**Strength under Control**

The Beatitudes show the logical, natural progression of the transformation that comes only through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the **1st Beatitude** we saw that there has to be an emptying of our lives before there can be a filling – we must become poor in spirit before we can become rich in God’s blessings. To be poor in spirit means that we realize we are spiritually bankrupt and totally dependent upon God. In the first beatitude, we see ourselves as nothing and God as everything – we are humble!

In the **2nd Beatitude** we mourn over our spiritual condition, which causes us to repent and turn to God where we find the comfort we truly need. Spiritual mourning is the natural response of a person who realizes the enormity and ramifications of their sin. Humility and mourning lead to the next beatitude!

Matthew 5:5 – “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” NKJV

Matthew 5:5 - “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.” NASB

Matthew 5:5 – “God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.” NLT

Matthew 5:5 – “They are blessed who are humble, for the whole earth will be theirs.” NCV

Matthew 5:5 – “How happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them!” Phillips

In the **3rd Beatitude** we accept God’s will without question through obedience with a meek, gentle, yielding spirit. That is when we receive the best of God’s blessings in the here and now, and the promise of eternal life in the hereafter.

The word “meek” can also be translated as “gentle” or “humble.” A meek person is gentle, mild in spirit, humble.

To the Jewish crowds waiting for a Messiah-King who would lead them to victory over the Romans, this Beatitude must have sounded ridiculous. The thought of a meek and gentle Messiah seemed absurd to them. They wanted a militaristic kingdom with a massive army. They only understood the power of the sword.

Just like then, our world today places little value on being gentle or meek. The beatitudes of the world are more like this – “Blessed are those who assert themselves, for they shall get their way.” “Blessed are those who promote themselves, for they shall be noticed.” “Blessed are the aggressive, for they shall succeed.”

People of the world associate happiness with possessions, beautiful houses, the praise of men, and the vain things of earth. Jesus says true happiness comes by meek and humble submission to the will of God.

What does it mean to be meek/gentle/humble? What did Jesus mean when He said that the gentle/meek shall inherit the earth? What does being gentle/meek have to do with being happy?

The common definition usually given for meekness is **strength under control**. God gives us strengths and abilities that Satan wants to distort, these can be used for good or evil.

The works of the flesh are the result of being **out of control**, of using what God has given us for Satan’s purposes. If we are meek, then that means we are **in control**, in other words, **strength under control**.
When it comes to our relationship with God, to be meek means that we accept what God is doing in our lives without disputing or resisting Him.

It means we understand that what He is doing is good and best for us. The meek person does not fight against God, does not struggle and contend with Him. The meek person is open towards heaven.

Many people view a meek/gentle person as the opposite of a strong person - a mild-mannered man who is a coward, always getting shoved around, somebody that is tolerant of anything and everything, even that which is wrong and immoral, because they won’t stand up for what is right, don’t want to disagree with anyone, will go to great lengths to avoid unpleasantness. But meekness is not cowardice or weakness. To be meek does not mean that a person is timid and afraid to stand up for himself, that he allows people to mistreat him and take advantage of him. Being meek does not mean you never get angry.

Aristotle said that “meekness is the middle between excessive anger and excessive lack of anger.” In other words, it is “controlled power.” “Blessed is the man who is angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time. Blessed is the man who has every instinct, impulse and passion under control.”

The gentle person says to God, “I don’t need You and I don’t need Your way.”

The gentle/meek/humble person says, “God, I recognize my weakness and realize that I have nothing of value to offer You; but I am thankful that You love me, gave Your Son to die for me, and then made the way of salvation clear. Now I humbly submit to Your will.”

“The meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to His word and to His discipline, who follow His directions, and comply with His instructions, and are gentle towards all men, who can handle being provoked without losing their temper. The meek remains silent or only responds with a soft answer, they can be cool when others are hot; they are rarely and hardly provoked, and quickly and easily pacified. The meek would rather forgive twenty injuries than revenge one, having the rule of their own spirits.” Matthew Henry

The meek man is the captain at the helm of his ship in the middle of the storm, who, in full control of the vessel, guides the ship steadily through the storm.

Think about Moses – commander in chief, general, mighty leader – it was said at his death “Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor (force) diminished” (Deuteronomy 34:7).

It was said of his life: Numbers 12:3 – “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” Could a weak man have led 2-3 million people out of Egypt? Say what you want, Moses was not a weakling, he was not a milquetoast or a pansy who could be pushed around.

In 2 Corinthians 10:1, Paul referred to the “meekness and gentleness of Christ.” Would you say Jesus was a coward, a pansy Who could be pushed around? The money changers He drove out of the temple with a whip wouldn’t say it (John 2:13-17).

Was Jesus tolerant of evil? Did He avoid unpleasantness at all cost? Absolutely not! The Pharisees He condemned in Matthew 23 wouldn’t say it! Jesus was strong, but it was strength under control. His strength was tempered by reverence for God and love for people. That is what meekness/gentleness is all about.

To be meek means that we have a humble spirit that yields to the will of God and deals kindly with others. The gentle/meek Christian does not insist on having his own way. He takes into account the needs and feelings of others.
Colossians 3:12-13: “Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” ESV

The opposite of being meek/gentle/humble is to have a contentious spirit - to be a person who is likely to cause a controversy, to argue, to fight, to quarrel, to be involved in a heated argument. This is a person who has the personality of a piece of sandpaper.

Proverbs 21:9 – “Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”

Proverbs 21:19 – “Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry (quarrelsome, complaining) woman.”

Proverbs 25:24 – “It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”

Proverbs 27:15 – “A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike…”

Are you impatient, overbearing, contentious, or hot-tempered?

I. Inheriting the earth

Matthew 5:5 - “Blessed are the meek/gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.” What does this mean? In what sense do the gentle/meek “inherit the earth”?

The phrase “inherit the earth” is found many times in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 19:14; Psalm 25:13; 37:9) as an expression to describe any great and abundant blessing, perhaps the sum of all blessings.

This promise does not mean that those who are gentle and meek will inherit the earth in a legal sense - landowners. Jesus did not promise us that we would own oil wells, cotton fields, and fancy cars. Consider the two examples we discussed: Moses and Jesus.

Moses, the meekest man that ever lived, wandered the earth with no home for forty years hoping to inherit the promised land, but he only got to look at it (Deuteronomy 34:1–5). The Bible also tells us that Jesus was a meek man: Luke 9:58 – “But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head.”

So in what sense do the meek and gentle inherit the earth? Like the first two beatitudes, the promise is not physical in nature, but spiritual. The disciples of Jesus were hoping the Messiah would be a military leader who would conquer the earth and then give it to them to rule. Jesus dashed those hopes when He said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

Inheriting the earth means living the richest, fullest, and most satisfying life that this earth can give. The meek man “inherits the earth” by having the best life possible here on earth, and the promise of everlasting life. The meek are content, even if they own nothing!

2 Corinthians 6:10 – “Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.” NLT

Most of us probably know of individuals with great wealth who are miserable, as well as those with little who are happy. It is not the abundance of possessions that makes us happy, but our attitude toward life. “The veil of money has never been about how much money you have but about how much money has you.”
A meek person is not concerned with how many possessions he has nor is he consumed by the fear of losing those possessions. The meek person knows that there is a better place than this – that’s the possession worth having.

Referring to the saints in the Old Testament, the Hebrew writer said: [Hebrews 11:13-16]: “All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.” NLT

**Hebrews 13:14** – “For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.” NLT

Jesus is crystal clear - only the meek will be received into the kingdom of heaven and receive the abundant blessings of being a child of God. There can be no greater incentive to strive to be what we should be – meek!

**II. How do we become meek?**

How do we become meek? [Zephaniah 2:3] – “[…seek meekness…]” 1 Timothy 6:11 – “[…]pursue gentleness (meekness)[…].”  Colossians 3:12 – “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering…”

If we seek/pursue to put on meekness, then God will produce it in us as a Fruit of the Spirit. [Galatians 5:22-23]: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

How does He do this, what method does God use? God produces meekness in our lives when we open our hearts and receive His word. In order to do this, we must have three things:

**Repentant spirit** [James 1:21] – “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness…”). We must repent - get rid of all the filth and evil in our lives. There comes a time when we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and say **this is wrong and I want to stop!**

**Isaiah 1:16-17:** “Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. Learn to do good…”

**Receptive spirit** [James 1:21] – “…and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls”). You “lay aside” (repent) in order to “receive with meekness.”

One Greek word for “receive” means to “reach out and grab, to take, to grasp.” That’s not how we are to receive the word of God; you will never learn it with that kind of attitude.

The word that is used here means “to receive or welcome as you would a stranger/guest in your house, with great gratitude.”

You have to welcome the word, you must be teachable. Until we realize we don’t know everything and become ready to let God teach us we will not be a meek person [Psalm 25:9] – “The meek (humble) will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach his way”). KJV
Responsive spirit (James 1:22) - “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves”).

So many people sit in church and think because they “hear” the preacher they are all right – they think wrong:

Matthew 7:21-23: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ‘And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”

There are two main reasons why we need to be, should want to be meek! First, if we want to truly reach the world with the gospel, we must do so with loving gentleness/meekness/humility:

Galatians 6:1 - “Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path…” NLT

2 Timothy 2:25 - “Gently (in humility) instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth.” NLT

Titus 3:2 - “…be gentle and show true humility to everyone.”

1 Peter 3:15 - “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear…”

Secondly, if you want to be in heaven, you must be humble, meek, and gentle:

Psalm 22:26 – “The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek Him; your heart shall live forever.”

Psalm 37:11 – “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” NKJV

Isaiah 29:19 – “The humble (meek) will be filled with fresh joy from the Lord.” NLT

James 4:10 - “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.” NLT

Isaiah 57:15 - “For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” NKJV

1 Peter 5:5-7: “…be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” NKJV

III. Conclusion

Do you want to “inherit” the earth—to enjoy the best of what this earth has to offer and look forward to the “new earth?” Then you must be gentle and meek and humble.