

Blessed Are 3) The Meek

Matthew 5:5 • 2024-08-25 • Series: The Beatitudes • [Transcript of Audio](#)



James and John, two of the disciples of Jesus, decided it wasn't enough merely to be just part of the twelve. So they approached Jesus with their request to sit at his right and his left when he comes into his kingdom. They wanted to be in the highest, the greatest positions of honor, the place of prestige. Of course, we know Jesus' rebuke and response is that's not the way it's to be in his kingdom. That those who want to be first in God's kingdom are to be the last and the servant of all. And in this world, the Gentiles, that is, the non-Jewish leaders around them, they all lorded it over their people. But that's not the way it was supposed to be with the people of God and with disciples of Christ.

Evidently, James and John had not been listening very well when Jesus earlier had told them, "Blessed are the meek". And what about us? We've heard it. Blessed are the meek. Do those words really sink in? Do we take them to heart? Do we contemplate what that really means to be meek when Jesus says we're blessed when we're meek? That's what we'll consider today as we continue our series looking at these blessings, the beatitudes, and consider what it is to be meek and what God has given us.

Meekness is different in many ways from what Jesus said earlier. He said "Blessed are the poor in spirit". And perhaps we can distinguish the two as we say "poor in spirit" is more of humbleness before God, recognizing how lowly we are as we approach our God empty-handed. But the meek, that refers more to the humility towards the people around you. It is humbleness as you interact with the people in this world. Meekness really is making others more important than yourself and being considerate of the needs of others, no matter what your position is or their position. That's why sometimes we take the word meek and translate it as lowly or humble.

But don't misunderstand, meekness doesn't necessarily mean that you're poor. Certainly, we have a lot of examples on the pages of Scripture or maybe even some prominent figures in this world who present themselves as meek. They get rid of all their wealth, or they lower themselves by the way they dress. But that's not necessarily what makes you meek. You can be in a high position and still be meek. That's why we might translate the word meek also as "gentle." Even if you hold the highest commanding position, even if you are in charge of someone else, even if you're in a position of authority over them, you can still be meek. It is shown in the way that you deal with them gently instead of with pride or rash anger or outbursts. But instead of rash arrogance using gentleness, recognizing your fellow man in lowliness deserves to be treated with value from you.

How does this world around us view meekness? Just like all the other things Jesus said (in these Beatitudes), it's not something that's sought after. In fact, isn't the world tempted to do just the opposite? Doesn't it do the opposite when we see what it means to not be meek but proud? We see things like ethnic pride and hatred. Certainly, that attitude is found in the Scriptures. Remember a man like Jonah who just didn't want anything to do with those Assyrians, those foreigners. And so Jonah refused to give them God's Word. He didn't want them to come to faith and repent. And even to the time of Jesus' disciples, when Jesus and his disciples are walking around, you still see examples of ethnic pride. Oh, the Jews certainly had their ethnic pride, but so did the people around them. The Samaritans did not associate with the Jews, and the Jews did not associate with the Samaritans. They would turn their nose up at someone else. And don't we see that today, the ethnic arrogance, pride, and even hatred in this world? As one group, one nation, one type of people, one culture is looked down on by another.

And there's more than that. There's not just ethnic hatred. There's also socioeconomic pride. As people grow in their wealth, they soon feel and find themselves entering a new stage, a new era of their life where they no longer have to deal with those things the poor around them do, because they've earned it. And so they begin to only associate with the upper class, to stick around with those who share in their wealth and their position, this type of haughtiness, proud eyes the Scriptures speak against. Or maybe someone finds themselves flattering another person. As we see celebrities praising other celebrities to build themselves up, or politicians praising other politicians. And apart from flattery, you know what happens when you're not meek? The mudslinging. You begin tearing down your opponent as you describe how ugly they really are in your eyes. And you slander them. And you find all the mud you can.

The way that this world really operates is not meekness. It's a big ladder. Everybody is trying to climb to the top of that ladder. And it doesn't matter to them if they have to step on a few people to get on their way up, or if they need to take some dirt and throw it in the face of someone else. That's the way this world operates. Because of ethnic pride, because of wealth, or because of some other standing, or because you belong to some group, it's so easy to look down on others.

And maybe we as God's people need to take to heart the times where we gave into that sinful heart, just like the world around us. You might say, "I'm not putting on an ad campaign to sling mud at my political opponent. I'm not doing that." But are you meek as you deal with that person going down the road who honked their horn at you? There's the temptation there to let them have it. Or when somebody else is in your way, or causing you trouble, do you like to let them know? And do you want them to know just how important you are? Maybe we might be like David, who when he

had protected Nabal and his flocks, found Nabal wouldn't give him food. Then David rashly decided he was going to act out in anger and show him who's boss. No, maybe we're not going to kill someone. Maybe we want to bring them a tier or two down on the social ladder. And as God's people, maybe not many of us are running for political office. But haven't you experienced that? Where there's a child on the playground, or in the workplace, or among family members, the fight for who's on top, who's in charge, and the struggle to avoid all the mudslinging and all the attacks?

God says, blessed are the meek. And sadly, we must admit, as we see all the pride, one group against another group, one person against another person, one class against another class, that God's people too are guilty of this. Jonah, James, and John, are not the only believers who are guilty of pride and arrogance.

And what does God say about this? We read in the book of Proverbs just how seriously God takes proud hearts. He says, "There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him, haughty eyes, (that is being proud in the way you look down on others), a lying ton, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies, and a person who stirs up conflict in the community." (Proverbs 6)

Do you catch what God puts on par with haughty eyes and on par with pride which is the opposite of lowliness and meekness? He hates those who stir up dissension in a community and in a family and in a household. And he detests those who are proud just as much as he detests those who shed innocent blood. It's no wonder God says, you shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. He knows the way that this world will attack and the way that God's people will attack one another in pride.

What is God's solution to this world so filled with hatred and pride? God himself came to this world to deal with the pride. And he didn't come here to deal with what he detests, but rather to come and deal with the sin and to bring his mercy through his Son. The Son of God truly came in meekness. Was there anyone born so meek and lowly that could have claimed the highest position, and yet was born in a feeding trough, in a manger, placed in that lowly place among the cattle? Was there anyone more lowly than the Son of God who walked this world, though he could have demanded the crowds give him his right, and he could have asserted his position? He had to say, "the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." And can you see the meekness as the crowds are adoring him? They want to crown him their king, but he's fulfilling a prophecy as he comes in gentle and humble, riding on a donkey, on a colt, the full of a donkey. See your king, Jesus, the perfect, holy Son of God, living in meekness for you and for me. And for all the times we lashed out in arrogance or looked down in pride on others, the Son of God bent down and washed the feet of those two disciples who wanted to be first –and all the rest.

And in such meekness, he was willing to give up his life for us, considering us better than himself, the Son of God, the Holy One. He did this so that we might be freed from that curse and freed from our guilt. And so that we might live as the people of God in humility, in lowliness.

Maybe you might say, well we need to assert our rights, we need to make sure people know where we stand, otherwise how are we going to advance in this world? After all, won't the world just trample you over if you are meek and lowly, if you don't assert your position, if you don't strive for prestige? There's that thought. But then there's also what the Scriptures promise. When we look at the word of our God, Jesus gathered his disciples and told them, "blessed, blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

You worry that by being lowly, by putting yourself as a servant of others, that somehow you won't get ahead? Look how God fulfilled this for his Son, who was the meekest and lowliest of all. God lifted him up out of the grave and gave him the name that is above every name, that he might receive the highest praise. Jesus, our living God, was blessed by the Father, raised to life and glory, and his is the kingdom.

And he says to you, humble and lowly though you might be, blessed are you, for you will inherit the earth. No, we're not going to earn it by our humility, but we have assurance, we have a guarantee, a promise from the living Christ that though the world might scorn and look down on the lowliness of God's people, they are those who will stand to inherit the earth. Just as the poor in spirit inherit the kingdom of heaven and it's theirs, so also the lowly among this world become the greatest as God lifts them up and gives them the new creation.

And he says, "Come you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you, the world made new." And then all the meekness and lowliness will disappear as God himself treats us as a jewel in his crown and delights in his people, the meek who he lifted up. Brothers and sisters, don't forget, "Blessed are the meek."