

Podcast Episode Notes

S9 Ep 4 What Does Meekness Look Like?

Scripture References (Matthew 5-7)

Verse 5 – Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

The Sermon on the Mount pictures what life, relationships and community look like when they come under the gracious Lordship of Jesus – as citizens of the Kingdom of God. Jesus emphasized that His people were to be different from others. Theologian RT Kendall writes, “It is a reflection of what life looks like when the Holy Spirit is not grieved in us.” The whole sermon contrasts how followers of Jesus live, act and think in comparison to the world around them!

Meekness conjures the idea of being a doormat, letting others trample over us. In our world, the meek person is not valued. But Jesus says the meek will inherit the earth. We must have the wrong idea of what it means to be meek. Theologian RT Kendall says, “It is the opposite of self-righteousness, arrogance, haughtiness, smugness and defensiveness.” That sounds like something we all need, so how does it look to be meek?

Definition of Meekness

In the New Testament, meekness speaks of being gentle, humble, considerate, courteous and patient.

Welsh minister Martin Lloyd-Jones describes meekness as “a humble and gentle attitude towards others which is determined by a true estimate of ourselves.” He goes on to point out that it can be fairly easy for us to be honest with ourselves before God and acknowledge ourselves as sinners in His sight, *but it can be much more difficult to allow other people to say things like that about us!* Inner hypocrisy!

Theologian R.T. Kendall says: “Meekness is easier described by what it is not rather than what it is. It is the opposite of self-righteousness, arrogance, haughtiness, smugness and defensiveness. Putting it positively, meekness is unpretentious, gentleness, sweetness and the grace to be utterly self-effacing. It is also the inner strength to accept criticism without sulking or arguing back.”

Kendall goes on to say that meekness is the “crown jewel of Christian virtues”.

- 1) It is character formed in us as a result of humbling oneself over time. It takes considerable spiritual development and a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in us to form meekness. It is a trait that is not natural to our own temperaments and personalities. It is the opposite of us “pulling strings” to make things happen. It is a God-formed yieldedness within.
- 2) Meekness is not an attribute that someone who has it looks to be affirmed for by others!
- 3) Counter-culture thinking here:
 - a. We can think that “meek people” get nowhere in life because they can be perceived as not being “tough, overbearing, have a backbone, and throw their weight around”.
 - b. However, from a biblical perspective – Jesus’ words here – it is not might, but meekness that allows one to “inherit the earth”!
 - c. The meek never seek credit – rather their lives ultimately deflect glory to God.

A. Meekness in Moses and Jesus

- 1) Moses in Numbers 12:3 – “Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.” The only person described in all of the OT this way!
 - a. Hebrew word “anav”: gentle of mind or circumstances; humble, lowly (dependent), needy; speaks of being patient, forgiving, trusting of God.
 - b. As you read Moses’ story in the Old Testament, you also see that meekness is really a marriage of humility and self-control. We see a “composure of soul” in difficulty.
 - c. Numerous times he grew weary and frustrated with the people of Israel’s sin and selfishness in the wilderness, which resulted in them turning from God.
 - i. Complaints about food and water
 - ii. Wanting to go back to Egypt due to the lack of life’s comforts
 - iii. Wandering for 40 years in the wilderness
 - iv. Building the golden calf
- 2) Jesus – yielding your will to do God’s will
 - a. We see in Jesus’ life meekness as a virtuous character quality that reflects putting aside one’s own desires to yield to the will of His Heavenly Father.
 - i. Phil. 2:6-8: “...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
 - ii. Mat. 22:40-42: “And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”
 - b. We see meekness in how Jesus was approachable and treated others:
 - i. Mark 5 – the woman with the issue of blood, trembling...”faith healed you”
 - ii. Luke 7 – the woman washing His feet, He received her, spoke tenderly to her
 - iii. Luke 23 – on the cross, towards those crucifying Him: “Father, forgive them”; here “blessing His enemies” as He stated in Matthew 5
 - iv. John 20 – with Thomas after he doubted Him – “come touch my hands, side”
 - v. John 21 – Jesus encounter with Peter on the shore restoring him after he had denied Him three times: charging him to “take care of” and “feed” His sheep.

B. The Promise: Inherit the Earth

- 1) Inheriting the Kingdom of God is inheriting all that belongs to Jesus – including the earth!
- 2) The word “inherit” here is in the future tense – it means “reward”. The promise here is both a deposit while leaving here on earth, and enjoying our inheritance in heaven forever.
- 3) As co-heirs with Jesus, we inherit everything He us to steward — life, relationships, possessions.