



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH
SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS



Meekness Isn't Weakness

Tim Badal | October 13, 2013 | Matthew 5:5

The Upside-down Kingdom Series, Lessons Learned from the Sermon on the Mount, Part 3

Turn to the book of Matthew this morning. We're in the series we've just started a couple weeks ago that we've entitled "The Upside Down Kingdom: Lessons Learned from the Sermon on the Mount." Jesus is sharing what we have as the longest discourse of His words before us. In Matthew 5 through 7, King Jesus is sharing to us His followers how we are to live. And we're going to break down this series into four smaller series, and the first one we've been focusing in on are these Kingdom attitudes—the Beatitudes as they're called in Scripture—these Kingdom attitudes that Christ-followers are to live out and have as a part of their life. And we find ourselves in what we call Beatitude #3, speaking about what it means to be blessed as meek individuals.

But before I move on with that, I want to share, Amanda and I had the opportunity to go to a family wedding yesterday. And I'm always a bit wondering who I'm going to sit with at a wedding. You meet some of the nicest people; you meet some of the craziest people. I always try to figure out why were we put with these people. Well, we sat next to probably the most talkative guy I've ever met in my life. This guy would not stop talking. In fact, Amanda was sitting next to him, and he talked her ear off. She finally said, "I've got to get away."

So during one of the courses of the meal I switched with him, and found out he was the Catholic deacon who married the couple. So I'm like, "Okay, here's what they do. Here's the smartness of the seating order—bring an evangelical pastor and put him next to the Catholic deacon, and they'll have plenty to talk about. And we did. He was a very pleasant guy. Like I said, he talked a lot, and he asked me the question, "What do you like most about pastoring?" And right away I said, "I love preaching the Word of God." He says, "Me too! I get to preach once a month at all the masses, and it's the best seven minutes of the week." So he looks at me and he says, "So, how many services do you do?" I said, "Are you talking my services or your services?" He says, "Well, how long do you preach for?" I said, "Let's take one of your sermons and times it by seven, and that's about the time I have. So I preached about 47 different times on a Sunday, according to your math."

And he was astonished. He said, "Hey, when I hit nine minutes they're digging daggers into me. At nine minutes you'd better be closing that thing out, because if not they are going to be angry with you, and you're going to hear about it." And the Lord impressed upon me something that I want to share with you. I am a blessed pastor to have a group of people—because he said, "How in the world do they sit there and listen to you?" I said, "It's not that they love me. It's not that I think I'm that good of a speaker. But my people in my church love the Word of God. They love it, they apply it to their lives, they're impacted by it." I sat there for a

moment and said, "I am a blessed pastor to be able to speak—and I want you to never worry about the clock, because God is speaking and we're all listening, and I am blessed to be a part of a congregation, a group of people, that love the Word of God as much as I do."

I wanted to share that with you, because it's important that you hear it. And here's the thing—we need to make sure that hunger stays. We need to make sure we pursue that hunger, because it doesn't take long for a church to be okay with stories, to be okay with some anecdotes, to be okay with some pithy thoughts—we need to continue to seek after God and hunger and thirst for His righteousness. So I'll have you out by 1:30 and we'll go from there....

Well, with that let's go ahead and let's turn to the Scriptures, Matthew 5. We come to a place where I want to look under the heading Meekness Isn't Weakness. We've been learning these past couple weeks that the world tells us that the way we receive the Kingdom and all the blessing of life is to pursue it in our own ways. And Jesus is going to, in this third Beatitude, come to a point where He says, "It is not about you exerting authority, but it's about you relying on Me." But the world says that meekness is a very different thing, so we need to define that this morning.

But before we do, I'm going to ask you once again to step out of your pews and stand for the reading of God's Word. Let's hear what God has to say. Let's hear what His Son Jesus has for us to hear this morning. I'm going to start in Matthew 5, verse 1, and we'll get to our text in verse 5 in a moment.

Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] 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."

Let me read that again. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Let's pray.

Father God, we just stop again and we say thank You. We stop again and we depend on You and we show that by taking a moment to bow our heads and our hearts to You, asking that You would be our teacher this morning. Oh God, I want to get out of the way so that You may teach Your people, that You may teach me, in a way that will change our hearts once and for all, and Lord, that we would be a different people as we leave this place. Lord, give us a heart of meekness. Give us a heart of meekness in this dog-eat-dog world that we live in, so that we may be salt and light to the world around us, in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Long before Adolf Hitler would ever give a speech railing against the Jews and the impure races of central Europe, years before Hitler would ever speak about a master race of blonde-haired and blue-eyed Germans being greater and more perfect if you will than any other race in the world, long before the satanic pursuits of the "Final Solution" and the annihilation of the Jews—Adolf Hitler would have to have a foundation set. You see, you just can't wake up in the morning and have this idea that you are superior to everybody else. You have to have a philosophy behind it. There has to be some sort of belief that gives you the right to think that way.

And for Hitler, the foundation of his diabolical thirst for war and world dominance was found in the beliefs and writings of Friedrich Nietzsche. He began to read Nietzsche and began to love the philosophy that Nietzsche had laid forth. Now Nietzsche's philosophy was more social than it was national or racial. But it set the foundation for Hitler to do what he did. Now many of you may not know, but the philosophy of Nietzsche was surrounding this idea in German of the *Übermensch*, the Ultra-man. And the pursuit of this

Ultra-man was to show his supremacy in all ways. It was caught up in the idea of Darwinism and the social aspects of the survival of the fittest. So Nietzsche said that if you're going to make it in this world, you need to be the Ultra-man, the Superman, who rises above all other adversaries to claim the victor prize. And as a result of that you would be the one who would survive. You would be the victorious one.

Now let me tell you something. You say, "Well, I'm glad we live in a country that doesn't believe that." Let me tell you, *Übermensch* is alive and well in American culture today. It's just a little more subtle. But you turn on the TV and you see our love for competition, our love for reality shows—whether it's the next top model or the top chef—I will tell you, Nietzsche's favorite TV show would have been the show "Survivor." Gather a group of people together, put them on an island, and see who will make his way to being the last one to stand. Nietzsche would love that. And Hitler had this idea that it would be the German race because of their purity and all of that, but here in America we live in a time where the American culture has moved from character to image, and have turned to vanity instead of virtue.

So where does that leave this virtue that we're looking at this morning, the issue of meekness? Can we really believe as Jesus said that the meek will really inherit the earth? Sure doesn't look like it, does it? It sure seems like pride has redefined our culture as a virtue, that the strong, the beautiful, the powerful, the intelligent, the privileged take every opportunity to put themselves first. Politicians manifest this pride in their speeches and debates as the messiahs who are going to fix every problem. Entertainers glamorize their pride and their preeminence in their movies and their opulent lifestyles. Educators teach us that pride is important as we promote self-esteem and make every child the winner whether they deserve it or not.

You see, meekness is probably the least admired character quality in our culture today. People don't want to hear about it. And this creates a problem for us as Christians, because we follow Jesus—and Jesus was said to be the most humble, that He was meek and mild. And we've got a problem because this is why the world did not accept Jesus, because He did not come with a sword, He did not come galloping on a white stallion, but He came on a foal of a donkey. A servant. He was meek.

So the question is, how are we to live our lives as meek people when it seems that the world will just walk all over us? How is it, Jesus, that the meek will inherit the earth, all the while we see that those who are meek will not get anything in America at all? We've got to go after it. We've got to grab it. We've got to make sure that we see our desires taken care of first. So how do we make sure that we live as Jesus did? You've got to make a decision this morning. Will you live a meek lifestyle, or will you live a lifestyle that pursues what you want? Here's the thing. You cannot ride the fence this morning. You have to choose one or the other.

1. Two conflicting definitions of meekness

So we need to look at this, and I want to look at it under four headings this morning. The first thing we need to do is we need to examine meekness, but we need to understand two conflicting definitions of the word. There are two conflicting definitions on this idea of meekness. If you were to go to Webster's Dictionary and look up the word meekness, you would see that the Word of God still defines many of the words we have today. If you were to turn there, you would see all kinds of spiritual connotations and biblical terminology being used for meekness.

But here's the problem. We have fallen into the way of redefining words, haven't we, in our culture. And meekness is one of those words that the world has taken hostage and made it their own meaning. Even though the dictionary says it's one thing, they've changed it and they've said it means another. So let's notice the world's definition. So the dictionary speaks of meekness as the Word of God speaks of it, but as we listen to people speaking on the subject—especially in literature—meekness looks very different than what we think it should look like as it is laid forth in the Bible.

Meekness has been shared as the unfortunate dog abasing itself before its master. Edith Wharton said, "The meek are those who are bowed down to others like trees in a windy storm." Louise Erdrich says they are like hostages with a gun trained on them. Iris Murdoch says that the meek exist unthinkingly like a slave, like a working animal. Thomas Fuller says of the meek, "They are like a bell that will go for everyone that pulls it." "Meekness," Ellen Glasgow says, "is like the yes of a dog that is uncertain whether he is about to receive a pat on the head or a blow to the face."

You see, when you listen to what the world says about meekness, you will see spinelessness. You will see cowardice. You would see weak and passive. You would see someone who is a pushover. And here's the problem. The world takes that definition and then they see that Jesus is the meek One, and what Jesus becomes is this long-haired, effeminate hippie who just loves everybody—who doesn't turn any tables over, who is just Mr. Nice Guy, who just loves everybody, who sings "Kum Ba Yah" all the time, and just is a happy-going kind of guy. He is the meek one. He's just a pushover.

Well let me tell you something. That is not for me. I am not passive. Can I tell you there is nothing passive about me! Okay? And if that's the world's definition, I don't want anything to do with it, and I'll be honest with you—if that's what Jesus was like, man, then I've got some real issues and struggles. Because if that's what Jesus is like, then His words don't resonate—because if He's just this lovely-touchy-feely guy, then everything He says about hell and everything He says that confronts people means nothing.

So we need to ask the question, "World, do you have the right definition of meekness? Or are you missing it, and is there another definition?" Well, it sure does seem when we go to the Word's definition of what meekness is, we get a different picture. You see, when the Bible speaks of meekness, it uses a Greek word *praus*. *Praus* was what Aristotle said was the balance of all virtue. The idea was that it wasn't leaning towards one side or another, but it was living life in perfect balance. But what did the Greeks think about this word? Well, there are four renderings of this Greek word *praus* could be defined according to our emotions. When you were called, speaking of your emotions, as a meek, a *praus* individual, it would be translated as William Barclay, the Bible scholar, translated it, as "a man who is always angry at the right times, and never angry at the wrong time." That's a good definition. You see, Jesus got angry. Jesus got angry. He goes into the temple, His Father's house is to be place of prayer, and they're making money, and they're making a mockery of the temple. And Jesus comes in—and the world says that Jesus comes in and says (gently), "All right, everybody. Let's just clean things up. Let's just take care of it."

No! That's not the Jesus we see in the Scriptures. He becomes angry. He turns over tables. Literally, He drives out, He casts out, the evil tax collectors and those making a mockery of the sacred place of God. He drives them out, not as a passive individual but One who is angry at the right time. Jesus got angry, and He got angry about the right things. He was a meek individual.

2. Notice this word *praus* speaks of an animal who was a wild animal, but had been trained in such a way that it could live amongst people When you spoke of meek, a person would look at an animal and say, "That animal that we have living around us, that we use in domesticated ways, that is a family pet or animal, is an animal that is meek."

The best way to illustrate this is when I was growing up we had a German shepherd dog. His name was Rocky. This dog, this German shepherd, was a dog that grew up with us. You know, you have those pets—I remember I was a puppy when he was a puppy. Okay? And we grew up. And this dog would let us three boys do anything to this dog. We'd pull his tail, we'd pull on his ears, we'd play around with his snout and do all kinds of things, and Rocky would just smile and laugh and lick us to death.

My dad, when he was going to discipline us, would have to put the dog away, because the moment that my dad would take an aggressive move towards us, Rocky's ears went up, and he was ready for action. And he was ready—no longer to be the domesticated German shepherd, but to be the protector. I want you to understand. Rocky was probably the most docile dog we ever had, but here's the thing. Rocky lost his life—he had to be put down—because my younger brother was nipped by a neighbor dog and Rocky saw it and he attacked and...that was it. He took care of that dog and dealt with it.

Let me tell you something. Being meek is not weak. Being meek is having power, and knowing when you're amongst children, a German shepherd knows, "Hey, I'm to be loving. I'm to be kind. I am to care and be cautious with the little ones around me. But if there's an intruder, you'd better watch out." You see, meekness is a meekness that loves and cares, yes, but shows in the right time and in the right place it's indignation and wrath.

You see, God is a meek God. He's a God who is angry at the right times, and He's a God that is not angry ever at the wrong times. He's a God that shows His power in the right moments, and He's a God that withholds His power in the right moments. And Jesus personified that, and this is what Jesus is telling us.

3. There's another use of this word *praus*. It was used to speak of one who was well-mannered, polite, and behaved. This is where we get the word "gentle" from. Meekness also is translated into a gentleness. It's a fruit of the Spirit. This is when we're called gentlemen. It is that word gentle. Now very rarely is a man "gentle," but what it means literally is a man who knows his spot. The man who hangs out with his buddies in the garage, talking man stuff and grunting and doing what men do, is not a gentleman when he takes that out into, like the setting I was in yesterday, a very formal setting around a beautiful table at a wedding reception. The grunts of the garage can't go there. A gentleman knows, "I can be one thing in the garage because my environment allows me to do so, but in a formal setting I can't be that." A gentleman knows his place and understands that in his certain setting there are rules to be followed. He is one who is tempered because of the circumstances around him.

4. Finally the word *praus* means, in the biblical sense, one who is subservient and trusting in his relationship to God. The idea here is that a person, a follower of Christ, knows, I am poor in spirit. I've got nothing to bring but sin itself to my relationship with God. Because of that I find myself in a constant state of mourning. I'm mourning over my sin, I am sad over the consequences that sin brings to my relationship with God, my relationship with my fellow man, and I am grieved over that.

And because of that, because of my sin, meekness says if I'm a sinner—and the Bible says that you're a sinner, when you respond in an ill way towards me, when you hurt me, when you do something that causes me pain, my initial reaction is to come back and to bite your head off. It's to retaliate. A meek individual says, "Why would I do that, when I myself am offending and hurting others and not wanting revenge to be taken out on me?"

So it's a recognition that I am a sinner in the hands of God, and you're a sinner in the hands of God, and so I'm going to treat you with love, I'm going to treat you with grace, I'm going to treat you with forgiveness. It is what the book of Matthew says, before I go and point out the speck in your eye, I look at the log in my own. It's a realization, it's an estimation of who you are—not in comparison to one another, but first of all in comparison with God.

So here's a long definition of meekness. You're never going to be able to write it down, so just listen. Meekness is a controlled strength, or power, that is completely surrendered to God and His sovereignty. It is an attitude of the heart in which all energies are brought under the perfect control of the Holy Spirit. It does

so knowing that God promises that all things work out according to His will, and trusts that one day God will right every wrong.

So we need to submit ourselves to that. We need to hear and understand what God's Word says about this subject of meekness. Now, write this definition down—this is the abbreviated version that comes from Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. He says, "Meekness is the true view of self expressing itself in both attitude and conduct with respect to others." Once meekness teaches me who I am, now I'm going to relate to you in a different way. Does that make sense? I get a right understanding of who I am, I am to be meek, and therefore my response to others will be meek as well.

2. Some biblical demonstrations of meekness

Now, we need some help with that. Those are definitions. Well, let's get some demonstrations. Write these passages down. There are some biblical demonstrations of meekness that should help us to understand what in the world Jesus is talking about. Our first passage is Genesis 13:5-18. It tells us the story of Abraham. Abraham is hanging out with his family, and his family has gotten bigger and bigger and bigger, and he's hanging with his cousin Lot. And Abraham and Lot are talking, "Since our families have gotten bigger, we need to separate so we can have some room to grow and all of that, so why don't we go to a high place, look at the land that's around us, and let's choose amongst ourselves which land we're going to take."

And Abraham and Lot get up to a high place, and they look to the right and they look to the left, and both of them see that to the right everything looks beautiful. Man, it's lush land. To help you out, it looks a whole lot like Hinckley, okay? And then to the left, it's not bad. I mean, it's a nice place. It's more like Sugar Grove. So both of them want the stuff to the right. And what happens when we both want the same thing? Let me tell you. We go on a field trip and we'll learn that meekness when we want something and someone else wants it, we don't have to go very far but our nursery to see two little kids wanting the same truck. And meekness usually doesn't reign supreme. And what happens is that there is a vying for that.

So Abraham and Lot see the same thing and they both want it and they both have a right to it in the sense that both of them need more land—they need area to farm, they need area to live—and that sure is a nice area to live, so they both are going to vie for it. But before the argument begins, Abraham says, "You know what Lot? It's yours. I'm not going to let my relationship with you be impacted in a negative way over a piece of property."

Now why in the world would Abraham have made that decision? Because in Genesis 12, Abraham is called out of Ur of the Chaldeans, northern Iraq, and God says, "I am going to take you on a journey, I'm going to make you a nation, and I'm going to give you a place to live. You trust that, you believe in that, and you will not be ashamed. You will not be disappointed." And Abraham says, "You know what, God? If You really want me to have this land, I'll have it. But I'm not going to ruin a relationship over it, and so I'm going to defer to my cousin, I'm going to give him the land." And if you notice later on in the text, right after he's done with this conversation with Lot, he gives the land to Lot, God says, "You have chosen right. I am going to bless you in the land where you're at. I'm going to take care of you. My promise is going to continue on."

So here's the thing. Some of you are vying for things right now. Some of you are in the midst of a promotional opportunity where it's either you or your co-worker. And you're sitting there and you're trying to figure out, and you're starting to say, "You know what? If I'm going to get this promotion I need to show that Johnny's not all that trustworthy. I need to make sure that Johnny doesn't look as good, and I'm going to make sure I look a little better." That's not meekness. Meekness says, "You know what? If God wants Johnny to have the promotion he's going to have it. I'm going to be the first person that shakes his hand. I'm going

to be the first one who says well done." It doesn't mean we don't try. It doesn't mean we don't work. But we don't vie for something that God doesn't want us to have.

Number two illustration we see in Numbers 12:1-15. This is a story that doesn't get much play. It's a family feud among Moses, Miriam and Aaron—the siblings. And they're out in the wilderness, and Moses has liberated the people from Egypt. You'd think everybody would be happy and everybody would be all excited. And in Numbers 12 we have a family crisis come out. And the family crisis—and I know some of you deal with this—the family crisis is that brother and sister don't like Moses' wife.

Now why in the world don't they like Moses' wife? We are told that the wife comes from the land of Cush. The land of Cush is southern Ethiopia. So while Miriam and Aaron probably had some olive tones like your preacher does because of his Middle Eastern background, she doesn't have olive tones. She's black. And there's this racial divide. She ain't one of us. And they began to badmouth Moses and his wife, because he has married into an interracial marriage.

And they start saying to themselves in a not-very-meek way that, hey, just as God speaks through Moses He's spoken through us. We're important people, is what they're saying. And because we're important people we have the right to say we don't like Moses marrying this black woman. And God says, "Hey, I'm not okay with this. What Moses has done is totally fine. He's done a good thing. There's nothing wrong with this. He met this woman as a foreigner running in the wilderness, and he met her as a foreigner and he's married a foreigner, so I'm okay with this. It's all good."

And Miriam, it says, continues to fight. She gets angry about it. She says bad things about her brother and his wife, and God brings a cloud of smoke. That's when you get nervous, by the way—when you see God bring the cloud of smoke. And the cloud of smoke encircles Miriam, and when the cloud of smoke lifts, Miriam is afflicted with leprosy. Her skin literally is starting to fall off of her face, fall off of her hands, and she starts to scream in agony.

And what does Moses do? Let me tell you what I would have done. That's right. You mess with Amanda, you're going to get in trouble. You don't mess with my wife. You don't say bad things about my wife. She's my wife. I love her, and you know what, it serves you right that God's now dealing with you. What in the world does Moses do? Moses—who the passage says is the most meek man that ever walked the earth—he prays for his sister's healing. Wait a minute. This dumb woman has just bad-mouthed your wife, and now has gotten her due, and what is his response? He prays, "Lord, take this away. Make her whole again." That's meekness.

Some of us are struggling with this meekness because someone has wronged us, someone has hurt us, someone has said something to us, and we have every right to be angry. We have every right to be offended. But what we don't have a right to do is seek revenge. And Moses shows us that when we have been wronged, we have the right to be angry, but the Bible makes it clear in Romans that it is God's to avenge—He will repay. So God says, "You know what, Moses? She's going to have leprosy for seven days. She needs to go outside the city, and in seven days she'll be healed. She'll be taken care of." And Moses is a meek man who allows God to do the work. He doesn't have to.

A third example of this that we need to look at is the example of David. In 1 Samuel 24, David is running for his life. Who is he running from? King Saul. Why is King Saul running after him and chasing after him for one purpose—to kill David? The answer is because God has anointed David to be king, and God has removed His presence from Saul, and He has put His blessing on David, and Saul was feeling the pain. And Saul, not being meek, takes his determination into his own hands. "I'm going to take care of my problem. I'm going to deal with it. I'm going to kill David."

And after chasing after David for some time, David is given the opportunity where David comes upon Saul's camp where they're all sleeping. And David has the opportunity to kill Saul right there. And what does David do? Let me remind you, David has every right to kill Saul. Every right. This isn't, well, he may have had a right or he didn't. He has every right to protect himself. "This guy's been chasing him down with his military, and now I can kill my enemy—and really, it's my spot to be in anyway. I deserve the right to be king."

And what does David do? David shows Saul, "I've been there." He takes his sword, remember? He takes his robe. He reminds Saul, "I've been there, but I'm going to show mercy." And what does he say? "I will not touch God's anointed. I won't touch him. I can. I have every right to do so, but I'm going to leave it to God. And Saul is still God's anointed until God deals with him." And some of us right now are dealing with a struggle of meekness, because we are unwilling to allow God to have the role of seeing all things out, and we're taking it into our own hands.

Now, the Bible's full in the New Testament about meekness. We are told that we are to be meek as followers of Jesus Christ in Ephesians 4:1. We are called to clothe ourselves in meekness in Colossians 3:12. And even in our presentation of the gospel we are told that when we are given the opportunity to share the reason for the hope that we have, we are to share that hope with two words: gentleness and respect. Those two words together are meekness.

And so the Bible is clear. You want to be a follower of Jesus Christ, then you need to be meek. And you need to allow the Spirit of God to make each and every day more and more of a meek person. But here's the problem. The flesh is going to tell you, don't do that. The world is going to tell you that you shouldn't do that. So how do we begin to do that?

3. The necessary disposition for the meek

Notice, there's a disposition. Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 37 for a moment. In Psalm 27 we get Jesus' citing, if you will, of this verse in Matthew 5. You see, Jesus isn't the first one to say, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." David is the first one that says it. And Jesus uses it, which reminds us that Jesus preaches the Word of God just as we are called to. Jesus knew the Old Testament, and He applies it in a New Testament way. So notice in Psalm 37—listen to the words that are shared.

Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

The meek devote their ways to God.

How do we become a meek individual? What spirit do we need to have? Number one, we must be people who devote ourselves to the ways of God. We need to devote our ways to God. When David talks about devoting his ways to God, what he is saying is that we take our lives in an open hand and we give it to God. But more clearly in the Hebrew language of what David is talking about is even deeper trust and faith than that. And what it literally is, is if you want to devote your ways to God—this is what David is saying—it is you becoming blind. So you put a blindfold over your eyes, and now knowing you cannot see, you take your hand and you say, "Lord, I put my life into Your hands. Where You lead I will follow, because I'm not going to be able to see."

Now why in the world do you need to blindfold yourself to trust? One of the reasons why is because trust has to have an absence of anxiety and worry. So if I am not going to worry about things, I need to blindfold

myself. I need to cover myself from the things that will cause me issues. Notice how many times it says, "Fret not." All throughout the passage it says, "Hey, you cannot be anxious if you are going to be meek." So what you do is you say, "God, I cannot just give you my life with my eyes open, because if I do that I'm going to pull it back every time You lead me somewhere I don't want to go. So knowing that I am a faithless individual, I'm going to cover my eyes to make sure that when I give You my hand there's no distractions."

So the meek individual trusts God, but knowing that he can't trust himself he blindfolds himself and says, "Okay, God, lead me where You will. Take me where You will, because I can't trust my own eyes, because when I open my own eyes meekness leaves me—because I start worrying about things." Let me tell you something. When you worry about things, you will not be meek, because worries mean you've got to do something about it. Worries mean I have to respond. So the meek individual devotes their ways to God, commits their ways to God, and notice—he doesn't worry about circumstances, and there's a place of great delight.

Let me tell you something. When you close your eyes or are blindfolded from the things of this world, and you put out your hands, notice what God promises. "I will give you the desires of your heart." That's the paradox. We think that if you just give me the money.... My son told me this a couple weeks ago. "Dad, this Christmas just give me money. I'll buy what I want. Because I know what I want. Dad, you don't know what I want, so I'll help you." I told him, "Son, I know more of what you want than you do. I know what you want, I know what you need, I know what will bring you happiness, because I've been there, done that, all of that."

God knows more of what we need, what we want, what we desire than we know ourselves. So when we give our lives over to God like this, God says, "I will give you what you desire. You may not even know about it right now." Can I tell you something? I think this is extra credit for this second service. Fifteen years of marriage—I am absolutely floored that the things I saw in Amanda when I started dating her had nothing to do with what would make her a good wife years from then. Never was there a thought—I wonder how this woman would be if she had to help pastor a church when I get the calling to be a pastor. That was not in the dating thing.

But you know what? I remember as a young man trusting, "God, I don't know what I'm doing here. I don't know why this pretty girl wants to date me. I don't understand why she wants to be with me. But here's what I know. You've brought her into my life, and I'm going to be as obedient as I can. I'm going to serve her in the best way I can." And let me tell you something. God has absolutely in 15 years given me the desire of my heart. Because God knew more than I did. And I didn't even know what I was looking for in a wife, as a 20-year-old kid getting married. I didn't know that, but God did. And when we trust God, when we give Him even just a mustard seed of faith, God says, "I'll take care of the rest. Devote your ways to Me."

The meek delay their plans for His.

Now, notice, if you're going to devote your ways to God, notice what verse 7 says. It says, "Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!" Here's the thing. If you are going to do this with God and be meek, can I tell you God works a lot slower than you do. You see, we do this for ten minutes. "Okay God. I've waited. Patiently. Nothing's happened." And then I'm reminded that God says a day is like a thousand years with Him.

So when we do this, we need to know meekness means patience. It means I've got to wait on the Lord, and I've got to wait for His timing and His ways, and as I give my life to Him and I trust Him with the circumstances of life, not worrying about the stuff. I just need to wait, and it may be a day, it may be a month, it may be a year, it may be a hundred years. It may not be in this lifetime—it may be in eternity. So we delay our plans for God's.

Some of you right now find yourself not being blessed by God because you're too busy checking off the things you want and you think you need, and you're not giving God any opportunity to bless you. So you're doing it on your own. And here's what I've learned. When you get ahead of God, that decision falls totally on you. You carry all the responsibility, you carry all the liability. I've made decisions—financial, spiritual, material—where I have jumped faster than God wanted me to. And God says, "Hey, you made that decision. It's on you."

When you wait on God, brothers and sisters, God says, "All right. I'm going to do it, and when trouble comes don't worry about it. I'll take care of it. We'll take care of these things." I wanted so badly to build the building in this church. We were chock full—if you remember years ago—we didn't have anywhere to go. And we had rooms that were just crawling with kids, and as an elder, as a pastor, as a visionary, I said, "We've got to build a building. I don't care what it costs, I don't care what we've got to do—we've got to build a building."

And here's the problem. Every time we tried to build the building there was a stop sign at every corner. And I kept thinking, what am I going to do? How are we going to fix this? Who do I have to talk to? Wait 'til the Village of Sugar Grove council meets Mr. Charisma, Tim Badal. Do you know what they said when Tim Badal walked in? No. Nope, no building. And there were a whole bunch of reasons why. And God said, "Stop moving too quickly. Cut it out. Quit going to elder meetings and telling the guys how bad we need a building and all that, and just wait."

Six months later, every barrier and hurdle came down, and God did it. And if you remember, we couldn't build anything—water and sewer. Remember those days? Until you've got a well, you've got septic, you can't build a building. Until Fox Metro comes in, "Hey, we're going to put a water and sewer line in for Waubensee, and we've got to go through your property. It's the only one that works." That's a God thing. Tim can't do that. Okay. "By the way, your parking lot looks a little beat up out there. So when we're all done, we'll replace your whole parking lot for free." Again, that's not a Tim thing. That's a God thing.

And when we wait on God, I'm going to tell you something, we're going to be blessed. And meekness allows the blessing of God in your life. And some of us are not realizing God's blessing because we're not meek. We're not meek. So notice that what happens when we don't wait patiently and we've got to start moving mountains ourselves. We get angry. Well, things aren't going my way, and I deserve it, and this shouldn't be happening to me. And everybody doesn't like me and they're fighting me.

The meek defer their anger.

And notice, the meek individual says in verse 8, "Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!" You see, the meek individual says, "I've got nothing for revenge, because it ain't about me." If God doesn't want us to have a building, it ain't about the City of Sugar Grove. It's about God. He doesn't want us to have a building right now. If God wants us to have a building, do you know that God brings building projects straight down from heaven? The new heaven and the new earth—bam, it's there! Okay? If He wanted us to have a building at the right time, He would have just brought it down. But God saw fit that guys like Rich Wood and others would help build this thing in the proper season.

And some of us right now are angry because the financial thing hasn't happened, the material thing hasn't happened, the spiritual thing hasn't happened, the relational thing hasn't happened—and we're angry, and we're filled with wrath because meekness is not reigning supreme in us, that's saying, "God, whatever You do, I'm willing to wait."

The meek dwell in God's presence.

Notice finally that when we are meek, we dwell in the presence of the Lord. Notice what it says in verse 9. "For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land. In just a little while, the wicked will be no more." You don't have to seek revenge. They'll be gone soon enough. "Though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace."

What was "the land" in Old Testament times? It was the nation of Israel. It was the Promised Land of God. When Jesus speaks about the inheritance of the earth, what is it? It is the rule and reign of God's Spirit in the hearts and minds of God's people. What will it be in the future? Brothers and sisters, there's a day coming when Jesus will part the clouds and come back to earth, and He will establish His earthly Kingdom. And in that earthly Kingdom for a thousand years you and I will reign with Him. So if we want to be a part of that Kingdom, if we want to inherit that future land, inherit the peace that comes in the here and now, then you and I have to go low. We have to be meek.

4. The spiritual disciplines of a meek person

So how do we get there? Let me close real quick with this final point. If you're going to do that, it involves spiritual discipline. You cannot tomorrow morning get out of bed and say, "All right. I choose to be meek. It's gonna happen. I'm gonna do it." Here's the thing. You may do it for a day, but it'll be inconsistent. It'll look hypocritical, and you will not do it for long.

Studying the Son of God

So what we have to do is we have to do what God has prescribed as the way to become meek. The first way you become meek is study the Son of God. Who is the most meek? Jesus. Forget Moses. Jesus was the most meek. Why was Jesus the most meek? Philippians 2 says, "Though he was in the form of God, [Jesus] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant." God becomes a servant. Jesus did not come to be served but to serve. Meekness is about our service. So if you want to be like Jesus—and as Christians we want to be like Jesus—then it means we need to serve. We need to reach out and love on people and care for people, even though we may think we're better or higher than they are.

Number two, it means we get angry about the things Jesus gets angry about. Can I ask you a question this morning? When was the last time you got angry about something Jesus is angry about? It's been a while for me. I get angry about what Tim gets angry about. I mean, I'm angry that Jay Cutler isn't the quarterback he needs to be. That's the stupidity of our anger. I'm angry to have to wait at a light at 47th and Bliss. I'm angry that someone has 23 items in a "20 items or less" line. And I'm filled with wrath about that, and you are sinners too because you're laughing, okay? We get angry about stupid stuff.

God got angry about all the right stuff. He gets angry when His grace is trampled underfoot and put under all kinds of human regulations. He gets angry when we keep children away from God, and away from Christ, because we don't think kids need to know about salvation. He gets angry when He sees injustice. He gets angry when He sees abortion take place. He gets angry when He sees the world going to hell in a hand basket. He gets angry about that stuff, and we're angry because our cable news channel or our cable TV show is turned off because it doesn't have enough viewers, and we're angry we don't have anything to do with our Thursday nights. Let's get angry about the right stuff. Jesus was meek. He got angry about the right stuff at the right time and in the right way, and we need to do so as well.

Finally, with studying the Son of God, it means doing continually the will of God. Jesus was meek. Every time you see this phrase, "Not My will Father, but Your will be done," it's chock full of it. "Lord, not My will. Father, not My will but Your will be done." Our response each and every day as a meek individual is we wake up and say, "Today it will not be my will, but it will be Your will. In my workplace, if I have to get and endure some trouble, I'm going to do so as a good soldier dealing with persecution and suffering."

You see, when we say that, God allows even His Son to endure hardship. Jesus said that when He knew He was going to have to go to the cross. And some of us are going to bear some crosses as a meek individual, because God's going to say, "You know what? You're going to be a servant, you're going to endure suffering, you're going to be persecuted." We'll talk about that in a couple weeks. "You'll be persecuted, but I'll lift you up at the right time."

Here's what God says He will do. When Jesus was meek, He made Himself in the form of a servant, being nothing, being obedient to death and even death on a cross—there's meekness. Here's God's response to meekness: that the name of Jesus would be above every name, that He would be exalted, He would be lifted up, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

When you are weak, God raises you up. And some of you are trying to raise yourself up, you're trying to do that, and I've done that in my past where I tried to raise myself up, and Jesus says, "No. To get high you must go low. To be blessed you must make yourself a servant. To be great you must be the least. To be first you must be the last." We're going to see all that.

Welcoming the Word.

So what do we need to do? Study the Son of God. Number two, welcome the Word. James 1:21 says that we are to receive the Word of God implanted with meekness. Why? Because we'll never follow the Word of God if we're not meek in our response to it. If we're not like this to the Word of God, then we will never follow what it says. And some of you want to follow the Word of God but your eyes are wide open. "Well, I would love to follow it, God, but my finances are all messed up. I'd love to follow it, God, but my relationships are all messed up. God, I'd love to do what You say but my flesh tells me that I will have more fun if I go against Your Word." The meek life says, "God, it ain't about me but it's about me doing Your will." So I'm going to welcome the Word of God as the liberating law that gives life. This is the way to happiness.

Submitting to the Spirit.

Number three. It's submit to the Spirit. The meek person knows that things can't happen through your own strength. Things can't happen by human manipulating things. Things can't happen by you making everything work. Let me tell you something. You will not add a moment to your life by worrying about things. Jesus said that. You can't add a second to your life in that way. So what we need to understand as followers of Jesus Christ, as entrepreneurs, as salesmen, as fathers and mothers, as husbands, as wives, that it's not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit says the Lord of hosts.

We have to submit ourselves to that. God, it's You moving. It's You having Your way in me. It is You doing what needs to be done and me just following behind. This is the spiritual disciplines

Praying when problems come.

Notice the fourth one is that when problems come we pray. A meek person, when problems come, gets on his knees. You want to know if you're meek? Ask the question, how much have you prayed about this week?

How much have you gotten on your knees and said, “God, if You don’t show up I’m done for. God, I need You.” We sang it, “Lord I need You, oh, I need You. Every hour I need You.” You want to prove that? How much are you on your knees? How much are you praying, asking God to meet you each and every day?

I know I’m not as meek as I can be, because I know I don’t pray like I can. I’m just going to confess that to you, because I’m a fixer. I’m a conflict resolver. I take care of things. And God says, “What? You kidding Me? You can’t do anything apart from Me.” So we need to pray as meek people.

Seizing opportunities to serve.

Finally, we need to seize opportunities to serve. Meekness is found in service. It is opening our hands with open hearts and open hands to serve where God calls us to. How open are you to serve? How open are you to do what God is calling you to? God wants us to be meek. He wants us to be ready and willing to do whatever He’ll call us to.

So let me ask you this: what area of meekness today do you need to work on? Pray about it. Ask the Spirit to empower you. Spend time meditating on these truths. Ask God to empower you in your growth towards meekness in order that we may experience His presence and power in this life and in the life to come. Because it is—listen to me—it is the meek who will inherit the earth. Don’t fall for the garbage of the world. It is the meek who will inherit the earth. King Jesus says so, therefore it is true. Let’s pray.

Father God, we come before You Lord, and I pray that we would humble ourselves now under Your teaching, that we would not look to the people sitting next to us, to our children, to our spouses, to our friends—even to our enemies, Lord—and say, “Boy, that’s a message they need to hear.” Lord, I know this was a message I needed to hear. And I know my friends and my family here would recognize that as well. We are not a meek people.< Lord, I am so glad You give us the Spirit, that where we fall You give us the opportunity, You give us the grace, to experience newness in life. Lord, I pray that this week would be a week of meekness for our people, that it would be a week of meekness for me, that I would see my utter need for You each and every moment, and that I would give You my total allegiance and my reliance would be solely found on You and You alone. Oh, God, we need You. We need You to change our thinking. We need You to put those blinders on our eyes so we don’t worry about the circumstances of life, but follow You and You alone.

Lord, I pray that as we go out in this week in our workplaces and our schools and in our neighborhoods and in our families, Lord, that as we live out lives of meekness, that people would see us as salt and light and that they would see Christ in us and experience Christ through us, so that we may have the opportunity to give a reason for the hope that we have, doing so with gentleness and respect. Now Lord, let us leave this place and the dog-eat-dog world that is before us, and let us live differently, let us live this life upside-down from the world, so that You might be brought glory and praise. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Note: This transcription has been provided by Sermon Transcribers (www.sermontranscribers.net).

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.