

Bryan Station Baptist Church

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ORGANIZED 1786

MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

VOL. 8

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

JANUARY, 1977

NO. 4

Blessed Are The Meek

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"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

This third portrait of the saint shows him in relation to others and to material things. It is a virtue of the person who is poor in spirit—poor in his own estimate of himself—and who grieves over his sins. "The meek man is one who has got himself out of the center of the picture." The ideal Christian not only esteems himself lightly; he also denies himself. The meek man does not measure events by their effect upon his own welfare or comfort. His main concern is not for his own interests and reputation. He is ruled by love for God and his neighbor.

If the world should write a Beatitude touching earthly possessions, it would read about like this: "Blessed are they who push and shove and fight for their way to the top: for they shall win the earth." The world says, "Blessed are the strong, who can hold their own." But He who spake as never man spake says, "Blessed are the meek." We have never seen the man who exactly fits this picture, but we have known some who reminded us of him.

What is Christian meekness? In the Bible the word is associated with such words as humility, lowliness, patience, and gentleness. It is the opposite of the fierce spirit that belongs to pride and disposition to avenge a wrong. It is the spirit that leaves vengeance with God. Meekness is not a natural virtue, but a spiritual grace. In Galatians 5:16, it is mentioned as a fruit of

the Spirit along with love, peace, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, and temperance. Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is a conqueror; it overcomes evil with good. It is said that most men are like dogs that answer bark for bark and only make the night hideous and themselves hoarse. The spirit of meekness belonged to our blessed Lord. He said of Himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart." Moses was said to have been the meekest man of his day. He showed his meekness by ignoring the criticism of Miriam and Aaron, and by refusing to avenge their attitude towards him. Moses put up with their rebellion, but God avenged him by striking Miriam with leprosy. The meekness of Moses was further shown in praying for his sinning sister. "And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee" (Numbers 12:13). Vengeance belongs to God, and we must not usurp His prerogative, but leave those who would injure us in His hands. "And shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto him" (Luke 18:7). Another thing, the meek man is not forward to make claims upon others. The meek man does not make demands upon others; he does not even expect much from others. A lot of people are sore all over because they do not get the honor and respect which they think is their due.

Now meekness is not opposed to righteous indignation when God is slandered and men are injured. Jesus, who called Himself meek and lowly in heart, was aroused to wrath when the Pharisees objected to His healing the man with

the withered hand on the Sabbath. He was moved with indignation when His disciples tried to keep the mothers from bringing their little children to Him. With righteous indignation He cleansed the temple and drove out the covetous men who made the house of prayer a den of thieves. Meekness forgets self, but it does not forget others. Florence Nightingale, English nurse and hospital reformer, was famous for her kindness and gentleness and yet she could fight like a tigress for her wounded patients. Abraham Lincoln could be terrible but not in self-defense.

Meekness is not laziness. I heard of a man who went to his doctor for a physical checkup. He said to the doctor, "Do a thorough job and when you have finished the examination, I would like for you to tell me in plain words just what is the matter with me. When the doctor had finished the examination, he looked the man straight in the eye and said, "You are just plain lazy." The man then said, "Please, put that in technical terms so I can tell my wife."

Now Christian meekness is far more than a right attitude towards men who provoke us; it is also manifested in humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God, realizing that our afflictions come from Him. It was in meekness that Job said, "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And again, when he said, "Though he slay me, still will I trust him." A dear friend and deacon in my church in Florida was called upon to pass through deep waters of affliction. Trouble upon trouble pounced upon him like hungry dogs upon a helpless lamb. He lost his tangerine grove in a winter freeze, which put him in financial distress. And his troubles were climaxed by the fatal illness of his devoted wife. After months and even years of trying to nurse her back to health, she was taken from him. Under the terrible blow, he wavered for a moment. He talked of their happy married life in contrast with so many who had missed marital happiness. And then he said, "It does not seem fair for God to take my wife and break up my happy home." And while I trembled, grace came to his rescue. He humbled himself under the mighty hand of God and such sweet submission to the will of God has been rarely seen. While his wife lay cold in death on the Lord's Day, this deacon was at church. And when some expressed surprise, he said, "Why not, here is where I find comfort; my friends and brothers in Christ are here, and I feel better here in God's house than anywhere else." This dear deacon has long since followed his wife in that long procession of those who have departed to be with Christ.

And here in our own church we have witnessed manifestation of the same grace given to a brother and his family. This past Lord's Day, while his wife lay a corpse at the funeral home, he was here

at church greeting the people as they came to God's house. And why not? This is where he found comfort and where his devoted wife would want him to be. One wonders where such an idea originated that the Lord's people should stay away from church in times of sorrow. Such an idea did not originate with David, for when his baby died, one of the first things he did was to go into the house of the Lord to worship. Let us think with the poet as he says,

"Lord, it belongs not to my care,
Whether I die or live;
To live and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.

If life be long, I will be glad
That I may long obey;
If short, yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
No one into His kingdom comes,
But through this opened door.

Come, Lord, when grace has made me meet
Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be?

And now, let us consider the promise to the meek. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Ps. 37:11). Whatever the Psalmist meant, we may be sure that in quoting the Psalmist Christ did not mean that His people would win back the land by armed rebellion against the Romans. Yes, the meek shall inherit the earth. But this has no reference to the acres a man may own. Happiness cannot be measured by acres. One may own a large part of this earth and yet not enjoy it. A person may spend much time in clipping coupons and drawing interest on his investments, and yet not enjoy what he owns. The Psalmist says, "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked" (Ps. 37:16). It is the meek man who enjoys what he has of this world's goods. The present enjoyment of earth's possessions depends upon the right use of them. The man who misuses what he has does not enjoy what he has. The man whose ruling passion is getting things is not happy with what he gets. Generally speaking, the wealthiest are the most miserable. Marilyn Monroe had much of this world's fame and possessions, but her soul was empty. Like many other people who are famous and wealthy, her soul was empty and sad. With much to live on, they have nothing to

live for. Most suicides are full-handed, but empty-hearted.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” This promise is for both the present and for the future. The meek are satisfied with what the Lord may be pleased to give them in this present life. And they will also be satisfied with what He provides in the future.

Spurgeon says of the meek: “They are lowly-minded, and are ready to give up their portion in the earth; therefore, it shall come back to them. They neither boast, nor contend, nor exalt over others; yet are they heirs of all the good which God created on the face of the earth. In their meekness they are like their King, and they shall reign with Him. The promised land is for the tribes of the meek; before them the Canaanites shall be driven out. He has the best of this world who thinks the least of it, and least of himself.”

What striving and fighting is now going on for this earth! What contention for control; greed for gold, and passion for prominence is now being displayed on every hand! Most of this earth seems to belong to the warrior and the aggressor. The meek lie crushed under the heel of the oppressor. But as Dear John Pennington says, “This earth which the meek seem most deprived of, they only shall have and enjoy. When the Lord hath made it worth having, then none shall have it but they.”

Peter, with prophetic eye, saw the coming of the day of the Lord when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth shall be burned up. Nevertheless, we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

And John saw the new heaven and the new earth, and heard over heaven’s loud-speaker the announcement that the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. And then shall His people inherit the new earth. “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”



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