

Meeting With Christ

Practical and Exegetical Studies on the Words of Jesus Christ

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Based on sermons of Pasteur Eric Chang

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BLESSED ARE THE MEEK (2)

Matthew 5:5

In our last lesson, we studied the third Beatitude of the Lord Jesus, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*. In that lesson, we focused our attention on the meaning of meekness. We tried to answer the question, ‘What did Jesus have in mind when He speaks of the meek?’ We saw that the meek are those who are righteous. You cannot be meek without being righteous. We saw also that the meek are those who know to wait for the Lord. They are those who let God be their defense. And finally, we saw that the meek are generous. They give and give, and give. You will remember that we drew these conclusions from the OT, more specifically from Psalm 37.

Today, we will complete our study of this third Beatitude and we will start by returning to Psalm 37. Now that we understand what it means to be meek, we want to ask this question: What is the result of this meekness? What does it bring to the people who reflect that quality? I would like to answer that question with these five points. And as we proceed, you will see that these points will gradually lead us to this notion of inheriting the earth.

Salvation

First of all, the result of this meekness is that it brings salvation. If you look at Psalm 37, you will see it again. In the last part of the Psalm, in the last two verses, you see that the whole thing has to do with salvation. This is what we read in Psalm 37:39-40.

Psalm 37:39. But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.

...the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord. The righteous are also the meek. They are the ones who will be saved. As I will emphasize later on, I want to say that salvation has to do not just with what you believe, not just with what you do externally. But it has to do with the kind of person that you become through faith, by the transforming power of God.

Peace

Secondly, the meek is the person who has peace. Read v. 11.

Psalm 37:11. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The Lord Jesus says the same thing in Matthew 11. He says, *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls* (Matthew 11:28).

And you shall find rest for your souls. When we come to Jesus and we meet with Him, we find rest, peace in our soul. We live in a society that puts a lot of pressure on you. With the general trend towards down sizing, there is a pressure on every worker to be more and more efficient. You are asked to keep going under the pressure of a heavy workload. But in spite of all the external pressures, the meek has the promise to find rest, to find spiritual peace.

Guidance

So first, there is salvation. Secondly, there is rest. And thirdly, there is guidance. The meek are the ones who will find guidance from God. Look at verse 23.

Psalm 37:23. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way.

God orders the steps of a good man, a man who is humble, who is meek in his heart. People often ask about how to know the will of God. It is good to seek spiritual guidance but make sure that you do it in the right way and with the right attitude. There is no special technique by which you can get guidance from God.

My response about this question of guidance is to say that the first step in seeking the will of God is to make sure that your heart is in tune with the heart of God. That's what the psalmist means when he says in v. 4, *Delight yourself in the Lord.* Take delight in what pleases God. Divine guidance is first and foremost a matter of the heart. Don't try to look for signs or hints of God's will for you until you have the right attitude. And it starts by asking, 'Lord, change me, in my heart, that I will know your will, that I become the kind of person who can listen to Your voice and understand Your will.' And as God transforms you in your thoughts, in your desires, in your character, you will come to know His will. And the meek have the assurance that it will indeed happen.

Victory

Fourthly, there is victory. The meek will find victory. Listen to Psalm 149:4.

Psalm 149:4. For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He adorns (He beautifies) the humble with victory.

The meek are the ones who are victorious. We tend to think that it is the strong, the tough who are victorious. In Chinese thinking, we speak of a person who is really something, who is very powerful, by the expression that 'he walks like a tiger.' It doesn't work like that in the spiritual world. How about walking like a sheep? The Lord Jesus says, 'I send you as sheep among the wolves' (Matthew 10:16). A sheep is a rather defenseless animal as you know. Who will be our defense? We read in Romans 8:36-37, ... *we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.* 'We will be slaughtered,' Paul says, 'all the day long like sheep, but God is our defense.' It is the meek that God adorns with victory.

You know, in Matthew 21:9, it tells us of the Lord Jesus coming into Jerusalem, humble, meek, riding upon a donkey. And people were crying out, *Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!* Do you get the picture? The donkey was the animal of peace. It was the animal normally ridden by non-military people. The horse was the instrument of war. Most of the passages in the Bible that speak of horses refer to their use in battle. So

the Lord Jesus comes in, victorious, but riding on a donkey. The meek are the ones who will be adorned in victory. They are the ones whom he Lord will vindicate.

Inheritance

And the fifth and last point is that the meek shall inherit the earth. The meek shall inherit the earth. This is very important here. What does this 'inherit the earth' mean? What is it that we are going to get exactly?

Now friends, listen to this. In the first Beatitude, the Lord Jesus says that the poor in spirit shall inherit the kingdom of God. Here in the third Beatitude, He says that the meek shall inherit the earth. So we have two kinds of inheritance: the kingdom of God and the earth. Now, it is two different things? Do you first inherit the kingdom of God and then you inherit the earth? The answer is 'no'. There is a sense in which this is one and a same thing. Because God's kingdom will be established on the earth. God has not finished with this world. God is going to establish His kingdom on earth. And that is why in the Lord's prayer, in Matthew 6:10, we see the Lord Jesus praying, *Your kingdom come. Come where? Come to us, come on this earth. Thy will be done on earth.* Here, on this earth, is where His will will be done. *As it is in heaven.*

God has not finished with this earth. We cannot say that we forget about the earth. 'Bye bye earth. I'm finished with you. I'm going to heaven.' No, that's not how it works. The meek shall inherit the earth. God is going to establish His kingdom in this world, on this earth. Christianity is no escapism. It doesn't refuse to face the problems of the world because God is concerned about this earth. He created this earth and He wants to establish His righteousness here on this earth.

So when His kingdom comes upon the earth, His will will be done on the earth, as it is done in heaven. There is a sense in which the kingdom of God is already here. And it will be fully established when Jesus comes again. The Bible tells us that as God establishes His government in the world, His saints shall reign with Him. You see, to inherit doesn't just mean that you are going to be there, doing nothing. We are going to be given the task of reigning with Him. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and the saints shall reign with Him. And the saints will be the humble, the meek of heart. We read of the reign of the saints in Revelation 5:10 where it says that the Lamb has *made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.* What a future! I get excited when I think of that.

A new kind of person

This leads me to talk to you about the Lord's teaching on salvation. Because there is a connection between the Beatitudes and God's plan of salvation. Let me first say what you probably all know. The Lord's teaching is not based on a teaching of salvation by creed. We are not saved by just believing the right statement of faith, important as it is. Nor are we saved by works, important as good works are. If we are neither saved by creed nor by works, how are we saved then? By a faith that allows God's power and grace to transform us into new people. We are saved and only saved by God's power given to us, through faith, to change us into new persons.

And what do these new persons look like? That is exactly what the Beatitudes are telling us. You find in the Beatitudes the picture of the new kind of person. It is a person whom God blesses because he is poor in spirit. God blesses him because he mourns over sin. God blesses him because he is meek.

You know, there is something wonderful about the gospel in connection with the problems of mankind. It's wonderful because you see, of all the solutions that we are trying to find, only the gospel gets to the root of the problem. And what is the root of the problem? The human heart. If you want to

deal effectively with man's fundamental problems, you have to touch the heart of man and change the man from inside out.

There is no other way. You can change his economic situation. You can improve his education. You can improve his health condition. But if you don't change his heart, he remains the same selfish being that he is. And mankind will simply continue to face the same fundamental problems.

Every year, we hear about a certain number of cases of crimes involving guns, of people killing themselves or killing innocent victims with guns. This has raised the controversial issue of gun control. In order to decrease the chances of using guns for evil intention, we want more control over the sales of guns. This is certainly a commendable measure, but I'm not sure that it's going to decrease the overall crime rate. Because the fundamental problem is not the guns. The problem is the wickedness of the human heart. And as long as you don't deal with the human heart, wickedness will continue to cause damage. People will continue to be killed, either with a gun or with something else. I have seen many of these shootings when they just happened, with the bodies still bleeding. And I can tell you that when a person is determined to kill, he is going to kill. It doesn't matter with what kind of weapon.

If you really want to deal with that issue, you have to go to the root problem. You have to change the human heart. There is no other way. You are not going to produce a better society on this earth until you change man on the inside. And for this, God has to intervene and change the heart of man.

There is a Chinese saying which illustrates this well. It is a saying that some people would put on the wall of their house to remind them of some words of wisdom. So the saying runs like this:

"If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation, there will be peace on earth."

This saying was not written by a Christian, even though it talks about righteousness,. But it rightly points to the fact that you have to start from the human heart. Only when you change a man inwardly can we come to the stage one day when we shall inherit an earth in which righteousness dwells, a society in which people are genuinely humble and not trying to climb up by stepping down another person and using him as a ladder. It will be a society in which each person truly cares for the other person and regards the other one as better than himself.

The Beatitudes in God's plan

So do you begin to have a vision of God's wonderful purpose? Do you see what these Beatitudes tell us? What is it that the Lord wants to say to us here? Do you know what I think God is doing? I see our God, looking down the earth, looking for men after His own heart. God's eyes are running to and fro over the earth at this present time, looking for people who shall reign with Him, who are going to build His new earth, the kingdom of God.

God is going to create a new society which is called the kingdom of God in which righteousness dwells here upon the earth. He is going to build a new society by building new people, new men and new women. That is the policy of His government. And His eyes are running through the earth, at this moment, looking for people after His own heart.

God is producing a generation of new people, transformed people. He is molding them into the image of Christ and they shall reign upon the earth. He is going to establish this new society. That is

why when Jesus came, He proclaimed the kingdom of God by saying, *Repent, for the kingdom of God is coming.* God's rule is coming. God's rule is going to be established. God's government will be established upon the earth. Those who repent are the kind of people who are going to be in the kingdom of God. The people who are poor in spirit, who weep because of sin, who are humble.

And we cannot be any of these things unless the Spirit of God comes to us and changes us. This meekness is a fruit of the Spirit as we read in Galatians 5:23. We cannot make ourselves this kind of new man. It is something that God has to do in us.

So my prayer is that when we listen to the Sermon on the Mount, we understand God's plan for His kingdom, that we understand God's saving purpose for the world. God is saying, 'This is My plan for the world. Wickedness is going to be wiped out. And I'm raising up people to reign with Me, the kind of people that are described in the Beatitudes. This is the kind of person that I'm going to make, a new man in My kingdom.'

Let us ask God that each one of us will find a place in that kingdom, that we will experience His saving grace and His power through the Holy Spirit.