



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Gospel of Matthew

“The Beatitudes III – Blessed Meekness,” Matthew 5:5 – TRANSCRIPT

For the Scripture reading this morning, we’re turning over to the Psalms and reading verses 1 through 11 before we read our text in Matthew chapter 5. Psalm 37 verse 1 through verse 11,

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him

who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

“The Beatitudes III: Blessed Meekness” by S. Lewis Johnson
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Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, shall
inherit the earth.

For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently
consider his place, and it shall not be.

But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the
abundance of peace.”

In Matthew chapter 5, building upon the statement of the Psalmist in Psalm 37, the
Lord Jesus, in the third of the Beatitudes, gives us these very significant words,

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

May God bless this reading of his word.

We have come in our studies in the Gospel of Matthew in which the Lord Jesus
has given us these unusual and immortal words: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall
inherit the earth.” What a hard saying: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the
earth.” The soft man, the docile man, the man who bows before every breeze, the door-
mat kind of man – blessed are the meek? We cannot disassociate meekness from
weakness, and blessed are the meek almost inevitably in our minds becomes, blessed are
the weak. And yet our Lord has spoken of himself in these terms, in this very Gospel of
Matthew in chapter 11 and verse 28 and 29 he has said, “Come unto me all ye who labor
and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me,
for I am meek, and lowly of heart. And ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

But even this statement of our Lord Jesus’, “I am meek and lowly of heart,” does
not seem to help us much. Because we’re so much under the influence of the world’s
portrayal of the Lord Jesus, that even this comes out, “I am weak and lowly of heart.” We

think of the way in which the Lord Jesus has so often been portrayed in movie screens or upon our stages; a Jeff Hunter kind of man. How could a person like that effectively represent the Lord Jesus Christ? He’s always pictured for us as gentle and delicate, a kind of effeminate unmanliness characterizes him in the eyes of the world.

I looked up some of the synonyms for meek. I was impressed with the last one listed in Roget’s Thesaurus: spiritless. I think that’s the idea that most of us have.

Blessed are the meek, blessed are the spiritless, for they shall inherit the earth.

What is this meekness? It has been said by someone, “The Bible says the meek shall inherit the earth. It’s going to be interesting to see how long they keep it after they’ve inherited it.” And then I read a statement in a Jewish book of quotations: “The meek do prematurely inherit the earth – six or more feet of it.” That’s the kind of impression we have of meekness. We cannot help but associate it with weakness, and yet in Scripture that is surely not the case.

The Beatitudes set forth in orderly fashion the character and the blessedness of the kingdom’s citizens. We have looked at the first of them: blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven—blessed are those who have a sense of sin. That’s really where all spiritual life begins. It’s impossible to know anything about the Lord Jesus. It’s impossible to know anything about Christianity if we do not have a sense of sin. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven—that’s where we all begin. If in this audience this morning, you have any sense of assurance that you belong to Jesus Christ, it is because you have come to understand, blessed are the poor in spirit.

The second beatitude follows very naturally. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. For the second act after the knowledge of ourselves, after we have come to the sense of our sin is the mourning over our sin. Oh the besetting sins that believers have: indifference, joylessness, inconsistency; meager zeal; failure; lapses into sin. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

I’m not surprised that I read next: blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth, because this speaks of the conduct and disposition toward God and man that issues from the sense of sin and our mourning over it. It’s a lovely advance that the Lord Jesus has given us in these beautiful words. Mr. Boram has said concerning these beatitudes that “they sum up, in a melodious octave of epigrams the ponderous contents of a thousand volumes of practical morality.” I agree with that. I think if we held the beatitudes before ourselves and if we came to a true understanding of them, we should have the benefits of spiritual teaching that would be worth ponderous volumes of practical morality. These are beautiful words of the Lord Jesus. I only hope that through the exposition of them we grasp some of the greatness of them.

Now for a few moments before we look at the epigram itself, let me contrast the world’s viewpoint of meekness against the biblical viewpoint. The world’s viewpoint is not that of the Lord’s, as you’ve guessed from the introduction to the message this morning. The world’s concept of meekness is the concept of spinelessness, of subservience, of womanliness in the bad sense (womanliness in a man, for example). When we think of the meek man, we think of—well at least I do; you’re not as old as I am, most of you—but when I think of meekness, I think of that universal, submissive husband which we used to see on the comic pages, Casper Milquetoast. What a lovely name for a meek man. [Laughter]

I think of all of the prototypes of the submissive husband, Casper Milquetoast, the meek man. That’s the idea that the world has of meekness. The world’s beatitudes are blessed are the mighty, blessed are the strong, blessed are the colorful, blessed are the radical, and various other types.

There is LeRoy DeRoche: “nice guys finish last.” I don’t have any statements of DeRoche on meekness; I wish I did. I imagine that they would be ideas that the world would embrace. But the world’s beatitudes are contrary to the Beatitudes of the Lord Jesus, and their concept of meekness is not the concept of the Bible.

This is one of the great Greek ethical words: blessed are meek—let me speak about the character of meekness for a moment. This word which is translated meek here is a Greek word that has several connotations. It referred in some contexts to a kind of mean between excessive anger and excessive angerlessness. In other words, if you can think of a mean, an average between the man who blows his top, and the man who is utterly spineless, then that was meek in some contexts. I think that you could say that righteous indignation was the expression of meekness in that usage. But it also had the sense of humility, so that the meek man was the man who possessed humility – the kind of man who saw himself before God, as he should see himself before God, and that led him to humility.

John Calvin begins his *Institutes* by saying, “We cannot know God if we do not know man, and we cannot know man if we do not know God.” Now what he meant by that was that if we are to truly understand man, we must understand man as a created being. And if we see ourselves as a created being, then we may understand how great God is, that he could do something like this. And if we look at God and realize if we are to understand God then we are to understand man. And in understanding man we shall understand God, for man is a reflection of God; we have been created in the image of God. And so the things that we see in measure in man are reflections of God.

True humility is to understand ourselves as we have come from the hand of God, a created being, a dependent being. There’s not a one of you in the audience who is not dependent; your very existence is a dependent existence. There is only one self-existent being in the universe. This is the kind of answer that we try to give to our children when they say, “Where did God come from?” Well, he doesn’t come from anyone but God. He’s a self-existent being. He has no ancestors. He has no father. He has no grandfather. He has no great-grandfather. He has no genealogy. He’s the self-existent being.

And if you can grasp what it is to have your existence from yourself – and we cannot really grasp that – you can grasp something of the greatness of God. We are dependent upon him, every one of us. In our great moments of independence, full of pride, full of self-righteousness, full of independence, we are just as dependent as we have ever been upon him. Humility. Seeing ourselves before God as we really are – that Greek word “meek” was used for that, too.

But then it was used for the person who accepted control of himself by someone else. Most interesting usage of this word, I think, was the fact that it was reserved for domesticated animals. For example, a horse that had been tamed after having been wild would be called a meek horse.

And it is my understanding – I must say, I have been a lot of places in my life. In my life before I knew Jesus Christ as Savior I had some unusual experiences. But I never have frequented the race tracks. My father impressed upon me when I was a little child that that was rather hazardous. And while I didn’t mind an occasional game of Black Jack or poker, when I was going through college and living fraternity life, still I did not go out to the race track. But I am told by some of my friends who did, that if you went out there – at least in some circles – the horse that won the race was often called “the meekest horse.” That is, the horse most under the control of its rider – that horse is a meek horse – that that word is actually used of a horse that is able to be controlled, and therefore responds to the jockey.

The domesticated animal. The colt that is broken in. So that that meek person is the person who has learned to accept control. Not weakness – meekness – the ability to accept control. Now I think that is what our Lord has in mind. Blessed are the meek; blessed are those who have learned to accept control. And of course, he means the control of God. Blessed are those who have learned to accept the control of God; they shall inherit the earth.

Now what does that mean, then? Well, that means that this beautiful meekness is submissiveness to the divine control. There is a statement back in the Psalms—in the 25th Psalm, not in the 37th that we read in our Scripture reading, but in the 25th Psalm and the 9th verse that reflects this, this beautiful submissiveness, this beautiful willingness to accept control.

Now looking at it from the divine standpoint, David writes in the 9th verse of the 25th Psalm, “The meek will he guide in justice, and the meek will he teach his way.” Now you can see from this that the meek person is one who can be guided. The meek person is the one who can be controlled. The meek person is the one who is teachable. So, the meek he will teach in the way; the meek he will guide.

Now when we think about meekness, we are interested in possessing it for ourselves. Where is this meekness to be found? Well Paul has a very interesting statement over in the fifth chapter of the Book of Galatians. In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul gives us the Fruit of the Spirit. Now it is not the fruits of the Spirit, but the fruit, singular. I do not think we can say we have the “fruit” of the Spirit unless we have these nine virtues that are listed here in verses 22 and 23. We may say if we have one of these virtues that we have a virtue of the Fruit of the Spirit, but the Fruit of the Spirit is singular. It’s one fruit; it just has nine different flavors. But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, [sic. kindness] gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and then, meekness. Now the Fruit of the Spirit is the fruit produced by the Spirit. So, the source of meekness is the Holy Spirit. The source of meekness is the third person of the Trinity. It is he who produces meekness in the hearts of the saints.

Now the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 1, when he exhorts the Corinthian saints, exhorts them by reference to the meekness and gentleness of Christ. He states, “Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...”

I think we can say this, that meekness is a characteristic of the Lord Jesus, pre-eminently. He was the meek man, as he said, because he was the man who accepted control.

Now if anybody had no reason to accept control, it was the Lord Jesus. He was the second person of the blessed Trinity. He, too, being part of our great triune God, possesses life from himself. He is self-existent. And yet, at a point in time, the Lord Jesus accepted the control of the Father, and came here to perform his magnificent redemptive work which shall ultimately lead to the Messianic kingdom upon the earth, and beyond the Messianic kingdom to the eternal state. He is the pre-eminent individual who learned to accept control.

As a matter of fact, the writers of Scripture say that very thing, “He learned obedience by the things he suffered.” So, meekness, ultimately, is characteristic of our Lord Jesus and is produced by the Holy Spirit – and only by the Holy Spirit.

There are two great illustrations of meekness, then. One of them is one of the greatest men of the Old Testament. The other is the greatest man of Scripture. One is an Old Testament character, one is a New Testament character. The Old Testament character is Moses, and the New Testament character is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Moses, a meek man? Well, I’m not sure we would have come to that evaluation of him. I’ve often wondered about that parenthetical statement in Numbers chapter 12 and verse 3, “Now, the man Moses was very meek above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.” Now who wrote Numbers? Well, Moses wrote Numbers. [Laughter] Moses tells us that he was the meekest man upon the face of the earth. I’ve often wondered about that.

If I were to introduce my message to you this morning and say that of all the meek men that I know, I think I surpass them all. What would you think? Well, I know you’d think that Dr. Johnson had a loose shingle on his roof or something like that [laughter].

Now it’s put into parentheses, and I guess the translators have really wondered whether it came from the hand of Moses. But assuming it was guided by the Holy Spirit – let’s just say that it came from him – but even if it did not, it still expresses the truth of Scripture: the man Moses was very meek above all the men who were upon the face of the earth. But would we call Moses a meek man?

Moses’ public life began with a murder. Moses was wandering along the streets of his place in Egypt, and he saw an Egyptian who was persecuting one of the Hebrews, and he slew him. That’s the way he begins his public ministry: by murder. The next day he sees two of his own kinsmen who are struggling, and he attempts to intervene, and one of them says a word that he indicates he knows about the murder of the previous day. Moses is immediately afraid, and goes to spend 40 years on the backside of the desert.

Would we call Moses meek, a man whose life begins with a murder, and then, if you’ll remember, at the conclusion of his life his life ends with an outburst that makes the Father say, Moses, you cannot enter into the land to enjoy it? He lost his temper and struck the rock twice, remember? Well, the Bible calls Moses a meek man.

Meekness is not an inherited constitutional quality. There are not some people who are meek and some people who are rebellious. The truth of the matter is that every one of us is rebellious. Everyone of us – all of these little children sitting in the audience, all of these young people – they’re rebellious, too. We’re all rebellious. We all come from the same family tree. What have we been saying?

Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, those who learn to see who they really are. Every one of us begins with the disability of original sin. Everyone of us begins the disability of condemnation. We all are guilty because of Adam’s sin, and we all are guilty because we possess the nature with which God has judged us, our nature that is contrary to the will of God. Meekness is not something that some people have and others don’t have. No one of us has meekness.

It won’t do for us to say, well, they are naturally meek. They have that kind of constitution; I don’t. I have one of those kinds of tempers in which I just fly off the handle and am like a skyrocket. And I cannot help it; it’s part of me. No, we cannot flee to that. Meekness is not an inherited constitutional quality. It certainly wasn’t in Moses’ case. And even in this meekest man upon the face of the earth, there is manifested in his last days a little bit of the characteristic of his constitutional qualities.

Meekness is not temperlessness. It’s obvious from this passage that it’s not temperlessness. And Moses was the kind who could blow his top more than once, and when he did it, it was beautiful, [laughter] beautiful from one standpoint. Do you remember the incident from Exodus chapter 32? When Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments? When the people saw that Moses was delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves unto Aaron and said unto him, “Up, make us gods which shall go before us, but as for this Moses, this man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.”

And Aaron gave the instructions. They brought their golden earrings and as a result of this, they fashioned that molten calf, and the children of Israel gathered round and said, “These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of Egypt.” And Aaron saw it, and he built an altar, and Aaron made proclamation and he said, “Tomorrow we’ll make feast to the Lord.” And they rose up the next day and made offerings and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

And the Lord said to Moses as they were communing on the mount, “Moses, I want you to get down, because your people whom you’ve brought up out of the land of Egypt (notice the Lord says ‘your people whom you’ve brought up out of Egypt’), they’ve corrupted themselves. They’ve turned aside quickly out of the way in which I’ve commanded them. They’ve made a molten calf, and they’ve worshipped it. They’ve sacrificed unto it, and they’ve said, ‘These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of Egypt.’”

And the Lord said unto Moses, “I’ve seen this people, and behold, it’s a stiff-necked people.” That’s a good characterization of every one of us: stiff-necked. “Now therefore let me alone, Moses, that my wrath may burn against them and consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation.” And Moses – what a wonderful opportunity – and Moses turned it down. Make of thee a great nation; get rid of all the rest and start over with you, Moses. Now that’s a manifestation of meekness. Under great control, control of the Spirit.

And Moses pleads for Israel, “Remember Abraham and Isaac and Israel Thy servants, to whom Thou didst swear by Thine own self, and said unto them, ‘I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land I’ve spoken of I shall give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.’” And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

And Moses turned and went down from the mount. And now we’ll whether Moses has a temper or not. And when he came down into the camp, and saw the dancing, his anger burned, and he cast the tables out of his hands and broke them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made and he burned it with fire and he ground it to powder and he scattered it upon the water and said to them, come on, I want you to drink it! And he made them drink the water, over which had been scattered the ashes of the molten calf. Now that’s a blowup. That’s a manifestation of a temper. But that’s a temper of righteous indignation.

It’s evident that Moses, here, is a man who is under the hand of God, and yet at the same time expresses the most righteous of indignations. Meekness is not temperlessness.

Well Moses, who went from murder to meekness; how can you explain it? Well I think if I had to explain Moses’ meekness, I would trace it to several things. I think first of all, I would trace it to 40 years on the backside of the desert. Moses learned a great deal going off into that desert and spending 40 years communing with God over the

condition of Israel, over his own spiritual condition, learning the things of God that he needed to know in order to be the great leader of the children of Israel.

The loneliness of the backside of the desert was, undoubtedly, a time in which Moses passed from the weakness of his previous character to the meekness that characterized the remainder of his life. And then the crushing responsibility of leading those recalcitrant Israelites, and the great disappointments that Moses had as he sought to be the shepherd of the flock of Israel. Those were days in which God taught him control, too. And he learned to chain that temper. And the secret of his strength can be traced to the 40 years on the backside of the desert. The experiences of life.

And I want to say to you, my Christian friends, one of the things that God is doing in your life is cultivating the character of Jesus Christ, and the experiences through which you pass are designed to form your character in such a way that he can see something of his Son, Jesus Christ, in you. And so, the disappointments, the frettings of which the Psalmist speaks, the tragedies and trials, the successes – all of the experiences of life are under the hand of the great sovereign God in control of our destiny, and in control of all of this life of which we are apart, and they’re all designed to put us to the test by a loving Father who desires to see his Son, Jesus Christ, in his saints.

So, if God’s passing you through something that is very difficult, you can be sure that there is a purpose in it. If you are having a disappointment in life that is a kind of disappointment that seems to be throwing you, you can be sure that the hand of a loving God is in it. That is, if you belong to him; if you know what it is to have this everlasting life through faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us; if you know what it is to be a Christian.

Those 40 years were awfully long for Moses, and those years, which were 40 more, which he sought to lead the children of Israel, and those disappointments and discouragements and defeats and those occasions in which his old temper rose to the

surface again – all of those things were fit instruments in the hand of God to bring his saints to that fine-tuned mettle that he wishes to bring them.

Who are the meek men? Why the meek men are the Augustines and the John Huses and the William Tyndales and the John Calvins and the Martin Luthers and the great saints whom God has dealt with down through the years, and has brought them by the testings of the experiences of life to stages and spiritual growth that lead to maturity in Christ. They are the John Wesleys, and the other great men.

But the fact that Moses failed in the end should not be in any way a dimming of the meekness of that great man. But I do have to comment upon it. He did fail in the end, right in the end as they came up to the borders of the land, and again the children of Israel complained for the – I don’t know how many – time. They complained again, and God said, “Moses, speak to the rock, in order that they may have water.” And Moses went over to the rock. The incident is recorded for us in Numbers chapter 20.

He went over to the rock, and instead of speaking to the rock, he took out his rod and he smote the rock twice, and the water came out abundantly and the congregation drank. But Moses had also introduced the smiting of the rock with “Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?”—I would almost say, “again?” Moses lost his temper.

And as a result the Lord said, “Moses, because you and Aaron have not believed me to sanctify in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. This is the water of Meribah because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified with them.” And then later in the text, it says, “because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.” Right at the end, Moses rebelled against God.

But after all, Moses was only a man. And being only a man, we should not expect him to be perfect in his meekness. He was a man, however, who through his experiences came to understand what it was to accept the control of God.

Mr. Spurgeon has a very interesting story in one of his accounts of the Beatitudes in which he describes the contrast between the man who comes home from his work and sits down at the table and gives thanks for the food and looks up and says, “Do we have to eat this old mutton again?” And the man who comes home and finds a couple of herring and two or three potatoes on the table, bows his head and says, “O God, I praise Thee that Thou hast ransacked sea and land to find this beautiful meal.” Now that, of course, expressed the attitude of the meek man, the man who is controlled. The man who accepts control.

May I close by making some comments concerning the cause of the blessedness? The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek,” blessed are those who have accepted the control of God, for they shall inherit the earth. Now let me say a word by way of application first. Remember, these Beatitudes are spoken to men who were listening to our Lord announce his Messianic kingdom, that kingdom that is to be on the earth with the Lord ruling and reigning. And therefore, these promises and the Beatitudes have primary reference to the Messianic kingdom of the Lord Jesus. They are given to men who are to live in anticipation of that kingdom.

And so they are, in a sense, they are characteristics of the disciples of the Lord Jesus who live in anticipation of the kingdom. It was an interim ethic. It was the kind of ethic that was to guide their lives while they were with our Lord Jesus in the period of time before that kingdom came to pass upon the earth.

I’d like to say a word by way of application. It’s evident if that’s true – and I think it is true – if that is true, then these Beatitudes characterize the individual who is a disciple of the Lord Jesus. You will not find the way of salvation in the Beatitudes. They do not tell us how to become Christians. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved, the Apostle Paul says. We do not find anything like that in the Beatitudes. These are descriptions of those who have come to that decision and belong to the Lord Jesus. These are the descriptions of the saints.

Now I don’t want to water this down in any way. I want to say very plainly to you that these are the descriptions of the people whom God knows. The Lord knows those that belong to him. And these words describe them. These are the characteristics of the saints. We do not have any reason – no reason – for believing that we belong to the saints of God if there is not something of the characteristics of the saints as set forth here in the Beatitudes. They are beautiful descriptions of the kinds of people that belong to the Lord. So if you want to test your profession, if you want to test the reality of it, take a look at this beautiful description of the Lord’s people. Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are meek. The proud, the self-assertive, the rebellious – they do not receive the blessing.

Now of course, there is an application in our present day. This is a principle of life. The Mussolinis, the Stalins, the Hitlers – they do not inherit the earth. They may have it for a while, they do not inherit the earth. Now, of course, there is a sense in which all of this has its application to us in many spheres of life. There are areas of submission in which we should manifest this meekness.

As you know, every one of us lives in four spheres of life. We live in the United States of America, and we are subject to this government. And we are responsible in Scripture to be submissive to our government. We live in this church, the church of Jesus Christ, and we are responsible to be submissive to the elders – those who are over us in the Lord – as long they are submissive to Christ. If they’re not; we obey God rather than men. We are submissive to him. We live in a family, which means that the wife is submissive to the husband. That means the children obey the parents. That’s the test of meekness. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. The test of meekness is a willingness to accept control. And then for the husband, to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Meekness.

And then we all live before God, meekness before him – the control of God. That means the affairs of our daily lives are to be put in his hands. We are in the hands of

God in a practical sense. Now by interpretation, I’ve said this can only be fulfilled in the Messianic kingdom. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Well this beatitude is a word of grace. I want you to notice that the Lord Jesus says, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit. Isn’t it striking? You might listen to me and say, “Well, Dr. Johnson, I thought you were a grace man?” I am a grace man. I believe in the doctrines of grace. I believe in total depravity. I believe in unconditional election. I believe in definite atonement. I believe in irresistible grace. I believe in the perseverance of the saints. I believe in the bondage of the human will, and the power of God alone to break the power of sin in the heart of man. I believe in all of those things.

And when I see something like this, I’m encouraged. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit. There is one characteristic of the word inherit that is predominant. Do you know what it is? Grace. Grace. No man who inherits, earns. By the very meaning of the term inherit, we get something that we have not earned. It is a gift of grace to inherit.

Now if you have ever been the recipient of blessing from somebody’s will, you know exactly what I mean. Inherit is a word of grace. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit – not earn – inherit the earth. For you see, the meek are not the deserving. They are those who have been made deserving by the Lord Jesus and his saving work.

The originality of the Lord’s teaching, you can see is, as we read Psalm 37, not so great as one might think. The originality of the Lord’s teaching does not lie so much in the novelty of his precepts, because David said “the meek should inherit the earth.” As it does in the new relation in which he sets them, and the deepening that he gives them, and the motives on which he bases them, and especially upon the enabling power he gives to fulfill them. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth by the enabling power of God through redemption. The saints of God are made meek, and the acceptance of control is the characteristics of the saints of God. It’s the way they’re

distinguished from those who don’t belong to the Lord: they’ve learned to accept control by his grace.

The greatest illustration of meekness is not Moses. Moses began with failure, made great advance, became the meekest man upon the face of the earth, but failed at the end. The greatest illustration of meekness is our Lord Jesus Christ, who came, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was found in fashion as a man, became a servant, and, finally the Scripture says, became obedient, learning things, learning obedience by the things which he suffered – obedient unto death, and such a death as unto the cross. No wonder, then, that God should say, “Wherefore, God has so highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth and under the earth.”

How fitting that the meek man, the one who was meek and lowly in heart in the supreme degree, should be king over the earth peopled by the meek who have by his marvelous grace been brought to the place of the acceptance of control. O God, give me meekness. Give me, O God, to learn to accept control for Thy glory. That’s my prayer. Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] We are grateful to Thee, Lord, for these beautiful Beatitudes, which express the blessedness of the man whom Thou has brought under control. O God, give us this meekness. May meekness characterize the saints in this congregation. May the beauty of meekness be seen upon them and in them. O God, help us to learn to accept control.

And Father, if there be someone in this audience who has yet come to Christ, O give them no rest or peace in their rebellion, until they have come to him for forgiveness, for cleansing, for justification, for enabling power.

And then, O God, be with us through this week and the days to come, until Jesus comes, and we meet him face to face. May grace, mercy and peace abide with us. For Christ’s sake. Amen.

“The Beatitudes III: Blessed Meekness” by S. Lewis Johnson
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