

Blessed Meekness

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, for a short while, and with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this evening, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the Gospel according to Matthew and chapter 5.

Matthew chapter 5. And if we read again from the beginning.

Matthew 5 from the beginning. 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. And then our text for this evening, verse 5. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child.

[1 : 1 3] Pity my simplicity. Suffer me to come to thee. Fain I would to thee be brought. Dearest God, forbid it not. Give me, dearest God, a place in the kingdom of thy grace.

You know, Charles Wesley's 18th century hymn, it has often received a lot of criticism for its description and depiction of Jesus.

Because many claim that describing and depicting Jesus as gentle Jesus, meek and mild. They said that it, well, presents and portrays Jesus as someone who is, well, weak and woolly.

Rather than presenting Jesus as someone who is strong and sovereign. A strong and sovereign saviour that we want this world to see and believe in.

In fact, it was during the 1980s that the first line of Charles Wesley's hymn was omitted. Because some Christians believe that the lyrics, gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

[2 : 1 7] They believe that these lyrics were no longer adjectives that were appealing and attractive to the world around them. So they removed gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

More than that, they actually deleted gentle Jesus, meek and mild. But what Jesus teaches us here from this third beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount.

Is that these characteristics, gentle Jesus, meek and mild. They are Christ-like characteristics. They are Christ-like characteristics.

And although they may not be attractive and appealing in the eyes of the world. They are still Christ-like characteristics which must be possessed and practiced by those who have entered the kingdom of heaven.

They must be possessed and practiced by us as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Because as Jesus says in verse 5, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

[3 : 2 1] Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Now as we said and as we began our study of the beatitudes, we said that these opening verses in the Sermon on the Mount, they set before us nine beatitudes.

They are nine statements of blessing or nine benedictions of blessedness. And Jesus, he begins his Sermon on the Mount with these nine beatitudes because the Sermon as a whole, as you know, it's all about living as a Christian in the kingdom of God.

It's all about Christian living in the kingdom of heaven. It's all about what it means to be a child of God or a son and a daughter of our heavenly Father or even a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But with these nine beatitudes, what we have to understand is that Jesus isn't telling us what we're to do as Christians. He's not even telling us what we're to be as Christians.

No, with these nine beatitudes, Jesus is actually telling us what we are as Christians. He's telling us what we are as Christians. And what Jesus says is that as those who have entered the kingdom of heaven, Jesus says, you're blessed.

[4 : 39] That's your position. You're blessed. You're blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. And because you're blessed, the outworking of that blessedness is that you will possess and you will practice a Christ-like character, conduct, and conversation.

And your Christ-like character, conduct, and conversation. And this is what Jesus says. Your Christ-like character, conduct, and conversation should be a contradiction and in conflict to the world around you.

And that's what we see particularly with this third beatitude. That's what I want us to see this evening. I want us to look at this beatitude under two headings. Just two headings this evening. A Christ-like character and a Christ-like contradiction. A Christ-like character and a Christ-like contradiction. So first of all, a Christ-like character.

Jesus says, blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Now as many of you know, Joel Osteen is an American pastor and preacher of what many would call a prosperity gospel.

[5 : 59] The prosperity gospel is that the Christian life is not about poverty. It's all about prosperity. And Joel Osteen's most famous book is called, it's called Your Best Life Now.

Seven Steps to Living at Your Full Potential. And needless to say, the book was condemned by many faithful preachers and pastors such as John MacArthur who called it nothing more than a book about Christless Christianity.

But you know, when we come to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses the Beatitudes not to teach you how to live your best life now. No, Jesus uses the Beatitudes to teach us how to live your blessed life now.

Jesus uses the Beatitudes to teach you how to live your blessed life now. Because as someone, yourself included, as someone who has submitted and surrendered your life to the King of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus Christ, you have entered into the Kingdom of Heaven.

You are entitled to enjoy and experience all the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven. So as someone who's a Christian tonight, you're blessed. You're blessed. You're blessed.

[7 : 14] And as we've said before, the word blessed, it literally means to kneel. You're kneeling before King Jesus with your head bowed and your hand outstretched and you're receiving from the gracious, loving, and merciful hand of King Jesus something that you don't deserve.

And what He gives you is what you don't deserve. He blesses you. He blesses you. Because blessing only comes from the gracious, merciful, and loving hand of King Jesus.

And this is important because what Jesus teaches us is that in the Kingdom of Heaven, you need to be emptied before you are filled. In the Kingdom of Heaven, you need to be emptied before you are filled.

Because you know, my friend, the Gospel doesn't just add something to what you have already.

That's what the prosperity Gospel would tell you, that it just adds something to what you have already. No, the Gospel doesn't just add something to what you have already.

The Gospel empties you of all that you are in order to fill you and to bless you with all that Jesus is. The Gospel empties you of all that you are in order to fill you and to bless you with all of what Jesus is.

[8 : 34] And that's why Jesus said in the first beatitude, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Because it's only those who are poor in spirit, those who are emptied of pride and emptied of self, it's only those who are blessed with Jesus that will receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Then Jesus went on to say in the second beatitude, blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Because it's only those who truly mourn over their sin and over their shame before a holy God who will find comfort and consolation in the Gospel.

But now we see in the third beatitude that Jesus says, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Therefore, Jesus says, it's only those who are emptied of their self-confidence and emptied of their self-assurance and emptied of their assertive and even their aggressive attitude.

Jesus says, they will inherit the earth. They will inherit the earth. And what's remarkable is that from these opening beatitudes, Jesus is actually setting before us what a Christ-like character, conduct, and conversation really looks like.

And you know, when you actually read through all these beatitudes, just as we read them earlier, you know, we have to be asking the question, well, who are they describing? Who are they describing?

[10 : 04] Because who is poor in spirit? Who mourns over sin? Who is meek? Who is righteous? Who is merciful? Who is pure in heart? Who is a son of God? Who is a peacemaker?

And of course, the answer is Jesus. No one but Jesus. Therefore, the beatitudes, they actually depict and describe Jesus himself.

He is the blessed man. He's the only one who provides and pronounces blessing upon his people because he's the blessed man. But you know, as we consider this third beatitude, we need to understand that meekness, meekness was one of those characteristics that was utterly despised in the ancient world.

And it's safe to say that nothing has changed in over 2,000 years. Because meekness, you could say, it's often seen as weakness. Meekness is often seen as weakness.

That's why so many Christians thought that it would be a good idea to delete the words gentle Jesus, meek, and mild from Charles Wesley's hymn. Because as we said earlier, gentle Jesus, meek, and mild, that presents and portrays Jesus as weak and woolly rather than a sovereign and strong saviour that we want the world to see and believe in.

[11 : 30] And you know, for so many Christians, they want to delete this gentle Jesus, meek, and mild. And they want to remove any connotations or any associations with such a depiction or a description of Jesus.

Because they, well, they don't want the world ever thinking that Jesus is weak or woolly or that he's feeble and frail or that this Jesus in the gospel is puny or pathetic.

He's scrawny or sensitive, limp or lowly. No, no, they say, delete gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Get rid of that depiction. Get rid of that description of Jesus because who in the world is going to want a saviour like that?

Who's going to come to a saviour who is presented and portrayed in the gospel as weak and woolly? Who's going to see their need of a saviour who is meek and mild? No, they say, tell the world that Jesus is sovereign.

Tell them, tell them that he's strong. Tell the world that Jesus is majestic and he's mighty. Tell the world that Jesus is king of kings and lord of lords. Tell the world, preach and proclaim to the world that Jesus is one who has defeated death.

[12 : 42] He's conquered the grave. He's brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. But whatever you do, don't tell them that he's meek and mild. Don't tell them that this Jesus is gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

And you know, in a way you can understand why they wanted to delete gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Because in the eyes of the world, my friend, a meek and mild Jesus isn't a good image for Christianity.

Christianity. In the eyes of the world, it doesn't present and portray and promote the church as something that is strong and secure and stable.

Because a meek and mild Jesus makes Christianity, well, it just makes it look very weak and very wishy-washy. And yet, this is what we need to take note of.

And yet, when the king and head of his church, when Jesus himself makes his great gospel invitation to sinners, do you remember what we read in Matthew 11?

[13 : 55] He said, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me, and you shall find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. But my friend, what was the basis of Jesus issuing that great gospel invitation? Why did Jesus say, Come to me?

And you'll notice, Jesus didn't say, Come to me because I'm sovereign and strong. He didn't say, Come to me because I'm majestic and mighty. He didn't say, Come to me because I'm perfect and powerful.

He didn't say, Come to me because I'm king of kings and lord of lords. No, Jesus said, Come unto me because I'm meek and lowly in heart, and in me you will find rest for your soul.

Come unto me because I'm meek and lowly in heart. But you know, we have to ask, Well, why did Jesus say that? He could have told them anything about himself.

[15 : 04] Why did he say, Come to me because I'm meek and lowly? My friend, Jesus said it because living in the kingdom of heaven is a complete contradiction to living in the kingdom of this world.

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And this is what I want us to consider secondly, a Christ-like contradiction. So we see a Christ-like character that we are to possess and practice, but then a Christ-like contradiction.

A Christ-like contradiction. Jesus says, Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Now when Jesus issued that great gospel invitation, and it really is, it's a wonderful invitation, isn't it? Where Jesus says, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

[16:14] My friend, Jesus said, Come unto me for I am meek and lowly. And he said that because living in the kingdom of heaven, it's a complete contradiction to living in the kingdom of this world.

Because as you know, and the world will tell you, meekness is weakness. Meekness is weakness. And they'll say that it's not Jesus that we need to come to. It's not Jesus that we need to look up to. No, the world will tell us well, we need to come to those who will tell us what we want to hear. And we need to look up to those who are popular and powerful.

We need to look up to those who are perfect and pretty. We need to look up to those who are famous and faultless. Look up to those who are intelligent and influential.

We need to look up to those who are rich and royal because they have everything. In the eyes of the world, they have inherited the earth. They have inherited the earth.

[17:13] And what they'll say is, well, they've made it in life. And they've made it in life not because they were meek and mild, but because they were driven and determined. They've made it in life because they were pushy and proud.

They've made it in life because they were aspiring and even ambitious. They were positive and proactive. And for some of them, they got where they are today.

Maybe because they were cruel and callous and conceited. Maybe because they were backstabbing and backbiting and brutal. Or maybe because they were rude and ruthless and reckless.

Or maybe it was, they made it in life because they were negligent, nasty, and narcissistic. And the world will tell us that we need to look up to them.

We need to like them. We need to love them. We need to imitate and emulate them in our lives because they're the ones who go places. They're the ones who get things done.

[18:11] They're the ones who make a difference in society and improve things and change lives and influence nations and set trends. They have inherited the earth. They have everything.

That's what we'll be told. That's what the media will tell us. But with this Christ-like contradiction, Jesus says, well, they have nothing. They have absolutely nothing.

And they have nothing because they don't know true blessedness. They have not been blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

They don't know the blessing of the kingdom of heaven. And, you know, that's the deception and even the distraction that the devil has on so many people. The God of this world has blinded their minds in unbelief.

And that appeal and attraction from the world, it tells him that when you have these things, you have everything. But Jesus says the reality is they don't have everything because they're empty.

[19:19] They are completely empty. empty. Jesus told us in John 10, did he not, the thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy.

But I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. And Jesus promises us that we will inherit the earth. We will receive every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, not by our might, but by our meekness.

Blessed are the meek, he says, for they shall inherit the earth. And this is why Jesus issued this great gospel invitation to come unto me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Because, you know, my friend, Jesus knows that behind the facade of fame and fortune, Jesus knows that behind the facade of boldness and boasting and bravado, Jesus knows that behind the facade of popularity and power and perfection and prettiness, Jesus knows that behind it all, the reality is brokenness and weariness and people who are heavy laden.

And we see it so often with celebrities, don't we? You know, the one person in the celebrity world I will never forget is Robin Williams. He made me laugh as a child, and yet we thought that man had everything, and yet he committed suicide because he was the most depressed person.

[20 : 59] He tried to make everyone happy, but he couldn't make himself happy. He didn't know blessedness, true blessedness. And that's what Jesus is emphasizing to us.

Behind the facade, people are broken, they're weary, they're heavy laden, and Jesus knows that because he knows us and he knows what we need.

Therefore, what this world really needs is not someone to like or love or look up to, but someone who knows what they're going through, someone who can come alongside them in their time of need, and someone who can actually meet them at their point of need.

My friend, what this world needs, and we know it so well, what this world needs is not a mighty celebrity, but a meek saviour. What this world needs is not a mighty celebrity, but a meek saviour. And yes, it's a Christ-like contradiction. It's a Christ-like contradiction. But you know, as those who are blessed in the kingdom of heaven, that's who we need to imitate and emulate.

[22 : 12] We need to imitate and emulate this Jesus because the world will tell us that it's not the meek and mild who inherit the earth. It's the ambitious who inherit the earth.

It's the arrogant and the assertive and the aggressive. They're the ones who inherit the earth. And anyone who follows gentle Jesus, meek and mild, they'll tell you, well, you're just a weakling. You're wishy-washy. You're all woolly. And they all know that weaklings, well, they just go to the wall. But Jesus says, in the kingdom of heaven, the standards are switched.

The roles are reversed because the character, conduct, and conversation of a Christian is to be counter-cultural. That's what Jesus is teaching us in the Beatitudes, that the character, conduct, and conversation of a Christian is to be counter-cultural.

Therefore, my Christian friend, as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, we are to possess and practice meekness. We're to display and demonstrate this gentle character, this lowly character.

[23 : 25] We're to be tender-hearted. We're to be kind. Because, you know, when we are, and when we possess and practice this character of meekness, you know, the world will see that the Christian is not arrogant or assertive or even aggressive, but that they are humble, heartfelt, and human.

They're not, we're not to be arrogant, assertive, or aggressive, but humble, heartfelt, and human. And, you know, it's then that, it's then that, just like gentle Jesus, meek and mild, that we will be able to get alongside people and get to know them and understand where they're at and help them with what they're going through.

We can meet them at their point of need and then point them to Jesus with that great gospel invitation, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Jesus says, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. And, you know, as we said before, the thing about the Sermon on the Mount is that Jesus always practiced what he preached.

And when Jesus preached, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth, gentle Jesus, meek and mild, what did he do? He inherited the earth.

[25 : 01] Jesus inherited the earth from his Father. He inherited, he inherited it, and he inherited all authority in heaven and on earth. And he did it not by being arrogant or assertive or aggressive, but by being humble, heartfelt, and even human.

Jesus, as we know, he humbled himself down, down, down, from the crown to the cradle to the cross, from glory to Golgotha to the grave. He was humble, heartfelt, and human.

And so you go back to Charles Wesley's hymn, gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child. Pity my simplicity, suffer me to come to thee.

Fain I would to thee be brought, dearest God, forbid it not. Give me, dearest God, a place in the kingdom of thy grace. And we're saying, well, no, let's not delete gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

Instead, let's demonstrate and display gentle Jesus, meek and mild, in our lives. Let's possess and practice this Christ-like character and make sure that it is a Christ-like contradiction to the eyes of the world.

[26 : 25] Let's demonstrate and display in our lives gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Because as Jesus says, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray together. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for the wonder of who Jesus is, that although he is strong and sovereign, that although he is mighty and majestic, he is also meek and mild.

And we thank thee and we praise thee that he is so, that he is able to meet us at our point of need, that when we are at our weakest and even our lowest, that he knows us and he understands what we're going through, and that he promises to us that we will find in him rest for our souls.

O Lord, that we would keep coming to him, and that we as thy people would keep encouraging others to come to him, that they too would find rest for their souls.

O Lord, as we study these beatitudes, help us, we pray, to imitate and emulate our great Saviour, to have that Christ-like character, conduct, and conversation.

[27 : 52] O Lord, forgive us, we pray, for how often we are not like Jesus, but that thou in thy grace and in thy mercy, that thou wouldest teach us and train us to be more like him.

O Lord, guide us, we ask, bless us, we pray, and lead us by thy Spirit, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Well, we're going to sing again this time in Psalm 25.

Psalm 25 in the Scottish Psalter. We're singing from verse 4 down to the verse marked 7. So, Psalm 25, it's on page 231.

It's in the first version of the Psalm. Show me thy ways, O Lord, thy path, so teach thou me, and do thou lead me in thy truth, therein my teacher be. For thou art God that dost, to me salvation send, and I upon thee all the day, expecting, do attend.

So, we'll sing Psalm 25, verses 4 to 7, and at the close of this Psalm, the live stream, it will come to an end. So, we'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

[29 : 06] Show me thy ways, O Lord, thy path, so teach thou me, and do thou lead me, my truth, therein my teacher be.

for thou art God that dost, to me salvation send, and I upon thee all the day, expecting, expecting, to attend.

Thy tender mercy's Lord, I pray thee to remember, and loving kindness is for thee, love me, no hope forever.

ever. My sins and faults, so mute, do thou, O Lord, forget, after thy mercy, think, or me, and for thy goodness, give.

A voice that shall be ■■ obra, that have his seen nature in any way, and for thy peace, the imp■lar, and for thy people are, and for thy mouth, and for thy baby, the purist, of thy goodness, and for thy goodness, and for thou, and for thy God.