

Stadium Village Church 30 Sept. 2007

TITLE: Strength Under Control

SCRIPTURE: Ps. 37: 1-11, Mt 5:5 Blessed are the Meek

SERMON

OUR PROMISE TO BE LIKE CHRIST

In a few weeks we at Stadium Village Church will be blessed to witness the baptisms of some babies and young adults. They or their parents will acknowledge God's sovereignty or control over their lives.

For you sitting here today who have been baptized, it will be a time for you to renew your vows. One of those 4 vows is to promise to be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. A follower or disciple of Jesus is called a CHRISTIAN.

The word Christian comes from Jesus' title: CHRIST. Christ is NOT Jesus' Last name. Jews didn't have last names at that time. This word comes from the Greek: Kristus. It means Anointed One, or SAVIOR in English and Messiah in Hebrew.

The suffix -ian means : *Of, or belonging to , having the same characteristics of.* So a Christ-ian is a person who belongs to Jesus Christ and who has the same characteristics of Jesus.

This semester we are trying to help ourselves UNDERSTAND what those characteristics of Jesus are. Our sermon series is called Copying Christ's Character in Community. A Christian wants to be like Christ.

WHAT JESUS SAID WE MUST BE/DO 8 Beatitudes #1 Poor in Spirit

Jesus himself laid out very simply, in 8 statements, the Character of those who are part of his Kingdom. They are short, simple sentences each with a reward for copying his character, but trust me, they are NOT simple to actually LIVE life with these characteristics.

Actually we CAN'T live them, without God's help. And that's the first of the 8. We must realize our need for God's help in all areas of our life. Jesus called this being POOR in Spirit.

'Poor in Spirit' people REALIZE that they need God. They realize that they are unable to be like Jesus, UNLESS Jesus' spirit becomes a part of who they are. Then His power to live, to think, to BE will help us copy Him. That's the FIRST Be-attitude. Knowing that you need God.

And the first REWARD is Receiving God, or Receiving His Kingdom in the Person of his Spirit. . . NOW, today.

If you have never Asked For God to help you live, if you never told God that you are Poor in Spirit and Want His Spirit, DO it TODAY. Then Receive His Spirit. It can happen as fast as the blink of an eye. It is God's WILL that YOU receive him. Please don't hesitate. Decide today.

JESUS WAS A REVOLUTIONARY - COUNTER CULTURE

All this may sound too simple and too easy. But don't forget Jesus did not do things the usual way. Jesus was a REVOLUTIONARY. He lived IN the Culture but we was Counter Culture.

And like any revolutionary, we went into hiding. Well not exactly hiding, but he did leave the centers of power and populations and he went up into the hills of the Galilee.

Those that wanted to follow him, came up to listen to his counter cultural ideas. He did NOT say: Here's how you use a gun. Or, we must make or steal money and take hostages. OR, be prepared to use political power to overturn this culture. NO!

Jesus said

1. First realize in your MIND how Poor you are without God.
2. Be sad about that. Mourn for yourself and others who lack the Spirit of truth and wisdom, the spirit of Holiness. Do something about this. DO WHAT?? BE MEEK.

That's the 3rd of 8 things he said in his list of how to Copy him. BE MEEK.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Today I would like to talk about that word Meek. What does it mean? Who had it? And How can we get it? And What will be the reward for being Meek?

That word meek is currently not a trait that most people aspire to. In our day people understand the word to be WEAK. Meek also rhymes with freak, bleak, and sneak ... words that some may associate with being Meek.

But languages change over time. The word MEEK in Greek (Praus) meant kind, gentle and self-controlled.

You may be interested to know that the Bible refers to only 2 people as being Meek. And they weren't weak. Both of these men who were

Meek could do spectacular and powerful miracles. Both of these Meek Men were saviors of millions of people. I am referring to both Moses and Jesus.

Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Mt 11:29 (Jesus said) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am **meek** and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls.

So if being MEEK means contending with Egypt's emperor and leading millions of people out of Egypt, as Moses did. . . IF being Meek means feeding thousands of people with a basket of food, healing the sick and raising the dead, as Jesus did, then I would challenge you to reconsider the definition of Weak for the strong word MEEK!

The true understanding of MEEK is one who has great strength but chooses to control it for the good of others.

The classical Greeks used this word for a wild or spirited horse that had finally become tame and controllable by its master. This horse had great energy and potential to still be wild, but it had been trained to obey its rider's every signal. It was energetic but had been molded into obedience.

When we were in Grand Marais, MN one winter, the John Beargrease Dog sled races were beginning. I was so impressed by the Husky dogs. About 8 or 10 of them were tied up to each other, yelping and barking to let them run. They had such power and energy. But the Musher, their boss, held them back. When the race finally began I was shocked to see how the musher had to put the brakes on so that they would not run themselves to death at the start of the 500 mile race.

Strength under control. The dogs had the strength and the Musher driver had the control.

God has put into each of us both capacities. Strength AND Control. Jesus wants us to be MEEK. He has given us gifts and abilities and wants us to use them under HIS Control. The world sees this as Self-Control, but we know that it is God who is in control.

If you remember nothing else from this message, Please Remember that God wants us to be Meek and Meekness is **Strength under control**. Think of the image of the horse or the dogs.

In our study of Copying Jesus' Character in Community, we are linking each character trait from the list Jesus gave on the hillside, to a Spiritual Discipline. If you recall a spiritual Discipline is a something we can DO to help us listen to God.

When we read

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
We first practiced Silence for 3 minutes and talked about the need to Fast. Fasting reminds us that our true nourishment comes from God.

When we read Jesus' next words about who is Blessed:

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."
We practiced the spiritual discipline of CONFESSION, because we know that when we sin and realize it, we become sad. We mourn and need to confess our sins to others and to God.

We also noted that it appears that Jesus gave these Beatitudes in a certain order. The order is the ladder for us to climb, as we come closer to God's perfect design for our lives.

First we realize our need for God. That is being poor in Spirit. Then we realize HOW Far away from God we are, because of our Sin. That's when we Mourn.

And today we read the third Characteristic that Jesus wanted his revolutionary band of followers to BE:

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

We already talked about What Meek Means: Strength under Control

I mentioned 2 Biblical saviors who were Meek: Moses and Jesus.

Now it's important we ask the question HOW can WE be meek?

To answer this question, I will go to Psalm 37. This is the Psalm Jesus quoted when he stated this 3rd way to be blessed.

Psalm 37:11 But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.

Let's do some investigating and see what preceded this verse.

Perhaps we will discover How a Meek person acts.

Psalm 37:1-11 *A Psalm of David*. Page 552 (Read aloud together)

1 Do not fret (worry) because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;

2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.

3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath (rage); do not fret--it leads only to evil.

9 For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

10 A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.

11 But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.

Look for yourself and see how a meek person lives:
Because they TRUST in the Lord,
Because they DELIGHT themselves in the Lord and
Commit their ways to him (that word commit in Hebrew means to ROLL one's life over to the Lord, put your worries on Him),
Because they lean heavily on God for all their ideas and their support,
The RESULT is: they find safety, prosperity and peace. Peace means NO WORRY, no fretting. Did you count that word FRET 3 times in these 11 verses? (vs. 1, 7, & 8)

King David writes that

If we are STILL and PATIENT before God (vs 7)

If we REFRAIN from ANGER and TURN from WRATH (rage)

(vs. 8)

THEN we will inherit the land and find Peace.

That's what HOPING or Trusting in the Lord does for us. It turns us into Meek people that will eventually inherit God's Land.

What does will Inherit the Land mean to us?

If you notice Jesus says we WILL inherit the Land. The Jews of Jesus' day were hoping that they could kick the Roman Government out of their land. They wanted to inherit and live peacefully in the land of Israel.

But I believe that Jesus was talking about the Inheritance that his Followers WILL receive after they die. I believe it means Heaven. In Hebrew the word EARTH is the same word used for Land. So the meek will inherit the Land either IN Heaven or when Heaven comes to Earth.

After our lives our over, after we have MEEKLY allowed people to have their own way, after we have sacrificed and given to others THEN we will be rewarded with the Gift of Heaven.

When a person receives an Inheritance from their parents or a rich uncle, it's NOT something that they have control over. The inheritance is a gift, decided upon by the one giving it.

Heaven is Jesus' gift to us. If we are his children and have accepted Jesus as our Brother who saved us and brought us to the Father, then we can be rewarded with that greatest inheritance ever, Heaven!

Do you want heaven? Well, Jesus said in vs. 3 that you can have his Kingdom NOW. You can have as much Heaven on Earth in the PROPORTION that you are WILLING to WALK with Jesus, and be LIKE Jesus.

The reason I believe this is, notice the difference in vs. 3 and vs. 5. NOW you can have the Kingdom of Heaven with Jesus (vs 3). But in vs. 5 it is LATER that You INHERIT the Reward of Heaven.

I ask you, are you receiving the rewards that God wants you to have? His Kingdom, His Comfort and the coming Heaven?

Are you Meek? Do you sense in your spirit, power that is kept under God's Control? We have many Meek disciples in this Church. Are you in Community with one of them? Do you meet with one or more each week? Weekly for Strength!! Join a small group weekly for strength!

Because the word MEEK is sometimes hard to grasp, I always have a picture in my mind of a hero who is Meek.

Being Meek is not easy in our culture. Our culture wants Power displayed by MIGHT or FORCE. Our culture wants dollars and position.

Some Meek people do have dollars and position. Some Meek people END UP with those because they have DELIGHTED in the Lord

and God has rewarded them in this way. But NOT all Meek people are rich and famous.

In my mind I have 3 people that I can pull to the forefront to remind me that it IS possible in our culture to be meek.

Let me tell you about one of them. His name was Rutherford Aris. He has been in Heaven for almost 2 years. But in his life, Rutherford was probably the world's most famous Chemical Engineer, and one of the main reasons that the U's department has been rated at the top.

Rutherford was one of the Meekest persons I have ever met. He was extremely humble about his successes. He was polite and very generous. His wife said he would have given all his money away, if she would have let him. He never thought himself too high to do a job. Once, even though we hardly knew him, he babysat our 1st child. I saw him on the floor with her as she crawled, cherishing her.

He loved to make up jokes, sometimes in Latin, but he would kindly explain them later.

Professor Aris trusted in God's unfailing power and love even during his long illness with Parkinson's Disease, even when he could no longer walk or talk or eat.

Rutherford practiced a spiritual discipline called SUBMISSION. He turned his life, his days, his minutes over to the Lord AND he was willing to allow other's to have their own way. He was willing to let GOD have his own way.

Submission is the Spiritual Discipline of giving up our way in favor of someone else's.

His wife told me that before they married, they decided that they would serve and submit to GOD First, before they served and submitted to each other.

When the Chemical Engineering Department wanted him to be it's head, because, they said, he was the only one at that time who could hold it together, Rutherford agreed. For 5 long years, even though he knew his gifts were NOT in Leadership, he faithfully and gently led the department. It was his practice to submit to the desires of others, in order to build them up.

How many people in your life are you submitting to? (OR TO HOW many people in your life are you submitting?) (Of course, I am NOT encouraging any of us to submit to those who would injure us!)

But do you check in with God each day to see how you can submit to God?

When you submit in order to help someone, even if they are not deserving, do you grumble within, (like I sometimes do)?

Or do you see your submission as walking alongside Jesus as he submits to walk to the cross?

This being a Christ-ian, a Christ quality person, is not for sissy weaklings. It is for those who have God's Strength under God's Control. Ask for His Strength. Take it. Then ask for God's help to use it, with all gentleness and humility.

May God help us all to be MEEK.

PRAYER

Lord, Jesus, Thank you for providing your Spirit to us, so that we can become more and more like you.

Help us to submit to your Spirit AND to each other. Even when others may be annoying and undeserving, help us to value them as you value them.

Jesus, you submitted to your Father's plan for all of creation.

You were willing to die so we could receive true life, life in the Kingdom NOW and Life with you in Heaven later. We thank and praise you.

In Jesus' Name we pray, AMEN