

The Sermon on the Mount: Lesson 3 A Different Kind of King

Introduction:

So far, the first two Beatitudes, or blessings, have been granted to those who hold an inner spirit of humility. Both the poor in spirit and those who mourn have been promised their rewards. Yet, who, looking from the outside in, can tell whether a person is truly poor in spirit, or mourning over sin? Often, these things are hidden from those surrounding a person.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5

This third Beatitude identifies a spirit that can be seen from a person's actions. The Greek word translated as "meek" carries a much deeper meaning than English conveys. From a Western perspective, it means someone who is spineless, passive, and weak. Those listening to Jesus preach this blessing, however, would have understood a meek man as someone like their hero, Moses. (Numbers 12:3) Moses turned to the Lord for help when faced with the constant mutiny of the people, but, as a strong leader, also directed hundreds of thousands of people through the desert for forty years!

Commentator William Barclay explained Matthew 5:5 in this way: "O, the bliss of the man who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time, who has every instinct, and impulse under control because he himself is God-controlled, who has the humility to realize his own ignorance, and his own weakness, for such a man is a king among men!" (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, 93). Obviously, no human but Jesus consistently shows this kind of meekness.

Jesus, the One prophesied to be greater than Moses, identified Himself as meek and lowly in heart. His Kingdom would not be ruled by ruthless and destructive power. His Kingdom would be ruled by a King who showed power with restraint, forgiveness, healing, and resurrection life after death. Here, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared that those who chose to enter His Kingdom would also show this kind of meekness. Let's see what else the Bible has to say about this word.

Questions:

1. As all the Beatitudes have done, they have repeated Old Testament promises of God. This blessing is no exception. In fact, it can be found nearly verbatim in Psalm 37:11. During this period of time, Jewish teachers would often quote just one part of a passage from the Old Testament (all they had at this time), knowing that the Jewish listener would recall the entire passage surrounding it. The whole Psalm 37 revolves around the idea of meekness and God's inheritance. Jot down how many times you see the words "inherit the earth" or "inherit the land."
2. Just from the first 11 verses of Psalm 37, summarize what the Psalmist is instructing the reader to do. Do all of these ideas convey an idea of meekness? Why or why not?

3. At least three times in the first 8 verses, the Psalmist says not to "fret." How does [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) define this word?
4. Instead of fretting, the reader is instructed to trust in the Lord, do good, delight in the Lord, commit one's way to the Lord, rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, cease from anger, and forsake wrath. In a practical way, what can a person who is being unfairly treated, persecuted, or mocked do about that situation according to these verses?
5. As all of the Beatitudes do, God promises something the person does not have right now. Note that the meek will inherit the earth. Consider what the meek give up to stay under God's control. How does this promise offer more in return for what they surrender?
6. The Greek word for meek in Matthew 5:5 is only used four times in the New Testament. Matthew 11:29 and Matthew 21:5 both describe Jesus as meek. 1 Peter 3:4 describes a wife with a meek and quiet spirit. What is it about meekness that makes Jesus different than any other King?
7. Consider the power of a Spirit-controlled wife that 1 Peter 3:4 describes. How does Peter describe what God thinks of such a woman?
8. In Galatians 5, where the Apostle Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit, he also lists the works of the flesh. Compare the works of the flesh in 19-21 with the fruit of the Spirit in 22-23.
9. What thought patterns prevent meekness in your life? (Example: I will stand up for myself... No one is going to talk to me that way...I need to straighten them out...etc.)
10. Meekness is a trait that Jesus clearly showed throughout His life. He is still meek and lowly in heart. He invites us to come to Him if we are weary and heavy-laden so He can give us rest. How does laying down the burden of ruling your own kingdom help you experience His blessings now?