

## ***Studies in the Sermon on the Mount: Lesson 2***

**I. Something that** is made very clear in the beatitudes is that God's Kingdom is not going to have its doors kicked open by those who are the strong and mighty of this world: God is going to open them for those that the world considers to be weak:

**A.** In the same way that our world can sometimes be harsh and unforgiving, the world of Jesus was not one where many survived by being meek and gentle:

**B.** His audience didn't expect blessings to be pronounced on those who were meek, merciful and persecuted: Truth be told, it is still not an idea whose time has come!

### **II. Blessed are the Meek:**

A. And so Jesus continues his instruction by saying that the meek would also be blessed:

1. In a world that is dominated by selfish people looking to promote themselves at any cost, meekness would seem to be a fast way to let people run you over. And in some sense, that may actually be what happens in the short term--

a) But this is something that citizens of the Kingdom have to deal with:

b) The meekness and gentleness of Jesus did not save him from going to the cross, but Jesus teaches that ultimately, it is only those who are meek that will survive; what we have to do is learn what true meekness is:

B. Just as with those characteristics that we've looked at so far, the idea of Meekness is not something that we are naturally disposed to:

1. And the meekness that the Lord requires is not a forced attitude: It is not the behavior of a slave who hates his position, but because he has no other choice he fawns and grovels in front of his master, but would stop doing this as soon as the chance presented itself:

2. The meekness that we must have towards God is a choice: It involves us resolving that even though we have the power to do something a certain way, or even desire to do it a certain way, we will choose to behave differently.

C. When Jesus calls on us to be meek, He is not calling us to ignore evil:

1. Jesus during His ministry, patiently endured all of the insults and assaults that his enemies made on Him, but He was quick to defend His Father's name:

2. Jesus loved righteousness and hated evil: But a meek man can endure mistreatment because he is not worried about defending himself, but at the time be ready to defend against every false way:

D. Neither was Jesus calling on his followers to be Weak:

1. Meekness has nothing to do with weakness: Meek doesn't mean powerless, or out of shape:
2. Jesus our example of meekness, stated that he could have called 12 legions, or 72,000 angels to come be under His command and wipe away His enemies if He so chose: (Matt 26:53)
  - a) Jesus was more meek than anyone else, because he had more power to destroy His enemies than anyone else:
  - b) It wasn't being helpless that made Jesus meek, He was meek because He kept that great power under control because he Loved the Father, and He loved us:
  - c) It would have been a lot easier to simply destroy His enemies, but He chose to take the hard road:
    - (i) Jesus' meekness is described to us by Paul, in telling us how He viewed his position:

*(a) who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. -Phil. 2:6-7*
    - (b) The Hebrew writer would say that through that submission He learned obedience: Jesus came here as a servant, who emptied Himself for us:

E. Meekness certainly would cause us to view ourselves in the proper way before God; but as a term that deals with us keeping what is within our power under control; it is something that primarily describes how we are to act towards each other, and those around us:

1. In Jesus' day, Meekness most often had a specific use: it was used to describe an animal that had been tamed:
2. This is a fitting description because in Matt 11:29 among other places, Jesus calls us to allow Him to place His yoke around our necks:

- a) Those who are meek kingdom citizens have been tamed by the yoke of Jesus, and are now taking up the burdens of other men:
  - b) That citizen is not concerned about using force to take what is rightfully theirs, or trying to avenge some injustice done to them: Again, not because they don't have the power to do it, but because they are choosing not to:
  - c) They have placed it in God's hands, and instead are choosing to be a blessing to others, even their enemies:
- F. One who is meek has had enough of a self-righteous, self-willed attitude: He had replaced those things with the attitude of a willing servant, and it is for that reason that Jesus says they will inherit the Earth:

### **III. Hungering and Thirsting for Righteousness:**

- A. Jesus next statement is one that we may be able to understand, but have a more difficult time fully relating to:
- 1. The word Hunger, is the same word that Matthew uses in chapter 4:2 when he describes Jesus after a 40 day fast in the wilderness: This was not a slight rumble in the stomach that lets you know its time for lunch: It wasn't a craving for a light snack!
    - a) This is speaking of a serious state: starvation
  - 2. And yet everyone will be moved over physical hungry: There is no person who after some amount of time will not recognize that its time to eat something:
    - a) But spiritually speaking, the majority of people are skin and bones and dying, but they refuse to feed their soul: They will not acknowledge how empty they are without God
    - b) We recently looked at the story of the Prodigal, we made the point then and make it again here, that there are a lot of prodigals in the world today who are living in a far country away from God, but they don't have the sense to confess, and so they will perish with hunger (Luke 15)
    - c) The one who hungers after righteousness realizes that they have a desperate need, they know what will fill that need, and they are desperately craving it!

B. The righteousness that they hunger for is first of all a right relationship with God:

Having their sins forgiven:

1. But beyond that, they want to live lives that show they have been transformed by righteousness:

a) As Paul says in Romans 6:8, having died with Christ, they now want to live with Him

2. This is as it should be: God not only wants us to be forgiven, He wants us to be changed: He wants us to be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), and Jesus says at the end of chapter 5, that we will be like Him!

C. This hunger is actually present to some degree in everyone: Now, most in the world ignore it, but there is in each of us, a built in desire and need for God

1. David describes it in Psalm 63:1 *“My soul thirsts for you; my flesh longs for You in a dry and weary land where there is no water!”*

2. Our sin has left a hole in each of us that only God can fill: Most will try and fill that void by putting everything that the world has to offer into it:

3. One has said that we might as well “try to pour Niagara Falls into a teacup as to seek to satisfy our spirits with mere things and carnal thrills”

a) But what the world has to offer cannot meet our needs: Money, pleasure, the wisdom of the world will just keep making us hungry: We won't ever have enough, feel enough, or know enough to be content without God:

b) What we need is righteousness: Jesus says that those who are desperately longing for it will be filled:

c) This beatitude calls for a change in priorities: Jesus says that our relationship with God has to occupy all of our attention: in the same way that a truly hungry person can think of nothing else but food, we can think of nothing else but God:

*(This sermon series adapted from “Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution”)*