

**ST. ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**SARASOTA, FLORIDA**

**STUDY NOTES FOR SAKLC CONVERSATIONS**

**FEBRUARY 4, 2016**

**OPENING RESPONSIVE READING - PSALM 37: 3-11:** *(Men – odd vs. Women – even vs.)*

**<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, and do good;  
so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.**

**<sup>4</sup> Take delight in the LORD,  
and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

**<sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD;  
trust in him, and he will act.**

**<sup>6</sup> He will make your vindication shine like the light,  
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.**

**<sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him;  
do not fret over those who prosper in their way,  
over those who carry out evil devices.**

**<sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath.  
Do not fret—it leads only to evil.**

**<sup>9</sup> For the wicked shall be cut off,  
but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.**

**<sup>10</sup> Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more;  
though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there.**

**<sup>11</sup> But the meek shall inherit the land,  
and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.**

**CORPORATE PRAYER and SHARING OF GOD'S PEACE:**

*(please see next page for further instructions)*

### **AS GOD'S PEACE IS SHARED WITH OTHERS ... ASK FOR THEIR REACTIONS:**

1. When you hear the word **MEEK**, what comes to your mind? Do you think that this is also an accurate view of what Jesus is talking about in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Beatitude?
2. Name some modern characters in novels, movies, the world of business, politics, who, for you, ***exemplify meekness***.
3. Similarly, name some characters in novels, movies, business, and politics that are all about power, ***the opposite of meekness***.
4. **With which statement** do you find yourself agreeing **most**:
  - ... being MEEK means never speaking up for what I believe.
  - ... being MEEK means seeing others as more important than myself.
  - ... being MEEK means everyone gets a fair shake.
  - ... being MEEK means always letting others have their own way.

### **THE BLESSEDNESS OF MEEKNESS** (*Jesus' third Beatitude Matt. 5:5 in comparative translations*)

(NRSV) - ***"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."***

(MSG) - ***"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought."***

(GNT) - ***"Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised!"***

(CE) - ***"Happy are people who are humble, because they will inherit the earth."***

(AMP) - ***"Blessed [inwardly peaceful, spiritually secure, worthy of respect] are the gentle [the kind-hearted, the sweet-spirited, the self-controlled], for they will inherit the earth."***

### **AN OVERVIEW for this study - past and present:**

1. In the *first* Beatitude (*"blessed are the poor in spirit"*) we observed that there must 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.

2. In the *second* Beatitude we discovered that *mourning* over our sins drives us to God; there we find the comfort we truly need.
3. In this *third* Beatitude we will see how the meek (*i.e., those who humbly submit to the will of God*) will enjoy the blessings of God here and now.
4. Consider for an initial moment the crowds who sat at the feet of the Rabbi Jesus and were the first to hear these words: What reactions might they have expressed? Might these words have sounded off-base and ridiculous?
  - a) Jewish Zealots in the first century sought happiness through militaristic might; advocated for a massive army able to overcome their Roman oppressors.
  - b) The thought of a “*meek*” and “*gentle*” Messiah must have seemed absurd!
  - c) They understood the power of the sword, but had never considered the power of meekness.
  - d) Jesus’ teaching, therefore, must have seemed new and totally unacceptable to most hearers, simply because the Old Testament was so greatly neglected and misinterpreted.
  - e) They did not recognize God’s predicted Suffering Servant as the Messiah promised by several prophets of the O.T.; Jesus was not the kind of Messiah they really wanted!
5. Have attitudes changed that much from the ancient past to our modern-day?
  - a) As a nation, we still associate happiness with a strong military force, economic security, material possessions, elegant homes, the praise of others, and all the vain things of earth.
  - b) Think of the “*pitches*” currently being made by candidates seeking to be elected as President of the U.S.A.!
  - c) Have there been many calls for “*meekness?*”
6. The thrust of today’s study will focus on a Christian’s need to understand that true happiness comes by meek and humble submission to the Will of God. It is your facilitator’s conviction that “*the modern world*” seeks a false happiness. Most people have no idea that it is a blessing to be meek. Contemporary culture seems to declare:

*“Grab all the recognition you can; assert yourself; stand up for your rights!”* Our success-oriented society prizes self-aggrandizement. Jesus, in this Beatitude, teaches that happiness and ultimate success come only to those with the opposite perspective.

## A) What is Meekness?

1. Merriam-Webster Dictionary: (*current edition*)
  - *“enduring injury with patience and without resentment;*
  - *being deficient in spirit and courage;*
  - *being neither violent nor strong.”*
2. During pre-19<sup>th</sup> century times – *meekness* was a word sometimes used to describe a soothing medicine or a soft breeze. It was also used of colts and other animals whose naturally wild spirits were broken by a trainer so that they could do useful work.
3. In biblical Greek:  $\pi\rho\alpha\upsilon\varsigma$  (*praus*) – found only 3 times in the Synoptic Gospels (*and, only in the Gospel of Matthew!*)
  - a) In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Beatitude (*Matthew 5:5*)
  - b) Matthew 11:28-30 - ***“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am ( $\pi\rho\alpha\upsilon\varsigma$ ) gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”***
  - c) Matthew 21:5 - ***“Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, ( $\pi\rho\alpha\upsilon\varsigma$ ) humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*** (description provided of Jesus as he entered Jerusalem for the final time)
4. *“Meekness”*, in its modern usage, is often mistaken for *passivity*, *timid reticence*, and as *in possession of an inferiority complex*. But, the basic element of meekness, derived from its ancient roots is ***equilibrium – the full and complete possession of all the faculties of one’s being; an inner mastery!***
  - A description of Moses in Numbers 12:3 – ***“Now the man Moses was very ( $\pi\rho\alpha\upsilon\varsigma$ ) humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth.”***
  - In some lexicons the word has been illustrated by describing a captain at the helm of his ship in the midst of a storm; being in full-control, that captain guides the ship safely through the raging waves.

5. “Meekness” is another word for “**self-effacement.**”

- a) ... but don't miss the point that in all 3 opening Beatitudes, the truth is that the follower of Jesus does not aggressively insist on his own rights, but displays genuine humility!
- b) Meekness is not to be confused with weakness: the meek are not simply submissive because they lack the resources to be anything else.
- c) Meekness is quite compatible with great strength and ability; but whatever strength or weakness the meek person has is accompanied by a humility and a genuine dependence on God.
- d) ... a quality of the strong, those who could assert themselves, but choose not to do so.

6. **Who are the meek?** (The answer is found in Psalm 37:3-11; go back to our responsive reading!)

- a) The meek are those who trust in the Lord, who **delight** themselves in Him; who commit to His Will.
- b) To **delight** in someone means to experience great pleasure and joy in that person's presence, which can occur only when we know that person well!
- c) To **delight in the Lord**, we must know Him better! Knowledge of God's great love for us will provide delight.
- d) To **commit ourselves to the Lord** means entrusting everything to Him – our lives, families, jobs, possessions – to his control and guidance; believing that He can care for us better than we can ourselves!
- e) **Eliphaz**, one of the friends of the O. T. patriarch Job, describes being meek in this fashion: “**he sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.**” (Job 5:11)
- f) **Moses**: (an engaging account found @ Numbers 12:1-10) –
  - “**While they were at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had indeed married a Cushite woman); <sup>2</sup> and they said, “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it. <sup>3</sup> Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on**

*the face of the earth. <sup>4</sup>Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting.” So the three of them came out. <sup>5</sup>Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the entrance of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forward. <sup>6</sup>And he said, “Hear my words:*

*When there are prophets among you,  
I the LORD make myself known to them in visions;  
I speak to them in dreams.*

*<sup>7</sup>Not so with my servant Moses;  
he is entrusted with all my house.*

*<sup>8</sup>With him I speak face to face— clearly, not in riddles;  
and he beholds the form of the LORD.*

*Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” <sup>9</sup>And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed. <sup>10</sup>When the cloud went away from over the tent, Miriam had become leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned towards Miriam and saw that she was leprous.*

- After the death of Moses’ first wife, Zipporah, he married an “Ethiopian woman.” (“Cush” normally refers to ancient Ethiopia.) This leads to the suggestion among some biblical scholars that racial or ethnic prejudice was involved. (a subject for another occasion!) The reason for bringing this up now is the issue of Miriam and Aaron challenging Moses’ supreme authority, and how Moses conducted himself under that personal encounter:
  - Did he fight back? NO!
  - He submitted to God and waited for Divine vindication
  - Very few people in biblical history have been as rapidly, completely and publicly vindicated as Moses!
  - Moses’ meekness had caused him to take off his shoes at the burning bush, yet he humbly obeyed God by approaching the most powerful monarch in the world of his day, and demanded freedom for his people. (Exodus 5)

7. The N.T. provides multiple reminders of the importance of meekness:

- a) James 1:21 – ***“Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.”***

- b) 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) – *“in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect”*
- c) Galatians 5:22-23 – *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.”*
- d) Colossians 3:12 – *“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.”*

**B) The Example of Christ:** (1 Peter 2:21-23) *“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> ‘He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.’ <sup>23</sup> When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.”*

1. Christ did not revile or threaten those who hated Him; instead He left His vindication in the hands of His Father.
2. Consider St. Paul’s memorable testimony to Christ’s meekness and humility (Phil. 2:1-11) *“If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup> he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

### **C) How Do We Inherit The Earth?**

1. Nowhere is there a promise that we will achieve great material wealth (\$\$\$\$)
2. The phrase *“inherit the earth”* and/or *“inherit the land”* is found in many O.T. passages; as examples consider the following:

- a) Deut. 19:14 – ***“You must not move your neighbor’s boundary marker, set up by former generations, on the property that will be allotted to you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.”***
  - b) Psalm 25:13 – ***“They will abide in prosperity, and their children shall possess the land.”***
  - c) Psalm 37:9 – ***“For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.”***
3. This thought can be traced back to the O.T. view of the Land of Canaan as the earthly object of Divine blessings.
  4. In the recorded teaching experiences of Jesus, we find a regular use made of these O. T. words denoting this ancient promise. Quoting almost constantly from the prophets, we can imagine that Jesus used it as a proverbial expression to denote any great blessing; perhaps even as the sum of all blessings.
    - a) Isaiah 60:21 – ***“Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever. They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands, so that I might be glorified.”***
    - b) Psalm 37:20 – ***“But the wicked perish, and the enemies of the LORD are like the glory of the pastures; they vanish—like smoke they vanish away.”***
  5. When Jesus uses this language here, He means that the meek shall be received into His kingdom, in order to partake of its blessings in the “here and now;” and, of the glories of the heavenly Canaan in the hereafter.
  6. There is a sense in which we “*own the land*” right now; for we belong to Christ and all things belong to Him: (1 Cor. 3:21-23) – ***“So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, <sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, <sup>23</sup> and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.”***
    - The N. T. teaches that the meek person is satisfied now – for Jesus not only promises everlasting life, but the best life possible here on earth.
    - St. Paul makes the point that the meek are content, even if they have nothing (2 Cor. 6:10) – ***“as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.”***

D) **Conclusions:**

1. We are meek only to the extent that we have surrendered our wills to the Will of God.
2. The meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God; to God's Word; who follow God's directions; who comply with God's designs; and, who are gentle toward all people: (see Titus 3:2) – ***“to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone.”***
3. Jesus' invitation is still extended to us: (Matthew 11:28-30) – ***“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”***

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