



## **The Manifesto of the King, Part 3**

*Series: Matthew: The King and His Kingdom*

Matthew 5:1–12 (v. 5)

February 20, 2011

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As we continue looking at these beatitudes from Christ, I want us to remember what is at the heart of these words from Christ. These beatitudes are a description of every Christian. When you read the beatitudes, what you find there is a description of what every Christian is meant to be. Even more, Jesus means for us to see that all of these characteristics are meant to be found in all believers. Every Christian is meant to manifest all of these characteristics to one degree or another. Certainly they will be present to differing degrees in the lives of believers as they grow and mature, but they are all to be there.

In these beatitudes, Jesus is progressively dismantling the human view of the blessed life, the fallen, natural view of blessedness and replacing it with the divine declaration of what a life that is blessed looks like. Blessed translates the Greek word “makarios” which speaks of that of a distinctive joy, a sense of spiritual well being that comes from being in a right and a good relationship to God through Christ. In the beatitudes Jesus describes what true blessedness is composed of.

First He says: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Now truly, all men are objectively poor in spirit. In other words, all men, whether they know it or not, are spiritually bankrupt before God and have nothing with which to commend themselves to God or with which to earn God’s favor. That is true. But what Christ is getting at is this: Blessed is the man who knows he is poor in spirit, who has been delivered from the delusion of self-esteem and self-sufficiency and who know that he is spiritually bankrupt and worthy only of God’s eternal judgment in hell, who realize they are utterly sinful and desperately needy of God’s grace, for they know they need a Savior, who alone is Jesus Christ.

Then Jesus says: Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who mourn over their sinfulness, over their sins, who feel the weight of their rebellion against God, those who grieve over personal sin -- my sin that is an offense to the holiness and the righteousness of God, my sin that rebels against God's goodness, my sin that rebels against God's worth, my sin that exposes my willfulness and my self-centeredness, my sin that required Christ's death on the cross for atonement. Blessed is the who has been delivered from the delusion of self-righteousness and mourns over sin with a godly mourning that leads to true repentance -- turning from sin to God, for they and they alone will be comforted. They will be comforted by the forgiveness that is found in Christ at salvation and the forgiveness that flows from Christ as we fight sin and grow in Christlikeness by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In this third beatitude we will see Christ dismantle the foolishness and the deception of self-rule, self-promotion, and grasping for personal glory. Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5, ESV) Let's begin, as we have with the other beatitudes, with the precept.

#### 1) The Precept -- Blessed are the meek (v. 5a)

What does it mean for someone to be meek? What is meekness? Meekness does not denote cowardice or spinelessness or timidity or the desire to have what is falsely called peace at all costs. Meekness does not describe the wishy-washy, the indecisive, the compromisers or those who lack confidence. Meekness does not imply shyness or a withdrawn personality as opposed to someone who is an extrovert. Moreover meekness is not common courtesy or mere niceness. It is not merely good manners and it is certainly not a lack of conviction or lack of courage.

The idea is much greater in scope than any of those things. In fact, the word that is translated at meek is the word "praus" or "praotes." There are several ways that this word was used in the Greek language. It was used to describe medicine used by doctors in just the right amount to treat illness or that would take away pain. It was a word used by sailors to describe the wind that refreshes them and gets them to their destination. A horse that had been broken and who had been harnessed and domesticated was described by the word meek. Greek philosophers used to use this word to describe the right balance between the excess of a virtue and the lack of it. Courage, for instance, was the right balance between cowardice and foolhardiness. The word "praus" was used to describe the right balance between excessive anger and no anger at

all. A meek man was one who was angry on the right occasion, with the right people, at the right moment, and for the right length of time.

Now I want you to see what all of these definitions have in common -- great strength, great power, great passion all under control. Meekness in a man or a woman is not weakness. Meekness, the way that it is used here, means that I am completely at God's disposal, all of my life is surrendered to Him, my passions, my strengths, my weaknesses, my plans, my desires, my everything. Meekness means that I am broken from the delusion that it is my life, my reputation, my story, my exultation that matters. Meekness means that I see the greatness and the wonder of my God and I am completely at His call, for His use, for His purposes, for His glory. His righteousness, His ways are what really matter.

If I am a meek man, I am not proud of myself; I do not seek for glory for myself. I do not assert myself, or promote myself or make demands based upon position, privilege, possession, status in life, because it is not about my kingdom or me. But I will glory in God, I will glory in the cross, I will boast in knowing God, I will be a lion for his honor, I will be bold for his truth, I will exalt Him and magnify Him above all else. My eyes will not be focused upon me, but I will fix my eyes on the infinite, almighty, personal, sovereign God and I will entrust the totality of my life to making His name renowned. Meekness is the idea of being in a submissive, obedient and trusting relationship with God. It is primarily a vertical virtue. It is the characteristic of being bowed before God and under His rule, willingly and joyfully under His control. In fact, that is the idea of the psalm from which this beatitude comes. This beatitude comes from the 37th psalm -- (Psalm 37:1–11, ESV)

Who, then, are the meek according to Psalm 37? They are those who trust in the Lord – who have a deep rooted confidence in God and who believe that if God is for them who could be against them; who delight in the Lord – who find their greatest joy in the Lord and love His glory; who commit their way to the Lord – who trust that God is able to lead them and guide them and sustain them by His word and power; who are still before the Lord – who have a steady calm and confidence in the Lord. Taken all together, it is those who joyfully submit themselves to the rule and reign of the Lord. In contrast to weakness, meekness is controlled strength. It is an attitude of heart in which all energies are brought into the perfect control of the Holy Spirit.

Are you getting the picture of what it means to be meek? It is not self-rule for the sake of self-glory but God's rule for the sake of God's glory. It is the mastery of your heart, mind and passion for Christ's glory. Self-rule, self-promotion, grasping for glory and position and prominence -- this is the nature of the natural man. But the man who has been gripped by the grace of God, who has seen the depth of his depravity and his lack of standing with God, the man who has seen his spiritual bankruptcy before God, the man who has felt the weight of his sin and his offense against God, has known God's hatred of sin, the death of Christ that his sin required, the man who has rejected self-esteem, who has rejected self-righteousness -- that is the man who rejects the pursuit of self-rule, of self promotion and grasping for glory. He is the man who trades self-rule and self-promotion for the rule of God. He rejects self-mastery to be mastered by and be submitted to God -- for His glory. He rejects self-control for God-control.

Again this idea flies in the face of human thinking. The world thinks in terms of strength and power, of ability, of self assurance, of assertiveness and aggressiveness. That is the world's idea of conquest and possession. The more you assert yourself and express yourself, the more you manifest your power and your ability and your brilliance, the more you get. The world associates joy with conquest by means of self-direction and self-promotion. Grasping for personal glory, being driven by self-glory and self-promotion, being driven by self-interest breeds a multitude of sins (a bee's hive nest!): harshness -- mistreatment of others, vengeance -- the need to get even, rage -- at the "fools" you have to deal with and the circumstances and issues that get in the way, arrogance, pride, selfishness, malice, unforgiveness, manipulation, the demand for position, power, privilege and status and advancing self on the backs of others.

That is the rotten fruit of self-glory and self-promotion. But the fruit of meekness is true blessedness and joy. A man or a woman who is submitted to Christ, who trusts in the Lord, who has ceased grasping for personal advantage and desires to be mastered by God is the one who can receive the Word of God, who has been freed to be a servant of all, who can walk in a manner worthy of the calling of Jesus Christ, who is humble, gentle and patient with others, who can, in the words of Micah 6:8: "...do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8, ESV)

How does this meekness work itself out practically? There are two people who are described in Scripture as meek. I know that there were, of course, others who were meek, but specifically the Bible uses this word to refer to two men...Moses and Jesus.

First, think about Moses. Numbers 12:3 tells us that “Moses was very meek, more than all the people who were on the face of the earth.” That statement comes in the context of Moses’ brother and sister trying to usurp his position as the leader of Israel -- (Numbers 12:1–14, ESV)

At the end of the story, we see Moses praying for Miriam’s healing and God eventually grants it. The point? Moses was meek before the Lord and he trusted God to take care of him. He did not grasp for his position because he was submitted to God’s purposes being accomplished through him. Moses was not a wimp. This is the man who would stand before Pharaoh on his own turf and demand God’s people be set free or he would face the consequences. He was the one who would come off the mount of meeting with God, after getting the Ten Commandments, and hearing what he thought was the sound of war in the camp of Israel, and interrupted an idolatrous mess as he saw the golden calf Aaron had made for the people to worship and them dancing around it and partying and... In that moment Moses' anger burned so hot that he broke the two tablets given to him by God, and burnt the calf and ground it up and put it in water and made them drink and ordered the death of the unfaithful. What we see with Moses is that he would not defend himself before God, as in the case with Miriam and Aaron’s rebellion, but he would defend the Lord and his glory before anyone. That's what meekness is all about.

Or consider Jesus. Talk about power. Power over sickness, power over the wind and waves, power over death. Jesus had power. This is the one that would call the religious pretenders of his day snakes, white washed tombs, blind leading the blind, hypocrites, liars, children of Satan, children of hell. When His Father’s house was profaned by moneychangers and sacrifice sellers, He made a whip of cords and drove them out of the temple and turned over their tables, and scattered their coins. All of this came from Jesus, the personification of meekness. He fearlessly pronounced judgment on those who corrupted God’s Word. He faced down and completely dismantled all the false teachers of His day and fearlessly defended the glory of God the Father. But this same Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice. And in that Isaiah tells us, (Isaiah 53:7, ESV) As Peter says: (1 Peter 2:21–24, ESV) Jesus was utterly at God’s disposal, for God’s glory, for God’s purposes. This is the picture of true meekness.

While we are at it, let me give you one more. Just consider Paul. In every way, his life testified to meekness, to submission to God, to power under God’s control. (2 Corinthians 11:16-30,

ESV) Think of what he endured for the sake of the gospel without complaint or shirking his calling: In his farewell to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, knowing that he will be facing imprisonment and affliction for his faithfulness to God... (Acts 20:22–24, ESV) This was a man whose entire ministry was submitted to Christ's Lordship. Though he could have crushed the philosophers and knowledge brokers of his day, though he was brilliant beyond his contemporaries, Paul's tongue and mind, his words and arguments were under submission to God. He would say to the Corinthians: (1 Corinthians 1:17, ESV) AND (1 Corinthians 2:1–5, ESV) Paul did not seek to draw attention to himself in any way, but to put all focus, all attention upon Christ the Lord. Paul was utterly at Christ's disposal, for Christ's glory, for Christ's purposes. This is the picture of true meekness. And we can see why meekness matters...

2) Why Meekness Matters. Is meekness important? It's not just important; it is essential to so many things.

First, it is essential to salvation. (Psalm 149:4, ESV)

Second, if you do not have meekness, the Scripture says you cannot receive God's word. (James 1:19–21, ESV)

Third, you cannot witness effectively if you are not meek. (1 Peter 3:15, ESV)

Fourth, you cannot minister effectively without meekness. " (Galatians 6:1, ESV) (2 Timothy 2:24–25, ESV) Even more, meekness is absolutely indispensable to the fulfillment of such commands as: love one another, be at peace with one another, show hospitality to one another, honor one another, do not judge one another, receive one another, do not fight with one another, serve one another, do not envy one another, admonish one another, greet one another, care for one another, bear the burdens of one another, forgive one another, be kind to one another, submit to one another, do not lie to one another, encourage one another to good works, comfort one another, concern yourself with the interests of others, do not hate one another, do not speak evil of one another, pray for one another, be like-minded toward one another, do not hold a grudge against one another, highly esteem one another, have fellowship with one another, edify one another, teach one another, do good to one another, exhort one another, and minister spiritual gifts to one another because we understand that we are members one of another. All of these require submission to Christ, the death of self-seeking.

Fifth, it is through meek men and women that God accomplishes His work on this earth. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who was for many years an outstanding pastor in London, says this: We

Christians often quote 'not by might nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord,' and yet in practice we seem to rely upon the mighty dollar and the power of the press and advertising. We seem to think that our influence will depend on our technique and the program we can put forward and that it would be the numbers, the largeness, the bigness that would prove effective. We seem to have forgotten that God has done most of his deeds in the church throughout its history through remnants. We seem to have forgotten the great story of Gideon, for instance, and how God insisted on reducing the 32,000 men down to 300 before he would make use of them. We have become fascinated by the idea of bigness, and we are quite convinced that if we can only stage, yes, that's the word, stage something really big before the world, we will shake it and produce a mighty religious awakening. That seems to be the modern conception of authority. But God still uses the meek. The one enamored, first of all, with Him.

Last, meekness is necessary because it gives glory to God. Pride seeks its own glory, but meekness seeks God's. Meekness unites our hearts as the people of God to seek God's glory together, with one heart and one mind: (Romans 15:5–7, ESV)

Meekness is a challenge for us to think in a different way than the world thinks. Not about us, but all for God. How does this characteristic get developed in us? Meekness comes as we press into God. And our spiritual eyes are opened to his grandeur and wonder, the bankruptcy of living for my glory in self-rule is exposed for the foolishness that it is. To seek His face and pray and know His person and behold his power and consider His glory – we will learn of Him and we will be moved to worship Him and we will be compelled by His Spirit to surrender our all to Him.

### 3) The Promise -- they shall inherit the earth (v. 5b)

The promise of meekness is that we will inherit the earth or the land. Obviously the promise is not the earth that is, but the kingdom, the land, that is to come. The great reward for the meek, for those who delight and desire to be mastered by God is the great inheritance that is to come. The word "inherit" is from a Greek verb which means to receive an allotted portion, *kleronomeo*, it means to receive that which is apportioned or allotted to you. As fellow heirs with Christ, we will reign with him as He sits upon the throne of His father David. As Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:2, the saints will judge the world. We will inherit the new heavens and the new earth, we will inherit all things – the universe – in Christ. But there is more. Peter writes

of the inheritance that awaits us saying : (1 Peter 1:3–4, ESV) and he says: (2 Peter 3:11–13, ESV)

Ultimately, our inheritance is not simply a land, a city, or even a new earth. The supreme gift of our inheritance is God Himself. God is our inheritance, as the Psalmist writes -- The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psa 16:5-6, 11) God in Christ is our inheritance – our incorruptible, immortal, holy, innocent, unstained, undefiled, exalted, and unfading God and Savior

Do you see it, beloved? Do you see the depth of this, the wonder of this inheritance and the heart work that it accomplishes? This matchless inheritance – not merely the new earth but the Christ who reigns over it -- rightly understood, rightly valued, makes the pursuit of the trinkets of glory in this world fade to insignificance. Grasping for vain self-glory, grasping for my piece of the pie, grasping for my prominence and personal glory and all of the things that go with it become unimportant, become worthless next to the surpassing worth of serving God and His Christ for His glory.

What an amazing thought. What a tremendous contrast. Cease striving to gain something you could never lay hold of, and inherit something far greater than you can imagine. Are you meek? Are you completely at God's disposal? Are you passionate about the right things? Are you zealous for God's glory? Are you willing to set aside your own kingdom, reputation, your own story, your own glory for God's glory, for His life to be formed in you, for His glory to be displayed in your life and for the fame of His name to be the defining word of your life?

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