

sure no one questioned their rights. If they did, they did not live to tell the tale. In contrast you have the sheep grazing on the Galilean hillside, timid and afraid; being led from one patch to another, very unlikely creatures to inherit the earth. Yet in the wisdom of God, those giant lizards are nowhere to be seen; despite their defense policy, they are dead and gone. But the sheep still graze peacefully on those Palestinian hills!

Have you been brought by the Spirit of God to see your sins and mourn for them, and as a result, to be meek? My friend, only those who have undergone this change, inwrought by the Holy Spirit, will be on the new heavens and the new earth. Only the Lord can produce this in the hearts of sinners. All who claim to be followers of the Lamb must manifest this trait or they are imposters and not children of God.

Someone may ask how is this obtained by sinners, who are naturally proud? It is only as we behold God's holiness as it is manifested in the Cross of Christ that we are led to see our sins. But at the same time we see the mercy of God displayed, that God made provision for our salvation. It is only as we come to Christ for mercy that we learn to mourn for sin, and see that we have no grounds at all for pride. We have no basis to look down on others or compare ourselves to them and be proud. For our sins cause us to bow down in shame, and with the publican to cry out, "*Lord, be merciful to me the sinner*". Then the Spirit works in us **meekness**, which causes us to submit to God and to be humble in relation to others. Come to Christ today and beg for pardon and acceptance, and the Spirit of God will work this grace in your heart. Then you too can claim the promise here made by our Lord, that you will inherit the earth. Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

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Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

We come now to the third of the beatitudes, "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*". [Matthew 5:5] Each of these beatitudes is the characteristics of those who are members of the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Lord is not describing what it takes to become a Christian but showing the character of those who are. This is very important, for none of these traits are natural to men, but are supernaturally worked into the heart of those who are made children of God.

In the world what is prized is not **meekness**, but strength and power and aggressiveness. The last person the world expects to succeed is the person who is meek. Note what our Lord says here, it is not that those who are meek will win a kingdom, but will inherit it as a gift. There is a logical order in the beatitudes. First we have to be made to see our sins, by the Spirit's work, before we can mourn for it; and it is only when we are brought to mourn that we see there is no room for boasting. Meekness is not a natural trait, for by nature we are proud. It is a fruit of the Spirit. "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*". [Galatians 5:22-23]

Let me state what **meekness** does not mean before we look at what it does mean. Sometimes people are described as meek who never speak up for anything, but go along with whatever is proposed to avoid conflict. Such are not necessarily meek, but lack principles, and are cowards. Nor does it refer to one who is always nice. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones put it, "That is something purely biological, the kind of thing you get in animals. One dog is nicer than another; one cat is nicer than another". Nor does it refer to one who is spineless. John Blanchard writes, "Some people seem to have a wishbone where they should have a backbone". Finally, nor does it mean lacking decisiveness. Meek people are not pushovers, they have strength of character and are able to act on their principles.

What does the word **meek** mean here? "Meekness", writes A.W. Pink, "is not only the antithesis of pride, but of stubbornness, fierceness, vengefulness...Meekness is the opposite of self-will toward God, and of ill-will toward men". The word speaks therefore of balance. It speaks of a person,

who does not fly off the handle, is not proud, for having seen his own sins and mourned for them, what room is there left for pride.

Let us see this trait as it is manifested in God's children. First let us seek how it is manifested in relation to God. *"Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace".* [Leviticus 10:3] This verse comes after the two sons of Aaron have been struck down by God for bringing in new things into the worship of God. Note the attitude of Aaron, who did not express bitterness against God, or utter hard thoughts but submitted to His perfect will. We see the same attitude of submission on the part of Eli who, as he hears of the death of his two sons, said, *"It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good".* [1 Sam. 3:18]

We see this attitude in Job after he had received news that all his property had been destroyed and all his children killed. Listen to his response, *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."* [Job 1:20-21] We supremely see this attitude in the Old Testament in Moses who responds to the grumbling Israelites not with anger, but with meekness as he goes to the Lord in prayer. Numbers 12:3 calls Moses the meekest man on the face of the earth. Thomas Watson wrote, "Though they (Israelites) were in a storm, he was in a calm".

The supreme example of submission to God is our Lord Jesus Christ. We see how He submitted to all that the Father called Him to. He submitted to John's baptism, even though it may imply that He is a sinner, for He had come to bear the sins of His people. Even John refused at first, but Jesus asked him to do it in order to fulfill all righteousness. We see this submission especially in the Garden of Gethsemane when He struggled over what was coming before Him, namely the wrath of God, as He cried, *"Not my will, but thine be done".*

We see this **meekness** manifested in relation to men in many saints. David was pursued by King Saul, who was trying to kill him. David could have repaid evil with evil, for twice he had opportunity to slay Saul, but he refused to do so. David would not slay the king, because he was at that time the Lord's anointed.

We see this meekness in Moses. He was constantly murmured against, and at times he even came close to being stoned by the people. Under such provocation Moses remained meek and in full control of himself. He was more concerned for God's glory than his own reputation.

The supreme example is the Lord Jesus Himself. All the other examples we have given could have been excused by saying they themselves were sinners, so they readily were forgiving towards others. But our Lord was without sin. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. He was

accused of being demon-possessed, yet he did not respond in anger. Even upon the cross, no bitterness is found upon the lips of our Lord, but words of forgiveness, as He patiently bore the wrath that we sinners deserved. Listen to Scripture. *"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."* [Isaiah 53:7] *"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"* [1 Peter 2:23]

As Sinclair Ferguson points out, "Meekness is virtually the only personal quality about himself to which Jesus draws attention" and we are to learn this from Him. *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls".* [Matthew 11:29]

Now such are the people, says our Lord, **who shall inherit the earth.** This is a quote from Psalm 37 where David is perplexed over the prosperity of the wicked, but comes to see that God overrules in His Providence, so that in the end *"the meek shall inherit the earth"* (v.11). Now some apply this to the eternal world, the new heavens and the new earth. But as we have said in relation to the other beatitudes, they have a present application as well as a future promise. Now believers are heirs with Christ. Now believers have a title to this inheritance, though they will not enter into its possession, because others illegally occupy it.

There is another sense in which the meek, who have trusted in Christ, inherit the earth. For only they can enjoy the little they have, whereas the wicked cannot. As one writer put it, "the humble Christian is far happier in a cottage than the wicked in a palace". How true that is. Beloved, many confuse true blessed with many possessions, yet the rich are often miserable as well as the poor. Listen to Scripture's testimony. *"The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want."* [Proverbs 13:25] *"Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith".* [Proverbs 15:16] *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."* [Philippians 4:11]

Yet a day is coming when the meek shall possess the new heavens and earth. For this he waits patiently and it is kept in store for him, and he is kept for it as Peter tells us. *"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."* [2 Peter 3:13]

Yes my friends the **meek shall inherit the earth.** You know the dinosaurs, those giant lizards, one thing we definitely know about them is that like the great nations today, they spent quite a bit on defense! They had such weapons that no one could stand before them. They brought terror on the earth. They could have been said to be the possessors of the earth. I am