

Matthew050112-080711  
Bridge of Hope  
August 7, 2011

## “The Messianic Exchange”

Introduction & Communion: (Serve Communion during last song without a break.)

Certainly the Sermon on the Mount is the most influential sermon ever shared. The truth we discover in the first section called the Beatitudes brings a tremendous challenge to our lives as the character of Christ is presented. Together in community with one another we work to live it out just as they did when Jesus shared it with the first group of disciples gathered together to learn.

As we approach this time of communion we do so with increased understanding that to be blessed means to be approved of God. What an awesome thought . . . to be approved of God. It makes each of the Beatitudes so much more meaningful. They are Jesus’ call to each one of us to follow Him and have His character in our lives. So far we have been reminded that . . .

- *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven,”* This Beatitude is primarily intellectual in nature. Those who understand their need and that they are spiritual beggars, they are blessed.
- *“Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted,”* This Beatitude is the emotional counterpart to the first. It naturally follows that when we see ourselves for what we really are, spiritual beggars, then our emotions will be stirred to mourning. We mourn the presence of sin in our lives and our world.

Today as we receive the elements of communion we will look at the Beatitudes and reflect on them for a moment. We will break them into segments allowing us to examine and reflect on what this great sermon is saying to our lives this day. Join me in reflection:

### **Matthew 5:3-6 (NKJV)**

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Blessed are those who mourn,  
For they shall be comforted.  
Blessed are the meek,  
For they shall inherit the earth.  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
For they shall be filled.*

(prayer for the bread)

### **Matthew 5:7-10 (NKJV)**

*Blessed are the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.  
Blessed are the pure in heart,  
For they shall see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers,  
For they shall be called sons of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

(prayer for the wine)

**Matthew 5:11**(NKJV)

*"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Let's go ahead and get started with our focus for today. We are looking at the third Beatitude . . . ***Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.***

What exactly do you think it means to be meek?

Let's go ahead and get to work to discover what Jesus meant by this third beatitude.

- **BLESSED ARE THE MEEK**

1. **When talking to the first group of His disciples what was Jesus thinking about when He said the meek are approved of God?**
  - Here in Matthew, Jesus gives His listeners a paradoxical thought as He draws attention to the values of the kingdom of God.
  - He was speaking counter to culture when He said that the meek are approved of God. He created a paradox.
  - The culture at large elevated the strong and aggressive, how is it that the meek could have such approval from God?
  - So what did Jesus mean when He talked about the "meek?"
2. **To be meek means . . .**
  - that you show the character of gentleness and self-control; you are a gentle or mild person who exhibits self control in your life.
  - In classical Greek the word was used to describe things like tame animals, soothing medicine, a mild word, and a gentle breeze.
  - In the Bible it also carries the thought of complete trust in God and submission to the will of God.
  - Thus, a meek person is someone who is gentle in spirit, exhibits self-control, trusts God completely, and submits to the will of God.
3. **To be meek does not mean . . .**
  - weakness.
  - cowardness as in a spineless disposition.
  - timidity as demonstrated in those who show a willingness for peace at any cost, even when it is wrong and goes contrary to the will of God.
  - shyness as in a withdrawn personality.
  - indecisiveness as in the inability to make decisions because of a lack of confidence.
  - mere niceness as when a person simply is always nice because they fear showing their displeasure in others.
  - These and other descriptions similar to them are far too often what people think of when the word meek comes to mind.
4. **The meekness of Jesus Christ is the example we should strive to develop in our lives; it is His character working in and through us.**

- It is interesting that Jesus said of Himself in **Matthew 11:29-30** (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.*
  - Jesus displayed the character of being meek in multiple ways that all reflected His great strength and power.
    - In respect to His own person He practiced neither retaliation nor vindictiveness.
    - When He was mocked and spat upon He didn't answer or respond.
    - When confronted by Pilate he remained silent.
    - Jesus offered no reproach when betrayed by His friends who fled from Him.
    - When Peter, one of the 3 closest to Him, denied Him 3 times Jesus responded by restoring Peter.
    - When Judas betrayed Him with a kiss Jesus called Judas friend.
    - When facing death on the cross He pleaded for the forgiveness of those who had done this to Him.
    - Pretty amazing when you put it together and see the character of meekness as expressed in gentleness, self-control, and willingness to trust and submit.
  - **When it comes to matters of faith and welfare of others, Jesus was simply a lion.**
    - He rebuked the Pharisees hardness of heart when healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, their lack of love and concern brought out meekness.
    - He chastised His disciples when they tried to keep children away from Him.
    - He drove out all the moneychangers who corrupted the temple with a whip.
    - When Peter tried to keep Jesus from His mission, Jesus called Peter "Satan."
    - Meekness takes an entirely different look as Jesus acts in gentleness, self-control, and submission to the will of God while placing trust in Him.
  - **When it came to people in need and marginalized we see the Lamb of God.**
    - To the woman caught in adultery He was merciful in meekness.
    - To blind Bartimaeus He was understanding in meekness.
    - To the Samaritan woman at the well He was all knowing in meekness.
    - To Zacchaeus He was accepting in meekness.
    - To the man in the gadarenes He was freeing in meekness.
    - Meekness allows what is needed at the moment as gentleness guides us and self-control helps us submit to the will of God as we trust Him.
  - **We get this amazing picture of the One who is meek and has gentle spirit.**
    - He trusts God.
    - He submits to the will of God
    - He is gentle and strong.
    - Meekness in Christ is the power of God working in Him.
5. **"Our Lord's words 'Blessed are the meek' make it clear that a gentle and meek spirit has the divine approval. Therefore the lack of such is indicative of one's spiritual status."<sup>1</sup>**
- This is not to suggest that one who shows their imperfections through a lack of meekness in their life is not a Christian. They may well be.
  - It is to say simply that such a person who does show this character of Christ does have the smile of God upon their life as they live in His approval.
  - And for the one who doesn't live with much meekness, they need to ask Jesus for His help and then grow in this character.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom, pg36

- Jesus is not demanding perfection, but He does expect that meekness should be imperfectly present in your life and growing better as you journey with Him.
  - Hopefully this year the meekness of Christ is seen more in you than it was last year.
6. When disciples of Jesus learn the character of meekness they can also discover the promise of God. Jesus said Blessed are the meek . . .

• **FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH**

1. Talk about a paradox . . . so opposite of the thought of our world.
  - In the world the meek are run over.
  - They are the one's who lose in the world.
2. In the New Testament God's people are no longer a nation with land, they come from every nation of the earth and will together with Christ inherit the earth one day.
  - For Israel, as the people of God, their inheritance was actual physical land through which they were to serve God.
  - But now for the people of the Church they are made up of every nation and tribe, the land they will inherit one day is not a physical plot of ground like it was for Israel.
  - As heirs with Christ we will reign with Him in His earthly kingdom.
  - We will one day inherit the earth with Christ, but that day has yet to come.
  - We will one day judge the world with Christ, but that day has yet to come.
  - It is a day that will one day come and the paradox will find fulfillment.
3. Yet there is another fulfillment of the promise that isn't about the future, it is about right now in this life.
  - In this world what rules is a sense that there is never enough as we are always left wanting more and more.
  - It is the meek that find freedom in this life right now, as they are set free from the tyranny of just a little more.
  - Meekness brings a contentment of heart and a peace of God.
  - Through meekness, trust continues to grow as we find that Christ is more than trustworthy. He will lead us and take care of us as we walk with Him.
  - The meek inherit the earth now as they learn to see things through a different lens than before, they see it through the lens of Christ and His love.
4. It is important to understand that the meek alone will inherit the earth.
  - They inherit it now as they live with Christ.
  - They inherit it for all eternity as they continue to live with Christ.
  - Only they who live in Christ Jesus will have the meekness spoken of in Matthew 5.

Conclusion: My observation in life is that most of us can grow in meekness. Our world constantly assaults us with another attitude that works against the love of Christ. So this is something that we all need to continue to grow in. And as I thought about this way it came to me that we needed to figure out a way to grow in meekness so that we can be approved of God as our hearts would desire.

So here is what I came up with: a plan of sorts to grow meekness in our lives and the community of this family.

1. We need to realize that a meek or gentle spirit is a gift of God and is attained by His grace working in our lives.
  - In humility we are honest with ourselves and with God that we need His help to have this character working in us.
2. We need to tie ourselves to Jesus because He is the incarnation of meekness.

- Jesus is our example so when we tie ourselves to Him we learn to live the way that He does.
3. We need to pay attention to the progression of thought in the Beatitudes for it is providing the steps we take to have such character.
- The first beatitude – **POOR IN SPIRIT** – we learn that there is nothing within us that will commend us to God. We fall short and have need of God.
  - The second beatitude – **MOURN** – we find that as we realize our sin and effect sin has in this world we lament the condition we find ourselves in.
  - The third beatitude – **MEEK** – we learn that it is about the character of Christ that is gentle while being self-controlled to do the will of God as we trust Jesus completely.

R. Kent Hughes writes, “We should note that poverty of spirit and mourning are negative. However, when true poverty of spirit and spiritual mourning are present, they make way for the positive virtue of meekness. In a sense, meekness is superior to the two preceding states because it grows out of them. The process is all so natural, so beautiful, and yet also quite supernatural!”<sup>2</sup>

This week look for opportunities where your life can be approved of God as you put on the meekness of Jesus Christ and share it with the people God places around you.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom](#), pg37-38