

Mount Pisgah AME Church

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Bible Study, Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Developing Christian Character *Kingdom “Attitudes”:* *A Study in The Beatitudes* *Matthew 5:1-12* *Blessed Are The Meek*

Review

- The *Fruit of The Spirit* (Galatians 5:22-23) indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person’s character and hence are evidence that a person is a believer in Christ
- In his “Sermon on The Mount” Jesus introduces the characteristics and culture of “The Kingdom” that God is ushering in through Jesus. The culture of The Kingdom of God is fundamentally different from the culture of the existing world.
- What God esteems has very little to do with what human’s tend to esteem. “Blessedness” (i.e., what God counts as successful) has little to do with material possessions, political influence, or even popularity. “Blessedness” is achieved by walking in harmony with what GOD values.
- God values character. Jesus shares in *The Beatitudes* some of the character traits that God values.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God

- The poor in spirit are those who have humbled themselves, or been humbled by the circumstances of life, enough to realize that they have *nothing to offer God* that they weren’t GIVEN. Everything that they have comes from God, and still belongs to God. Their salvation, acceptance, and value comes *completely* from dependence on Christ who loved them.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted

- Everyone mourns and grieves personal losses, and the Lord by grace provides comfort. But special to the Lord are those who also mourn about the existence of sin, both personal and collective. The Bible promises that there is forgiveness and restoration (“comfort”) through Christ for those who grieve the pervasiveness of sin and want to turn from it.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

The Meek

Comes from the same Greek root word as in Galatians 5:23 (“meekness”/ “gentleness”).

Signifies: A mild disposition, one who has a gentle spirit. One who lacks harshness. One who is not condescending.

What did we say about the fruit of meekness?

- Meekness is not blind submission that turns a blind eye to injustice
- Jesus was meek – he didn’t lash back when criticized, slandered, or ill treated
- Jesus was meek – but he DID respond in anger when God’s honor was profaned, God’s truth was perverted, or injustice was perpetrated (Matthew 21:12-13, John 2:14-16)
- Jesus was meek – he was submissive to God and to the mission that God gave him. (Philippians 2:5-11)
- Meekness is not weakness, but power under control. To be meek is to rule one’s spirit. (Proverbs 16:32)
- One who is meek *chooses to respond* (as opposed to react) in a way that advances God’s causes, rather than in a way that protects self or self-seeking interests.
- Meekness requires complete dependence and reliance of the spirit, and submission of the old nature.

Characteristics of “The Meek”

- Meek people do not exploit others or oppress others. They are “empathetic” and understand the needs of the oppressed.
- Meek people are not given to “getting even” with folks. Only *getting it right*. They would rather fix the problem than fix the blame. (Matthew 5:23-24)
- Meek people are not violent, but believe in the power of love and truth.
- Disciples who are meek are clear about their mission and willing to go through whatever they have to in order to accomplish it.

In what sense will The Meek “Inherit The Earth”?

- Originally from Psalm 37:11- likely meant the promised land. Signified a complete belief in God’s covenant.
- In Jesus’ environment, it was a comparison of the culture of the kingdom of God versus the current (Roman) empire.
- The “meek shall inherit the earth” is in contrast to the prevailing notion that powerful emperors or feudal lords will always own everything.
- Jesus is challenging the idea of what it takes to prosper ultimately.
- Those who enter God’s kingdom are those who have surrendered their will completely into the hands of the one who has purchased them with his own blood.

Are we preparing to live in the Kingdom that Jesus has (already) ushered in?

- Let’s ask ourselves the questions:
 - “To what extent do I still operate with the underlying mindset that says that only the exertion of power, manipulation, or having a ‘scheme’ enables things to get done?”
 - Do we secretly look up to people with “aggressive” personalities and elevate them as heroes?
 - Why do some of our young people (as perhaps WE did as young people) glorify “gangstas”?
 - Can I think of someone who effectively balances humility/meekness with strength of conviction?

Those who God rewards have different aspirations – they are learning to strive toward a kingdom that is coming – a living and unshakeable kingdom. (Hebrews 11:11-16, Hebrews 12:28-29)