



The Sanctified Heart

Matthew 5:5, Ephesians 6:10-17

Jesus said “Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5). We may not find it so hard to be meek before God and to acknowledge that we are miserable sinners to Him. But what happens when someone else calls us a miserable sinner? Where is our meekness then?

The original Greek word (praus) which is translated as “meek” in Matthew 5:4 means gentle, humble, considerate and courteous. We know that these attributes are impossible to achieve without self-control. We should also understand that meekness is not weakness. It is power under control of the Master. This concept of meekness has been compared to a wild horse that has been broken and domesticated. All of the energy and power are still there but they are under control and can be directed by the Master.

Meekness is seeing yourself as you truly are and expressing it in your conduct toward others. If we are truly meek we are amazed anew each day that God and even people can think of us as well as they do. Understanding ourselves in this way will make us more gentle, humble, sensitive, and patient in all our relations with others. We will reflect Christ’s image to glorify God.

Moses is an example of Godly meekness. Numbers 12:3 says “Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.” When Miriam and Aaron were criticizing Moses because he had married a Cushite woman he did not quarrel with them, although, they did receive punishment from God. We see Moses in another light when he came down from Sinai and found the Israelites worshiping the golden calf. He was so angry he broke the tables of stone on which the commandments had been written.

Jesus described himself as meek. “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29) Jesus was always seen as gentle and patient with his disciples when they questioned him and when they bickered among themselves. But he also became angry when he saw God’s temple being used by the moneychangers to take advantage of the poor in order to make great profits for themselves.

Meekness challenges the world’s standards of aggressiveness and self-assertiveness. Jesus and Moses were both described as meek yet, this was not a spineless quality in either of them. Both were ignited with a sinless anger when the interests of God were challenged. They were both people who dealt with others in a humble and gentle way because they had first humbled themselves before God.

As believers we are set apart in sanctification for the worship and service of God. We are not sanctified completely in this life. But it is a process that continues throughout our lives. Christ

is our example of the sanctified life. His life is reproduced in us as we grow in grace. It requires a strong person to follow Christ because the way of Christ is different from the way of the world. But Christ gives us all we need to be strong in the Lord. (Read Ephesians 6:10-17) Paul tells us that God has given us a full armor to protect us from evil and he has given us two mighty weapons in the “shield of faith” and “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” If we use the weapons which he has given us instead of struggling in our own human strength then we will be able to remain meek (under the Master’s control) and we will claim the promise of inheriting the earth.

It is a paradox indeed that self-renunciation can lead to world dominion. But Christ promises us that very thing if we are under his control. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”

(Have someone read these scriptures aloud to the group: I Corinthians 3:22, Psalm 37:11, Isaiah 57:13, II Corinthians 6:10.)

All these scriptures tell us that when we belong to God, who is in control of everything and owns everything, we are his children. As his children we will inherit what He already owns. Every Christian, even if he or she is like Paul in this present world “having nothing,” will “possess everything” through Christ. Do we really want to continue to try and control everything on our own when we have these promises from God, who is truly in control?

Heart-to-Heart Activities:

1. Pictures or stories sometimes help us to better grasp an idea. If your group has seen the movie or read the book, “The Chronicles of Narnia, The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe” divide into groups of four to review the story and tell how you may see a picture of the meekness of Christ in Aslan (the lion). If many have not seen the movie, this might be a good time for a “Movie Night!” Watch the movie together at someone’s house and then have the Bible study.
2. In our study we saw how both Moses and Jesus were people who had been given great power but when they were dealing with others they did not always show this power but showed their meekness instead. On a chalkboard or chart have members of the group list particular persons they know or know about who are powerful in some way but demonstrate meekness (power under control) unless a show of authority is necessary. Then ask in what way each of these display the characteristic of meekness.

Reflection Questions:

- ♥ What is the world’s view of meekness? What is a Christian view of meekness? Discuss the pros and cons of both views.

- ♥ In what ways do you see yourself as sanctified (set apart for God's service)? In what way is this process in your life?
- ♥ How is it possible to deal with someone who criticizes you without getting angry and returning the criticism?
- ♥ Name some ways in which you gain strength, if not from being self-assertive or aggressive.
- ♥ What does it mean to you to hear Jesus say that the meek will inherit the earth? What will those words mean to the world?

Prayer:

Almighty God,

We come to you as your children whom you have given breath and life. We admit to you that we are miserable sinners but we know that you have forgiven us and have given us the gift of salvation. Help us to remember Christ's example daily as we live in a world that does not understand us. Show us how to live meekly so that your strength will appear in us as power under control of the Master. In Jesus' name, Amen.