

MATTHEW 5:3-5

³*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

⁴*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

⁵*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”*

We have been talking about “**Who God Wants You (us) to Be**” as we work our way through our teaching series discussing the Beatitudes of Christ. The past two weeks we have heard Pastor Ron share that God wants us to **need Him** (*Blessed are the poor in spirit*) and God wants us to **be compassionate** (*Blessed are those who mourn*). Today we hear that God wants us to **be meek or humble** (*Blessed are the meek*), but what does that really mean to us? What does it mean to be humble or meek? And, how do I become humble in the way God wants me to be?

Before we get into the meat of our teaching, I’d like to spend a few minutes setting the stage for what the Lord has taught me regarding this third Beatitude or blessedness of the meek.

First of all, there is extreme resistance to an attitude of humility. Jesus tells us; “Blessed are the meek.” This statement stands in contrast to everything the world teaches us. Society tells us we must “stand up for ourselves” and we hear of and glorify the “self-made men” of the world. We have a fear and aversion to the idea that we are going to be “taken advantage of” by people. We vaunt, and strive to attain, the title of “independent.” Most people do not like to be spoken of unfavorably, made fun of, or talked about behind their backs. Most people believe when they are victims of unjustified character assassination, they should defend themselves. The majority of people do not take kindly to being “used” by others, and when placed in situations such as these, most Christians will express the belief that “God does not want me to be a doormat.”

Second, we should understand what humility, or meekness, is not. A humble person is not a weak or timid person. A meek person is not a person without “backbone.” A meek person is not a person lacking leadership skills. Humility is not equal to personal insecurity. Meekness is not the same as fear.

Third, **the humble mind is one of the cornerstones of all Christian virtues**. Lack of humility was at the root of the fall of Lucifer. Lack of humility was the demise of man in the Garden of Eden. One of the primary narratives running through the Bible knitting together the promises of God with the characteristics of God’s people is the abasement of pride and the development of humility in them. The Bible teaches us that God hates pride (selfish-independence). God’s people are characterized by their humility and complete dependence upon Him. There can be no real love without humility. “Love,” said Paul, “does not boast, it is not puffed up” (1 Corinthians 13:4).

To walk humbly with the LORD completes the divine requirements

Micah 6:8

We can (and will) look at a more attributes of humility that point to its importance in the life of the believer, but I think we have a good starting place with the groundwork we have laid. Here’s the point; it is not our goal to gather knowledge about the person of Jesus Christ, our goal is to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ and the Beatitudes offer an excellent starting point for our “transformation.” Beginning with the last two, we have learned about “the poor in spirit” and “those who mourn” to illuminate our path.

Closer examination of the Beatitudes uncovers divine order to these blessings of Jesus. Listing them out reveals an intentional and deliberate progression as one attribute, or **attitude**, builds upon another. We can look at it like this. The first Beatitude asks us to realize our own brokenness and our own inability to fix our brokenness. It confronts us with our having to answer to a holy God, not only in the Ten Commandments and the moral law, but also in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the life of Christ Himself. It makes us feel we have nothing; we become “poor in spirit,” we are truly helpless. When we realize truly what we have to be (**“Be holy as I am Holy”**), we become inevitably “poor in spirit” because we cannot do it on our own. That leads to that second state in which, realizing our own sinfulness and our own true nature, and seeing the sin even in our best actions, thoughts and desires, we mourn and we cry out with the great apostle, *“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”* This admission and recognition of our state propels us toward humility.

In the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament,

Humility is an essential characteristic of righteousness, or of the man who is right with God.

God humbles men in order to bring them to Himself.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3

Building on those who are “poor in spirit” (that is understanding our weaknesses and inabilities), and confronting our sin before a holy God, begins to shed light on the words that Jesus shares with us here; **“Blessed are the meek.”** What does Jesus mean? Is he portraying one that is easily influenced? Is he describing someone that exhibits niceties and is soft-spoken? I don’t think so. I believe that the meek person described here is the person that walks in humility. To be more exact, one that is meek has “died to self” and there is an absence of pride. The man who has “crucified self” does not feel the need to boast or glory in anything he has done or does. He does not feel the need to defend himself from what others may say. The humble man is not sensitive about himself. He is not always watching defensively to protect his own interests. We go through most of our life protecting our interests, watching our back, comforting self, looking after number one...and most of this at the expense of others. The man who has “denied self” has finished with all that and no longer worries about himself.

To be meek, means to “die to self.” John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim’s Progress, says it well; “He that is down need fear no fall.” You have come to realize that no harm can come to you; you are dead to self, but alive in Christ. Paul writes in, **Galatians 2:20**—I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

The apostle Paul makes his appeal to us (Philippians 2:1-11) that we should cherish and manifest the Spirit of their Lord's humility – “in lowliness of mind each counting others better than himself,” and expresses to us the supreme example of the self-emptying (kenosis) of Christ: **Philippians 2:1-11**

*“Make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, love one another, and work together with one mind and purpose. Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. **Be humble**, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. **You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.** Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; **he took the humble position** of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, **he humbled himself** in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. **Therefore, God elevated him** to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names...”*

Our instruction should come from the model of our Lord remembering also it is not alone the sense of sin that should create the humble spirit: Jesus had no sin. Jesus was led by the Spirit. Though He was the Second Person in the blessed Holy Trinity, He became man; He deliberately humbled Himself to the extent that He was dependent entirely upon what God gave Him, what God taught Him and what God told Him to do. He humbled Himself to that, and that is what is meant by being meek. We must be ready to learn and listen and most especially **we must live lives that are surrendered to the Spirit.**

Following the model of Jesus in the way of humility:

Humility is also a life surrendered to the Spirit

We could say it like this; we are to leave everything—ourselves, our rights, our cause, our whole future—in the hands of God, and especially so if we feel we are suffering unjustly. The problem with this is we don’t like suffering and we don’t want to suffer. We don’t want to be ridiculed. We don’t want to be doormats. We don’t want to be taken advantage of. Timothy (Paul’s protégé) was suffering. He was being mocked and ridiculed. People were not following his leadership. Paul writes to him saying, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” In other words, “Do not be worried about your suffering, Timothy. You be meek and suffer and you shall reign with Him. You are going to inherit the earth with Him.”

I think it is best said by the Lord himself: *“For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted”* (^{NLT} Luke 14:11). Jesus also said, *“If you cling to your life, you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it”* (^{NLT} Luke 17:33). Rudolf Stier sums up this statement of the Jesus way saying, “Self-renunciation is the way to world-dominion.”

“...Those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Luke 14:11

Those of us who claim to be Christian claim of necessity that we have already received the Holy Spirit. Therefore we have no excuse for not being meek. The man who is outside has an excuse, for it is impossible to him. But if we truly claim that we have received the Holy Spirit, and this is the claim of every Christian, we have no excuse if we are not meek. It is not something that you do and I do. It is a character that is produced in us by the Spirit. It is the direct fruit of the Spirit. It is offered to us and it is possible for us all. What have we to do? We must face this Sermon on the Mount; we must meditate upon this statement about being meek; we must look at the examples; above all we must look at the Lord Himself. Then we must finish with that self which is the cause of all our troubles, so that He who has bought us at such a price may come in and possess us wholly.

Only the humble person can be happy in this life, because we have many difficulties in this world. Such a person knows what Paul knew and can say with him, “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances” (Philippians 4:11). Only the humble person truly enjoys peace like this. Too many Christians today do not live like this. We worry too much about our possessions, our children, our house. We resist being broken, but it is to brokenness that God calls us; He calls us to become broken so He can rebuild us in His divine image and offer us back to a world that is in need of reconciliation, healing, and restoration. We find who we are in Him when we are broken and humbled. It is in this place that we find contentment and satisfaction. It is in this place that God can use us as instruments of His grace and His glory...and, it is the reason humble people are happy and satisfied people!

“Humble people are satisfied people.”

Philippians 4:11

I read a quote the other day from Rick Warren that I thought fit very appropriately with today’s word; “Your creation cost nothing. Your salvation cost God’s son. Your sanctification costs your ego.”

Transition to Communion Service:

Today as we partake of this Holy Communion, examine your hearts... Do you find yourself **poor in spirit**? Do you **mourn for your condition** and the devastation that sin has wreaked upon God's creation? Are you humbled by it all and are you willing to turn away from yourself and embrace the **breaking** and **transforming** work that God desires to do in you. He wants to redeem, reconcile, and restore...and He wants to use you to do it. **Are you humbled?**