

**Pastor Tom Mortenson**

**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**May 24, 2015**

**Blessed are the Meek**

**Matthew 5:5**

**Prayer:** *Father God, we do again thank you for your goodness, we thank you for your grace, we thank you for your son, and we thank you for your word. Lord, we just thank you that as this morning we have the privilege and the opportunity to open up your book, we are at the Sermon on the Mount, and Father, we just again pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit, we pray that you would guide us, open our eyes, open our ears, open the ability for each of us to understand your word and again, to make it a permanent part of our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

If someone was going to describe to you describe you and they used the word "meek," would you be offended? "He's an incredibly meek person," or "She is altogether meek." Would you like to have that word associated with you? The Lord Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount names meekness as the third quality of the citizens of his kingdom. Our text this morning is taken from the Sermon on the Mount which is found in Matthew 5:1-5 and this is how it reads. It says: *Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he*

sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And we've seen thus far that the first quality of kingdom citizens is this idea of poverty of spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And we saw that the two critical words in that statement are those words: "in spirit," and that is that the poverty that Jesus spoke of had very little to do with one's socioeconomic status. We saw that you could be poor in spirit regardless whatever wealth you had or did not have and that being poor in spirit meant recognizing your own spiritual bankruptcy. The poor in spirit understand that they bring to the equation of God and man absolutely nothing. Secondly, God says in verse 4: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." And we saw that this quality is the ability to soberly examine ourselves and to mourn this fallen world where death, decay, and depravity have really become normalized. It also means mourning the suffering of our Lord who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and finally it means mourning the effect that our sin had on that suffering.

This morning we're going to examine the third quality that Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount and that is meekness. Verse 5:

*"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."* Well, the problem with the word "meekness" is that it's an English word which does not really capture the original Greek well at all. Frankly, most of us would be offended if we were described as meek because it carries with it this notion that we are timid or impotent, some kind of 97-pound weakling. So what did Jesus Christ really mean when he said: *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth?"* I think we first have to understand that the Sermon on the Mount is not a "how-to" lecture but rather it's a description, it's a description of what kingdom citizens are like, and meekness is a characteristic, it's a character of kingdom citizens and as such it has nothing to do with weakness, timidity, or impotence and it has everything to do with strength and with boldness and with power. Biblical meekness is defined as power under control. It's a power so certain, so internally self-confident that it precludes any need whatsoever to display itself. I'm sure you've all heard the old joke: Where does a 900-pound gorilla sit? And the answer is: Wherever he wants to. I mean, strictly speaking, you can understand that a gorilla can afford to be meek in the biblical sense. I mean, there's absolutely no need for chest thumping when everybody knows that you're in charge of the seating arrangements and you have the power to back it up. Biblical meekness has that same sense of certainty and same confidence rooted not in personal power but in the

sovereignty of God. W. E. Vine puts it well, he said: "Meekness is that temper of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good and therefore without disputing or resisting."

So the truly meek believe two things especially, they believe, number one, that God is in charge; number two, that God doesn't make mistakes. And you remember the old game of musical chairs, that hateful old game that we all had to play when we were at parties? You know, the music is playing and everybody's just kind of looping around a chair and they're constantly jockeying for position because as soon as that music stops you know one of you is out. Well, when it comes to musical chairs, the truly meek person is able to not worry about people or positions because he genuinely believes and trusts that it is God who's in charge of the music. And when we look at our lives in terms of musical chairs, we find ourselves jockeying for position in terms of our jobs and our families and our churches and our communities and the question becomes: Do we truly believe who controls the music? I mean, is it you? Is it chance? Or is it God? Well, there is a way to tell and there's some questions you can ask yourself, some diagnostic questions that might get at this question itself.

Number one, does the success of those outside the kingdom, does that rankle you? Number two, does your own sense of the injustices

that have been done to you cause you to in some way be angry with God? And number three, does it seem to you sometimes that God is absolutely unimpressed with your dilemmas? And if you think -- if you think that inequity, injustice and indifference, if you think that that all rests with God, well then chances are that you probably have a problem with meekness. The good news is that God is neither shocked nor surprised that we have these thoughts. In fact, when Jesus said, "*The meek shall inherit the earth*" he was actually quoting a Psalm, Psalm we just read, and that Psalm dealt with these thoughts explicitly. Psalm 37. Let me just read it to you again. It says this: *A Psalm of David. Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret -- it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;*

*Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

See, David at this point is -- he's an old man and he's reflecting on this age old conflict and that is the apparent success of the wicked along with the apparent failure of the godly. And through David's Psalm, the Holy Spirit gives us three ways to capture genuine meekness. He gives us three ways to counter the false thoughts of God's inequity, his injustice, and his indifference. In fact, in these few verses God tells us the answer to inequity is trust. He says the answer to injustice is to fret not, and the answer to indifference is to wait patiently. And our model of meekness is Jesus Christ. You see, his trust was absolute, he virtually never fretted, and his patience is what took him to the cross. See, he knew on the most practical of levels that the -- that not a sparrow falls without his father's permission, and his meekness had this one overarching principle, it was *Matthew 6:10* which says: *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* See, the Father's will was that Jesus would live a perfect life and then die the death that we all deserve to die. We had separated ourselves from God by the sin of Adam's rebellion and today every one of us carries the effect of that disobedience. I mean, in fact we are born predisposed to it and because of that

predisposition, every one of us is under the wrath of God. This is what *Ephesians 2* has to say, it says: *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience -- among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

So God had a problem. God had to find a way to satisfy his perfect justice and still keep us from being destroyed by it. And God's solution was *1 John 4:10*. It says: *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* Now, "propitiation" is a fifty-cent word but it means to turn away wrath. And so what happens is God sent his son to earth to do what we could never do, and that is to bear in his own body God's specific response to our sin. We often think of Jesus as this unfortunate victim of a series of missteps between the Jewish leaders who wanted Jesus's death and the incompetent cowardly Pilate who couldn't prevent it, and that couldn't be further from the truth. You see, there was one overarching force that drove the crucifixion and that force was God himself. In *Acts 2* Peter tells the crowd that Jesus was crucified not by the Jews and not by the Romans, but by "*the determined*

*purpose and foreknowledge of God.*" And what gave Jesus the ability to go to the cross was his complete and his absolute trust in his Father. In *1 Peter 2:23* Peter says of Jesus: *"Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."* This is what profound meekness looks like, and it is based on trust. You see, Jesus went through torture and execution silently, like a lamb led to the slaughter because he trusted in the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, and that's what meekness truly is. And meekness is not possible unless you believe in a sovereign God's total control of absolutely everything.

You know, it's been said if there's one random molecule in the universe that's still able to exercise its will at the expense of God's will, then God is not sovereign and God is not God and in fact it is that molecule that is God. True meekness is absolute trust in a sovereign's God ability to completely rule and to rule well and to rule in the best and the worst of circumstances. You see, it was trust that led Abraham to understand as he was about to sacrifice Isaac that God could be trusted, and he said in *Genesis 22:8*: *Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."* And the two of them went on together. In fact it was trust that Joseph had when he was confronting his brothers who had sold him into slavery. In *Genesis 50:20* he says



to his brothers: "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." And it was trust that Paul had as he's sitting in chains in a Philippian jail. He said this in *Philippians 1:12*, he said: "I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel." You see, the folks who made those statements were men, genuine men. They weren't milquetoasts. And yet they demonstrated a profound meekness. You see, I think our idea of meekness is a twisted caricature of the real thing. I mean, even a good spin on meekness is typically false. We think a meek Christian is somebody who is as they able -- as they say, somebody who can kind of put a cork in it, somebody who's kind of able to kind of keep from just blowing up at somebody like Ralph Kramden or George Costanza, you know, the kind of guy who just kind of simmers away and he's absolutely bearing the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune and then eventually just explodes. That's not meekness. That is anger that has gone underground. And at best it's a recipe for depression; at worst it's an invitation to psychosis. If you want a one-word definition of meekness, it's trust.

Secondly, a meek person not only trusts, he frets not. *Psalm 37* says: *Fret not because of evil men.* And fretting is the very first thing we do when we stop trusting. You know, you look at

Abraham and Joseph and Paul and we see that they showed stunning meekness all while they were suffering bewildering and painful circumstances, and they were able to be meek because they refused to fret. They refused to wonder if their trust in God was misplaced. And so we have to ask ourselves, how do we feel when our trust in God is challenged, when we see good things happening to bad people or bad things happening to good people? We look to Paul. Paul understood that some preach the gospel out of selfish ambition. These were folks who wanted to be the new Paul at Paul's expense. And what is astounding about Paul is that he really didn't care. He was that meek. He said in *Philippians 1:15*: *Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.* That's what true meekness is.

Can you be settled enough in your confidence that God knows what he's doing that you don't care who appears to get the credit, who appears to get the blessing? And again, we look at the opposite. How about when bad things happen to good people, when injustice seems to just run about unchecked, are you then able to fret not?

How about when things simply just don't go the way we planned? I'm sure Paul never planned to be chained up in a Philippian jail, and that if anyone had good reason to fret, certainly Paul did. But the scripture says he fretted not. The Greek word for "fret" is an interesting word, it can be translated "glow" or to "grow warm." And the idea is stoking a glowing coal. You know, the more you blow on it, the more it glows; the more it glows, then finally it just warms and it warms and eventually it just bursts into flame. To fret means to meditate on the negative. You know, meditating is basically what a cow does. It's chewing its cud over and over and over again, and when we fret, we take these bad thoughts and we bring them up into our brains and then we chew them over and over and over again. And God has a solution to this type of fretting and his solution is elegantly simple; he says don't do that. He says, "Fret not." I mean, he's implying though that we have a choice here. You see, some things are unavoidable but the pain of fretting is a pain that comes only by invitation because to fret is to choose to stoke the glow. It's to choose to do a slight silent slow burn over our circumstances and over the God who in our minds is too powerless or too indifferent to do anything about it.

And we have an example in scripture of that type of fretting and it's done by Asaph in Psalm 73. Let me read to you this Psalm of Asaph, it says this: *A Psalm of Asaph. Truly God is good to*

Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind. Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes swell out through fatness; their hearts overflow with follies. They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression. They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue struts through the earth. Therefore his people turn back to them, and find no fault in them. And they say, "How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?" Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. All in vain I have kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning. If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed the generation of your children. You see, clearly Asaph has a problem with meekness, and he says you don't want your kids around me because they would be scandalized if they knew what I really, really thought about God. You see, Asaph is a fretter. He's warmed the coal and he's blown on it over and over again softly and gently and now it's burst into flame. And he himself is scandalized by how bitter he now feels towards God. In fact, he's scandalized to the point where he says, keep your kids away from

me. You don't want them knowing what I know. But here's the point: God already knows what he knows. God already knows what he feels. God's the one who's told us all about how Asaph feels. In fact we're reading about the fretting of Asaph. And so ask yourself, how would your and my fretting read? What would God say as he's reading the story of how we fret? What God is saying in this Psalm, he's saying, "watch your step." He's saying, "Be very, very careful because you're treading on very dangerous ground here." You see, meekness and fretting are mutually exclusive. The one drives the other one out. And fretting is flirting with bitterness, and we start fretting when we stop trusting. And when we stop trusting we begin to taste a unique type of bitterness and anger, and we often find perhaps to our amazement that that bitterness is delicious. *Psalm 37 says: Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.* And so when fretting overtakes meekness, we begin to lose our vision. We stop seeing the world through God's sovereignty and we start seeing it through human control. After all, God helps those who help themselves. I think most of you know that that drivel is to be found nowhere in scripture and that it is usually the source of our fretting. And that's just what Asaph did. And the more he fretted, the more blinded he became until every single wicked person was fat and sassy and every good thing done for God was an absolute waste of time.

Have you ever felt like that? I mean, have you ever felt like saying, God, you don't know my boss, you don't know my spouse, you don't know my co-worker, my relatives, my so-called friends, you have no idea what they did or maybe what they're doing. And the question is really? Really, is that the case? I mean, I don't know but God certainly does. And one thing I can guarantee you is you are not alone. Every one of us has felt like that at one time or another. So how do we get out of that? How do we get out of that fretting? How do we get out of that thinking pattern? Well, we get out of it the same way Asaph wound up getting out of it. And he ends *Psalm 73* very differently. He ends it by saying this, this is *Psalm 73* starting at verse 16, he says: *But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until -- and that's a key word -- until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors! Like a dream when one awakes, O LORD, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms. When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you. Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire beside you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the*

*strength of my heart and my portion forever. For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.*

You see, what we're reading here is, what happens is Asaph has made a conscious decision to stop fretting. And how does he do this? Well, he does this by altering his perception. He brings his mind back into the sanctuary of God. He begins to perceive as God now perceives, and he gives up fretting and he starts trusting. But the key to this is our last point and that is waiting patiently. Again, let me read to you *Psalm 37* about this idea of waiting patiently. God says: *Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on his faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, and he shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret -- it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off; but those*

*who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

Now that phrase "*but the meek shall inherit the earth,*" it should sound familiar. And what God is saying is the meek inherit the earth because, number one, they trust God. Verse 3: *Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and feed on his faithfulness.* Secondly, they fret not. Verse 8: *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret -- it only causes harm.* And finally, they wait patiently. Verse 7: *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him.* God says trust in Jehovah and he will bring forth your righteousness like the light and your justice like the noonday.

I confess, the part that we all grapple with is this "when" part, and for some of us that patient waiting can last an entire lifetime. You see, meekness is a power so confident in God's goodness that it can say like Job, "*Though he slay me yet I will trust him.*" And sometimes that trust is literal and sometimes that trust is exquisitely difficult. You know, *Hebrews 11* contains a catalog of the great saints and what they did for the kingdom. Abraham is in there, Moses is in there, Joseph is in there, Noah's



in there, but in that same catalog is a tribute to the saints who did not receive in this life anything approaching a reward for their faithfulness. Instead scripture says in *Hebrews 11:13*:  
*These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.*

What God is saying here, he's freely acknowledging, sometimes you don't get justice in this life. Sometimes it just doesn't happen. But that doesn't mean that ultimately you don't get justice. In *Revelation 6:9* John describes a scene that takes place in heaven itself, he says this: *I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.*

That's a tough one. You see, God's answers to the saints in heaven mirrors his answer to the saints on earth. What he says is tell them to rest, tell them to wait patiently until the number of brethren who would be killed as they were killed is complete. Now does God know ahead of time the number of the saints that are going

to die? Absolutely. Does he allow that to happen? I think that's pretty self-evident. Are they victims? That's the real question. And the answer to that is absolutely not. In fact, each and every one of them is personally accounted for by God himself. In *Psalm 116:15*, he says this: *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.* And remember, the death of his chosen ones mirrors in some way the death that he also died. You know, God is not some distant figure up in heaven consigning others to a death that he knows nothing about. He knew precisely what was involved in dying a martyr's death because he died one himself. And he also knows that there's a finite number of martyrs who are going to die because he knows the exact moment when that last number is going to be completed, and God says of those martyrs that they will shine like the sun and they will inherit the earth. And again, *Psalm 37*, says this: *The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him, but the LORD laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming. The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose way is upright; their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous. The LORD knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will remain forever.*

I like the Chinese way of paraphrasing this, it's basically: "He who laughs last, laughs best." See, genuine meekness is trust that God is watching over all of the saints through every single one of their trials, from insults to assaults and even to martyrdom. But you know, you and I know that that is not likely for us. If we're in the Middle East, yeah, that's a real possibility; for us, it's not. What is likely though is that all of us are going to be challenged at some point to doubt God. We're going to be challenged to doubt his goodness or his power or both, and that is the challenge of genuine meekness. That's the challenge that the Lord Jesus Christ met. It's the challenge that saints have met through the ages, as well it's the challenge that we now face. So how do we face that challenge? Well, we do it by modeling our behavior after the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me illustrate. We are talking about power under control. I don't know if any of you remember who King Sennacherib was. King Sennacherib made the mistake of mocking the God of Jerusalem as he was attacking God's people. And he was feeling pretty cocky because he had an army of 185,000 soldiers. I don't know if you remember what happened to him, but it's detailed in *1 Kings 19:35*, it says this, it says: *And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead*

bodies. Well, the night that Jesus was arrested, he made a statement about angels as well, and this is what he said in *Matthew 26:53*, he said: *"Do you think I can not appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"*

Okay. So just -- let's just do the math here for a second. We have one angel who slaughters 185,000 in one night. We have Jesus casually mentioning that his Father has twelve legions of these angels just waiting for his command. That's 72,000 angels. That's 72,000 angels standing as it were on their tiptoes just waiting for a wink or a nod from Jesus. Human minds cannot conceive of the power that Jesus possessed at that moment, but it was a power under control. This was the meekness of Jesus. You know, when he was first brought before the authorities, he asked them why they had arrested him. After all, every single thing I did I did in public. I didn't do anything in secret. And in response, one of the court officials comes up to Jesus and he slaps him in the face. Now, I suspect that that slap rippled across the entire universe and that the entire spirit world just withdrew in abject horror at the idea that somebody had slapped God himself in the face and they were still breathing and they were still alive. That's more power kept in check. That's more meekness on display. And what followed that night was more beatings and then mocking and slapping and spitting and flogging and then crucifixion. And at any given moment in that

entire process, Jesus could have annihilated not just the Sanhedrin or Rome itself but the entire planet and the solar system that it was spinning in. I mean, you talk about power under control. At the moment of Jesus' ultimate shame and powerlessness, he was still actively maintaining the entire universe. Now *Colossians 1:16* says: *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* So as he's dying for us, he's still controlling the very heartbeats of the soldiers who are tormenting him while holding every single molecule in this universe together. This is power beyond comprehension held in check by a love beyond understanding. This is what true power is under control.

So how do we come by genuine meekness? Well, meekness is simply trust put into action. It is strength under control. It's not timid, it's not fearful, it's not impotent. It is complete and absolute confidence in God. It's confidence that he's in charge and that he knows what he's doing. So how do we trust God if we've never seen or experienced his trustworthiness? You see, meekness is a state of being. It's not a state of doing. It's something that you are. You either are or are not meek. And if God's only a theoretical concept instead of a practical reality, you can't

really know if he's worthy of trust. So how can you develop meekness? You see, meekness requires a first step of trust because any time you have the opportunity to practice meekness, you're going to have a simultaneous opportunity to doubt God. Because the fact is, meekness and doubt always come bundled together as a choice. And the principle of little things applies here. This is Matthew 25. In Matthew 25, Jesus speaks of the parable of the talents, he says those who have been faithful in little will be faithful in much. So meekness is something we practice in little things. You get a doubt in little things, you'll be getting a doubt in big things. So the next time you feel the urge to grab control and assert yourself no matter how small, take it as an opportunity to practice meekness. You know, practice giving over the little things to His care. Learn the practical side of God's trustworthiness in areas of who gets the credit or who gets the blame or notice or thanks or appreciation. Give them all over to God's providence. And as you practice meekness and God responds, you learn to trust the way Abraham, Joseph and Paul learned. You see, we learn it in steps, precept upon precept, line upon line. That's how God wants us to trust. God says in Psalm 34: *Taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!* You see, you can't really trust until you've tasted, until you've tasted and seen that God really is good and as long as he remains untasted, he remains untested, and there's no basis for

trust and faith is not really faith, it's just religion. You know, opportunities to practice meekness exist everywhere assertiveness and self-protection is called for, and meekness invites God right into that world.

And so my question this morning is is God calling you to meekness? That's a fair question for every one of us, and I would guarantee you the answer is yes. And it's not a hard task. It's an impossible task. But it starts with recognizing all of the different opportunities for meekness that God gives us. You know, when those fat and sassy folks outside of the kingdom succeed, God is whispering "Trust me." When I'm tempted to grow angry at God for my lot in life, God commands us to "fret not." And when it seems that God is unimpressed with my dilemmas, God is pleading with us to "wait patiently." He says, wait patiently and remember my son as your primary example of what true meekness is. Again, *1 Peter 2:23: When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.* Now this is meekness off any scale. And Jesus does it by trusting himself to him who judges justly. That's his father. That's who we trust in. So when we're reviled, when we're threatened, when we're suffering at the hands of others, the question is, can you and I trust him as well, because "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*" Let's pray.

*Father, I thank you that life itself gives each of us multiple opportunities to practice meekness. Lord, the principle is learn in the little things and the big things will come easily. Father, I pray that each of us in the next few weeks as we come upon opportunities to practice meekness, that you would give us the grace and the wisdom to see this as an opportunity and to seize it as a chance to see that you are worthy of trust, and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*