

I. Revolution 4 The Meek Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor April 27, 2008

A. *Matthew 5:1-12 (NRSV) When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. {2} Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: {3} "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {4} "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. {5} "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. {6} "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. {7} "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. {8} "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. {9} "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. {10} "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {11} "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. {12} Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

B. This week Jesus makes not just a revolutionary statement, but one that actually goes so counter to even the playground politics that we learn and have continually reinforced in our lives: *{5} "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

C. Let's do a word association, *Meek*, rhymes with *Weak*.

D. The more powerful, educated, successful we become, the less a person, a community, a country, a church considers meekness as a value.

E. Harper's (3/96). "To Verify," Leadership

1. *Percentage of Americans earning less than \$30,000 per year who believe that "the meek shall inherit the earth": 61%.*
2. *Percentage of Americans earning more than \$60,000 who believe this: 36%.*

F. That is what even makes Jesus' statement more unbelievable, The meek will inherit the earth.

G. What kind of logic is that?

II. We like to think blessed are the strong, the shrewd, those who fight for their rights, those who refuse to be taken advantage of, those who always look out for slights, those who strike it rich and make it a success. I was taught to put high value on self-assertion. The secular worldview is that a successful person is one who not only does what he/she wills but also bends others to do her/his will.

The Biblical concept of meekness, however, is different. Meekness in the Greek is used to describe an animal which has been trained by its master.

III. Experiencing God Day-by-Day The Devotional and Journal Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby P. 235

In popular thinking the term meek implies weakness. The word Jesus used had different meaning. His picture of meekness is that of a stallion that has been brought into subjection to its master. Whereas it once fought against any attempt to bring it under control, resisting direction with all its strength, now it yields will to its master. The stallion has lost none of its strength or endurance; it has simply turned these over to the control of the master.

For the Christian, meekness requires submitting our will to the Master. Meekness is not submitting to everyone around us, it is taking our direction from God. Meekness means that we do not have to defend our rights, but we allow the Lord to defend us. Meekness means a life that is submissive to the Holy Spirit, giving Him the freedom to make any changes He knows are necessary. Meekness involves a self control that comes from trusting God. Meekness demonstrates an attitude of long-suffering that allows God to deal with injustices we face.

Jesus' life was the paragon of meekness. He could have called upon legions of angels to remove Him from the cross, yet He allowed sinners to torture and kill Him. Although Jesus was by no means powerless to defend Himself, He chose to yield His life to the Father's will. He did this because He trusted the Father completely. When we doubt the Father, we tend to act in our own strength, rather than relying on His power. Jesus said that in relinquishing control over our lives to God, we will gain life in abundance!

IV. Let me summarize Blackaby for you:

A. *Meekness takes direction only from God.*

B. *Meekness trusts God to defend us.*

1. Peter Marshall, *Leadership*, Vol. 1, no. 2. Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change. And when we are right, make us easy to live with.
2. Jamie Buckingham, *Coping with Criticism* For a number of years, until her death in 1976, I worked off and on with Kathryn Kuhlman as a writer. Although Miss Kuhlman was very sensitive to criticism, she never let it deter her from her goal. Instead, she used it to help her get there--always seeming to make the very best out of even the harshest criticism.

Shortly after she went on nationwide television with her weekly program, she received a letter from a public school official in the little town of Iredell, Texas.

"I love you and love your program, he wrote. "It would have been much better, however, if you didn't have to spend so much time tugging at your skirt trying to pull it down over your knees. It was really distracting. Why don't you wear a long dress instead?"

Kathryn read the letter. "You know, he's right," she said to her secretary. She never wore another street-length dress on her TV program. A lesser person would have responded with anger, or passed it off as just another senseless remark. But she was not that sort of lesser person. She heard. She coped. She let it help her toward her goal of communicating. All of which was possible because there was no root of bitterness to give a bad taste to everything that came into her life which presented another viewpoint.

C. *Meekness demonstrates patience allowing God to deal with injustices we face.*

1. Thomas a Kempis, *Leadership*, Vol. 3, no. 2. He is not truly patient who will suffer only as much as he pleases or from whom he pleases. A truly patient man gives no heed from whom he suffers, whether from his superior or from his equal or from someone below him.

D. *Meekness is strength under the control of God and that gentleness is true power.*

1. *Matthew 5:5 (NASB)* "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.
2. A. W. Tozer in *The Pursuit of God*. The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather, he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God's estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and helpless as God has declared him to be, but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is, in the sight of God, more important than angels. ... He knows well that the world will never see him as God sees him and he has stopped caring.

V. Robert Harold Schuller (1926-) Meek-what does it mean? The answer lies in the word itself:

- A. ***M-Mighty,***
- B. ***E-Emotionally stable,***
- C. ***E-Educable,***
- D. ***K-Kind.***

E. *Meekness involves a self control that comes from trusting God.*

F. Boom, Tom Brokaw tells the story of Thomas E. Gilmore, and how his non-violent attitude worked to advance the cause of Civil Rights in the South.

1. Gilmore had grown up in Alabama and had been called into the ministry.
2. After Seminary, inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr he became involved in the Civil Rights movement.
3. Disheartened by the racism in the south he moved to California, "I wanted to go where racism wasn't so blatant," he says, "but I found out racism was everywhere." Three years later the riots occurred in Los Angeles, in Watts.
4. He had already decided to move to the East Coast with the hope of escaping racism.

5. On his way east, he stopped to visit friends in Greene County Alabama.
6. "As he drove into a local service station, his car splashed some rainwater on state police patrol car that was arriving at the same time. Two white troopers emerge from the squad car, and one confronted him. 'Hey, n....., you're gonna wash my car!'" he said. Gilmore responded, "I'll pay for your car wash, but I'm sorry, I'm not gonna wash your car."
7. His treatment by the Highway patrol was a defining moment for him. "That nailed me to Alabama. I decided to stay and get involved n the movement. He made the decision for me."
8. Gilmore and others began to confront racism in non-violent ways and would eventually run for Greene County Sherriff.
9. Losing his first campaign, he was eventually elected and made a vow to himself. "I knew I was not going to be an everyday, regular sheriff. I didn't know how I was going to do it, but I knew I wasn't going to do it traditionally."
10. His son Ronald drew a picture of his dad wearing two big guns and a ten-gallon hat. (Every sons picture of their dad.) Gilmore didn't like the image and decided that he would not carry a weapon as a sign of his office. "I decided I would try to conduct myself in a way that would reflect my life with Dr. King. I didn't go around telling people I was a nonviolent sheriff. They could see I didn't have a gun. I went out and made arrests without a gun. I though, 'Man, if you get through the civil rights movement without a gun, you can get through this.' And it worked because the Lord favored me ant the people supported me.
11. "He served as Green County Sheriff for twelve years before retiring in 1982 to become the minister Birmingham's Ensley Baptist Church.
12. That's when he started to wear a gun. Just joking.
13. When I read this account, I was so touched by the nature of Reverend Gilmore.
14. I made a not that I was going to try to see if he was still serving the church.
15. This week I found a number that was listed for him of a Seminary in Birmingham, Al. I called to thank him and tell him that in him is see what Jesus meant by blessed are Meek for they shall inherit the earth.
16. I may never hear from Reverend Gilmore, but I really wanted him to know that I appreciate what he did to help our country start to turn the tide on Racism and hatred, and that he did it in Christ like manner.
17. {5} "*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

G.Meekness is submitting to the Holy Spirit!

1. There is a story of Sammy Morris, a devoted Christian from Africa who came to America to go to school. Although his pathway to service for Christ was not easy, his difficulties never deterred him. Perhaps this was because he had learned genuine humility and what Jesus meant by blessed are the meek.

One incident that showed this occurred when he arrived at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. He was asked by the school's president what room he wanted. Sammy replied, "If there is a room nobody wants, give it to me." The president commented, "I turned away, for my eyes were full of tears. I was asking myself whether I was willing to take what nobody else wanted."

VI. Closing

- A.I wish there was a simple way for a person to become Meek.
- B.Have you ever tried to watch a person imitate Meekness, it's a pathetic show.
- C.Some are born with a propensity towards it, unfortunately I was not.
- D.True meekness is a sign of the presence of Jesus Christ living in person through the Holy Spirit.

E.It is a process of transformation even in those who may be naturally inclined to meekness.

F.Henri Nouwen, the late Catholic priest and scholar, describes his life as he left the academic world of Harvard to serve in the L'Arche community home for mentally handicapped adults. He writes: After twenty-five years of priesthood, I found myself praying poorly, living somewhat isolated from people, and very much preoccupied with burning issues. Everyone was saying that I was doing really well, but something inside was telling me that my success was putting my soul in danger....I was living in a very dark place and that the term "burnout" was a convenient psychological translation for a spiritual death.

So I moved from Harvard to L'Arche, from the best and the brightest, wanting to rule the world, to men and women who had few or no words and were considered, at best, marginal to the needs of our society.

G.I don't know that God is calling anyone to that level of self abandonment, but that is the kind of Revolutionary Attitude Jesus is looking for in His followers.

H.Do you need to join the revolution?