekness”** is **“power under control”**.

Medicine used **“out of control”** or indiscriminately can wreck your **health!** We all know what damage a **hurricane—wind** out of control—can do! And just try to ride a horse that’s **not** been broke to ride and you’ll learn the definition of power **not** under control. While weakness is a **lack** of strength, **meekness** is strength under **control**. Jesus was describing a believer whose strength, abilities, and energies are controlled by **God**.

In his book, *The Pursuit of God*, A. W. Tozer wrote, *“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 has **declared** him to be, but **paradoxically**, he knows at the same time that he is, in the sight of **God**, more important than **angels**...He knows **well** that the **world** will never see him as **God** sees him, and he has stopped being **concerned** about this.”*

Only two people in the Bible are overtly described as **MEEK**. Can you name them? **Moses** and **Jesus**. Moses was one of the greatest leaders in history. It took **backbone** to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go! Yet, when his brother and sister bitterly criticized and opposed him for marrying a **Cushite** woman, instead of taking matters into his own **hands**, he waited for **God** to defend him...which God **did**! And what was this great leader's **epithet** in Num. 12:3? It refers to Moses as "**the meekest man who ever lived!**"

Imagine also the **control** it took on the part of **Jesus** not to **shrivel the arm** of the men who beat those nails into His wrists and feet **OR** to strike down those who ridiculed Him on the cross with a **lightning bolt** or to call down on His enemies in Gethsemane those **twelve legions** of angels (that's about **80,000 of them!**). **Twice** in the Book of Matthew our Lord Jesus was described as "**meek**". In His triumphal entry in Jerusalem, Matthew wrote, "*Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King comes to you, **MEEK** and riding on the colt of a donkey...*" and Jesus also described **Himself** in Matt. 11:28-30 by saying: "*Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am **MEEK** and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*"

Thus, to be **meek** is to be like **Christ**, yet Christ never **was** and never **will** be **WEAK**, for the **Lamb of God** is also the **Lion of Judah**—**gentle** but **tough**...and always **controlled** by the will of the Heavenly Father. Here Jesus promises to teach you **TRUE** meekness **IF** you are willing to **yoke** yourself to Him. Often a young ox would be yoked with an older, more **experienced** ox, so that the older might **train** the younger one on how to do things **right**...and so by carrying the **same** yoke, the **untrained** ox would learn the proper **pace** and, **most** importantly, how to go in the direction his master **wanted** it to go. In the same way, you and I **also** can learn how to be **meek** and to experience the **blessings** of this beatitude **IF** we humbly surrender our lives to Him for direction.

Jesus and Moses teach us that people who submit their life to **GODS** control learn to **refrain** from revenge and to **constrain** anger. They **trust** God and willingly and humbly commit to doing things **God's** way, even when they possess the **power** to do it their **own** way. If you've been traveling very far down the road of Christian **discipleship**, you've probably **struggled** with doing things **God's** way instead of your **own** way, **haven't** you?

A stressed-out driver on a busy street was **tailgating** a woman's car. Suddenly, the light turned yellow just in **front** of her. She did the **right thing** by **stopping** at the crosswalk, even though she could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection. The tailgating man hit the roof **and** the horn, **screaming** in frustration as he missed his chance to get through the intersection on her bumper. Still in **mid-rant**, he heard a tap on the **window** and looked up into the face of a very serious-looking **police officer** who ordered the man to exit the car with his hands up. He was **searched, handcuffed**, and placed in the **back** of the patrol car. After almost **30 minutes** of interaction on his radio and in-car computer, the officer let the man out and **released** him. He said, "*I'm sorry for this **mistake**. I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your **horn**, flipping off the lady in **front** of you, and cussing a **blue streak** at her. I noticed the '**Choose Life**' license plate holder, the '**What Would Jesus Do?**' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated **Fish emblem** on the trunk, so naturally...I assumed you had **stolen the car**.*"

Aristotle defined **meekness** as the **mean** between two **extremes**—intense **anger** and excessive **indifference**. It's "**the happy medium**" between too much **wrath** and too little **passion**, so the Greek scholar and Bible commentator William **Barclay** suggested that this beatitude be translated, "*Blessed is the man who is **always** angry at the **right** time, and **never** angry at the **wrong** time.*"

Inwardly, the meek willingly hand control over to **Jesus**, so that meekness can be seen in a mother who handles a child **gently** instead of jerking that little one around when she's frustrated. Meekness is seen when a person is being **corrected**, and instead of being sullen and **defensive** is open and **teachable**. Who we surrender our **will** to (and this is crucial)—whether it be to **God** or to

ourselves—reveals the character we possess. The promise of this beatitude is that life will become a **delight** when you consistently give control to **God**, trusting that His **“will be done”** in your life.

Therefore, if this is what meekness **MEANS**, what then does meekness **GAIN** for us? In a nutshell, Jesus says the meek will inherit **the earth!** In fact, the verse is **emphatic** in the original Greek, meaning literally that the meek and **ONLY** the meek will inherit the earth.

The late oil billionaire J. Paul Getty once said, *“The meek shall inherit the earth...but not its oil and mineral rights.”* But Jesus isn’t promising us that all because we’re **meek**, we’ll be bequeathed great earthly possessions. So don’t say, *“I’m meek. Now, where’s my \$200,000 XP100D Tesla, Lord?”* Jesus was quoting **Ps. 37:11** where **“inherit”** means *“to enter into possession of something that’s been promised by God.”* In fact, when you **read** Psa. 37:11, you’ll find it says, *“...the meek will inherit **the land.**”* God was telling the Hebrews, *“Those who humbly and obediently accept My **will**, they will enter into the **land** I’ve prepared for them. And those who spend their lives waiting upon **God** will be ready for the Son of God when He **comes.**”* In other words, for the one who humbly submits to Christ, it means far more than the possession of any territory on **earth**. It means we inherit His promise of abundant life here and now on earth, **as well as** all the rights as heirs of eternal life that will come to us when Christ returns for us on the Last Day.

If you know Jesus by faith as your only Lord and Savior, then that makes you an heir of **everything** He’s promised. You’ll get some of it **now** but much more of it **later**. There will be an inheritance for the meek not only in **“the sweet by and by”** but also in this often **“nasty now”**. Right now, it **does** seem like sinners **reign** and the meek possess **little**. But in **reality**, believers who faithfully live out this beatitude may **seem** like they have nothing, yet they possess **everything!** After all, it’s only the **meek** who will reign with the **Savior!**

The meek are able to be at **peace**, because they know that God has everything in His **perfect purview** and is still in **charge**. And even if they have to endure some **adversity** here and **now**, ultimately His purposes will be worked out. They’re confident that wickedness and evil **do not** and **never will** have the final word...and that truth and righteousness **will** prevail. And they know that the earth and the fullness thereof remain the property of the **Lord**, and that He’s chosen to make it the inheritance of those who **walk** with Him—not in **wilted weakness**, but in **mastered meekness**.

The Pharaohs of Egypt, Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Napoleon Bonaparte, the Caesars of Rome, Adolph Hitler and the Communists all arrogantly tried to conquer the world and **failed**. They had huge armies under their control, but what they **didn’t** rule was their own **spirit**. But Jesus says there are people who **CAN** subdue this earth. He calls them the **MEEK**. In the end, the meek will inherit the earth because they’re the only ones who can be **trusted** with power. If you give power to a **proud** person, it becomes all about **them!** They’ll stop at nothing less than world domination. However, the meek genuinely and **completely** surrender themselves to their **Creator**, not because they’re Casper Milquetoasts but because they in who in Whom their **true** strength **lies**. As somebody once said, *“**Spiritual meekness** means giving up to **God** without a **struggle.**”*

Friends, meekness isn’t one of those traits we can just take or **leave** and then still expect to live a fulfilled Christian life. It’s a **necessity**. **First**, it’s necessary for **salvation!** Only people who **humble** themselves before God and admit their **helplessness without** Him can be **saved**. **Secondly**, meekness is necessary in our **witnessing**. People have this gentle picture in their minds of what Jesus was like, and **meekness** usually **characterizes** that picture. Why then would they listen to us if we who claim to be His **followers** don’t **ACT** like Him? And **third**, meekness is necessary if our lives are to bring **glory to God**. Otherwise, when we’re controlling and **proud** instead of **meek**, we just edify **ourselves** and not **Him**. In other words, meekness is a welcome **“master”** over all our **other** traits and fruit of the Spirit we’ve been given.

You’ve heard of the Greek philosopher **Diogenes**, famous for carrying around a **lamp** and looking for an **honest man**. (He didn’t find one!) Once Diogenes sailed on a ship that was captured by **pirates** who made **slaves** of the surviving passengers. A slave trader correctly guessed that

Diogenes was no **field hand**. Asked if he had a useful **trade**, the new “**slave**” replied that he was no tradesman **or** skilled laborer. His only **trade** was that of “**governing men**”. Thus, Diogenes concluded, “*I would like to be sold to a man who needs a **master**.*” And he **was**! A man bought Diogenes to become a tutor for his **sons** and advisor-ruler of his **household**! Diogenes again became the **master**. Evidently, finding a man in need of a **master** is far easier than the search for an **honest man**.

I’m in need of a **master**. You are, **too**. Our words, actions and influence are **powerful**. But they need to be **controlled**, so that others aren’t **hurt**. Our Master is **Jesus**...the truly “meekest person Who ever lived”. By willingly dying on the cross when He could have gotten down from it any time He **desired**, He proved His sacrificial **love** for us, and by rising from the **grave** and defeating even the power of death **itself**, He demonstrated He **also** has the power to **regulate** our lives **right now**.

Today, He offers the **world** to those who willingly **submit** to Him—to the **meek**, the ones who will inherit the earth. God has blessed us **powerfully**, but He’s still **training** us to be controlled by **Him**. The meek are the **strong** who are under **God’s** control. Does He have control of **your** life? Do you include Him in all your decisions and plans? Do you **TRUST** Him enough to follow His wisdom in knowing how **control** the power He’s given you...of knowing when to step **UP** and when to **STEP BACK**? If so, you’re among the **MEEK** and you are **BLESSED**! And one day you’ll possess in **fullness** the **inheritance** that you could never acquire on your own—the riches of **eternal life** in the **new** heaven and earth.

May God grant this in our Savior’s Name, Amen.