

Fil-Am Community Church

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“BE MEEK”

We have been making a journey through the “BE” attitudes. On the first part of our 8-week journey we looked at how to Be Committed to God and that involves giving him first part of four areas of your life like your daily life, your weekly life, your finances, and your relationships. Then, last week we looked at how to be comforted. That God is always there and will always listen to us when we are in deep trouble. This week we are going to learn how to be meek. Today we are going to focus in on verse five of Matthew 5. Reading from the NLT, it says and let us say it together, *“God blesses those who are gentle and lowly, for the whole earth will belong to them.”*

Now in the NIV, this is translated *“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”* Right there, when you contrast the two, the NLT gives the definition of meek for us, gentle and lowly. Which is not the same as what many think of meekness, which is weakness. You see, meekness has often been identified with **WEAKNESS**. People in the world seem to think that meek means weak, a spineless person, without any backbone at all. Some who is timid or sheepish? That’s why some say “meek as a lamb”. But that’s more of an insult than a compliment.

During the New Testament period the Greek word for meek was used to describe a wild animal that had been tamed. It was also used to describe a

gentle breeze that had once been a hurricane and a horse that had been broken to the bridle and saddle. The idea was strength brought under control.

It is not that the animal has become “powerless” – but that the power of the animal has been brought under the control of the trainer. So, in the Christian realm, when we talk about a meek person, we’re not talking about a spineless wimp.

We are talking about a person whose life has been brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and God is in control of his or her life.

Therefore, we can say that Meekness = Power under Control

Now, Jesus himself claims that he was meek. He says in Matthew 11:29: *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.”* Matthew 11:29. That’s from the KJV. Many translations like the NIV, NLT, and NASB render this as “gentle and humble in heart”.

Of course, we wouldn’t say that Jesus was a pushover. Not at all. Remember he drove the vendors from the temple. He knew that he had power. Absolute power. But he didn’t let it corrupt him. He put it under control. Unlike many power-hungry people who runs out of control even with just a little taste of power. As the saying goes, “Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.” So, a meek person knows when and how to put his power under control. If you cannot control your tongue, you’re not being meek. If you cannot control your temper, you’re not being meek. If you don’t love your spouse as you should, you’re not being meek.

You see the meek are sensitive to God’s leading in their lives. The meek allow God to be in control. The meek are not easily provoked or irritated.

They are humble. They are not proud, self sufficient or stubborn. They are not unmanageable or ill tempered. They allow God to take control. They allow God to train and teach them. They become teachable. Today we are going to look at the five characteristics of a meek person:

The first one is:

1. **TEACHABLE NOT UNREACHABLE.**

Meekness is about having a teachable spirit. Meek people don't pretend that they know it all. They look for opportunities to continually learn. Faithful Christians constantly look for opportunities to learn more about Jesus.

Jesus wants us to learn as much about Him as we possibly can. Jesus wants us to be teachable. Let's go back to Matthew 11:29, this time reading from the NIV:

“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.”

Matthew 11:29 (NIV)

It's interesting that in this verse Jesus says, “Learn from me.” Jesus wants us to know more of Him. He wants us to be teachable – not unreachable. Every day we need to pray, “Lord, teach me more about You today. Lord, help me to learn something today that will make me more useful in Your kingdom. Help me Lord to learn something about You that I can pass on to others.” Every day we need to search our hearts to see if we have a teachable spirit. Why? So that we can become like Jesus and teach others what we have learned. Look at what it says in Luke chapter six:

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will

be like his teacher.” Luke 6:40 (HCSB)

Folks I don’t know about you – but I want to learn as much about Jesus as I possibly can. I want to be “fully trained” because I want to be like Jesus. I know it’s hard but I’m trying.

In this church, that is what we want to accomplish. BTW, do you know what the purpose of our church is? What is our mission? Without looking at your bulletins, can anyone recite our purpose as a church, word for word? I’ll treat you to Pearl Buffet if you can recite it from memory. Any takers? Maybe you don’t like Pearl Buffet. How about a dinner-cruise at the Potomac?

Folks, our purpose is, “To make disciples and turn them into fully devoted followers of Christ.” Let’s say that together. It’s so easy to remember. “To make disciples and turn them into fully devoted followers of Christ.”

In short, we want each one of you in this church to be like Jesus. Not like me. Not like Pastor Dave. Not like Tita Annie. Maybe like Kuya Elvin with a nice condo in Charlottesville.

The point is, you can only be like Jesus if you have a teachable spirit. And people who are meek have a teachable spirit. It’s easy to teach them. And guide them.

The second characteristic of a meek person is:

2. GENTLE NOT JUDGEMENTAL.

Follow along with me as I read Romans chapter fourteen verse one from the Message Bible:

“Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don’t see things the way you do. And don’t jump all over them every time they do or say something you don’t agree with — even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but

weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.” Romans 14:1 (MSG)

Meekness is when you accept people even when you don't see eye to eye on certain issues. You see, all of us have different backgrounds, different personalities, different maturity levels, and therefore have different ways of doing things and looking at things. We have different opinions on different things. Because of this we have to exercise patience. We cannot always insist on what we want. Instead of passing judgment on someone, we have to be gentle with our words and actions.

In one of Chuck Swindoll's books, I forgot the title, he tells the story of a church in Boston whose members were divided because of their pastor. Some liked him, some didn't. During one Sunday Service, during communion the Pastor asked the music leader to lead the choir in singing a song. The music leader, who was one of those who didn't like the pastor, didn't do what he was asked.

Then, one of the ushers who was assisting the Pastor in the communion and a supporter of the Pastor, walked toward the music leader and exchanged words with him. Their conversation became heated and loud until one of the instrumentalists pushed the usher and all hell broke loose. People punched one another, objects went flying across the room, there was just absolute mayhem. Until the police came and people were arrested.

The next day all of those involved, with bruises and black eyes, faced each other in court before a Jewish judge. The judge shook his head in disgust after learning they all came from the same church. Fortunately, he didn't send anyone to jail but after scolding them told them to settle their

differences in a Christian way. This judge acted more like a Christian than them.

Folks, I hope you all love me. Especially our worship team. But seriously, the church should be a place where we find hope, inspiration and encouragement rather than a place where there is intrigue, discord, and division. Amen? Say to your neighbor, “I love you, brother, I love you, Sister.” You have to add brother or sister or you could get in trouble.

Let us look also at what it says in Galatians chapter six:

“Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you won’t be tempted also.” Galatians 6:1 (HCSB)

How do you react when someone you know messes up their life? Do you say, “I told you so? I could see that coming. You blew it. How could you be so dumb? How could you be so stupid?”

Folks, we all make mistakes. If that brother or sister has done wrong and shown true remorse, they deserve our understanding and mercy. Paul says be gentle with them. Don’t condemn them. Meekness is treating people gently and not being judgmental.

The third characteristic of a meek person is:

3. TAKES CONTROL NOT BEING CONTROLLED

This point is about taking control of our emotions rather than our emotions taking control of us. Romans twelve says:

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil . . . but conquer evil with good.”

Romans 12:17, 21 (HCSB)

Folks, here is a fact of life:

In this life you will get **HURT**.

How you respond to your hurts in life matters. What is your normal reaction when people hurt you? Retaliate? Get even? Stab them in the back? Or do you love the person? Forgive them? Treat them with kindness? Meekness is a matter of choice. Do you remember how we defined meekness earlier in the sermon? Let me remind you:

Meekness = power under CONTROL

Folks, when you fly off the handle – you have lost control. When you tell someone, “You make me mad” you’re admitting that they have control of your emotions. All you are doing is reacting to the world around you in a negative way. Be aware – you don’t have to react like that – you can act. You can take control. If you don’t have control of your emotions - who does?

Whatever happens to you - you can respond with patience, kindness and love. Look at what First Corinthians thirteen says:

“Love is patient; love is kind. Love does not envy; is not boastful; is not conceited; does not act improperly; is not selfish; is not provoked; does not keep a record of wrongs; finds no joy in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (HCSB)

Folks, when someone hurts you how do you respond? Do you allow them to take control – or do you maintain control of your emotions? We can either react to people - or we can take control of our emotions and act in love toward people. The choice is ours.

The fourth characteristic of a meek person is:

4. UNDERSTANDING AND NOT DEMANDING

Sometimes in a relationship, there is someone who is understanding and someone who is demanding. Don't look at your spouse now. But wouldn't it be nice if both are understanding? And, of course, that's true in any kind of relationship.

Look at what the Message Bible says in Philippians chapter two:

“Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.” Philippians 2:3-5 (MSG)

Folks, all of us want to be first. All of us want to be on top. Folks how many of you want to be in the longest - slowest line at the super market? When things don't go your way – how do you behave? Are you understanding or are you demanding? Do you take out your frustration on those around you or do you look for the opportunity to learn from the situation?

I read something about patience a week or two ago. What the author was saying was that if we ask God for patience – He does not give it. Instead what He gives are opportunities to learn patience. In other words – if we pray for patience – He places us in situations where we can learn patience. Patience is a learned ability – meekness is too.

Look at Philippians again with me:

“Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.”

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.” Philippians 2:3-5
(MSG)

Did you notice that in this passage Paul give three things to do and three things NOT to do.

Here are the three don'ts:

- A. Don't push your way to the front.
- B. Don't sweet talk yourself to the top.
- C. Don't be obsessed with getting your own way.

Here are the three do's:

- A. Put yourself aside to help others.
- B. Forget yourself and lend a helping hand.
- C. Think of yourself as Christ thought of Himself.

Do you know what the major lesson is that I get from passage of scripture? I have a choice. I can choose to be rude and crude – or I can choose to be patient. I can choose to be helpful or hurtful. I can choose to be a blessing – or I can choose to be a pain in the neck. I can choose to be self-centered – or I can choose to look out for others. I can choose to be understanding – or I can choose to be demanding. The choice is mine – the choice is yours.

The fifth characteristic of a meek person is:

5. TENDER WITHOUT SURRENDER.

Folks here is another fact of life:

You cannot please **EVERYONE**.

To some, you're a hero – to others, you're a zero. I read about a

meeting by some pastors in one city and they were discussing that a pastor could actually please 100 percent of his congregation.

Someone said, "That's a fact. 50 percent are happy when you come – and 50 percent are happy when you go." Folks no one will please everyone.

A test of maturity is how you handle disagreeable people. Meekness is not compromising your convictions. You can be tender without surrender. Meekness is not weakness – but it is handling conflict with gentleness.

Let me give you a piece of advice. Pick your battles. Don't argue over something that doesn't matter. Don't fight over something that doesn't make any difference. But when something does make a difference – be tender without surrender.

Look at what Proverbs fifteen one says:

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger."

Proverbs 15:1 (NASB)

Meekness is learning to disagree – **AGREEABLY**.

Meekness is learning to get along with people even though you don't see everything eye to eye. You can agree to disagree – and you respect each other because of it. At our CLASS 101, we teach, "In the essentials we have unity; in the nonessentials we have liberty; in all things we have charity." We need to get along with others – even if we see things differently.

I have never seen a marriage where the couple agree 100 percent of the time. I have never seen a church where everybody is in total agreement with one another. But I have seen situations where people love one another and have reached a point of unity. I have seen churches where there is unity with diversity. We each are different. We each have our different likes and

dislikes. In fact that is the way God has designed His church. We each have a unique function. We each have a unique gift. We need variety. We need each other.

Look at what Paul says about variety in the church:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (NASV)

God has brought us together for the common good. He has placed us here to get to know one another - to help one another. He has placed us here to serve Him and to serve one another. We are not all the same – in fact we are not supposed to be. There is supposed to be diversity – but there also supposed to be unity. Paul uses the illustration of the human body to show that we can have unity with diversity in the Church. Look at what Paul says later on in First Corinthians chapter twelve:

“If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.”

1 Corinthians 12:17-18 (NKJV)

Because Jesus is our Lord - we can be tender without surrender. We can be understanding not demanding. We can be teachable not unreachable. We can be gentle not judgmental. All because Jesus Christ is our Lord and our Savior. He is our teacher - and we learn from Him.

Let us pray....