

Meekness

by Anton Bosch

Meekness is not a natural trait, but rather a fruit of the Spirit that comes as a result of our relationship with God.

Duration: 48:32

Scripture: Exodus 4:10-11, Exodus 32:9-14, Job 1:20, Psalm 37:1-11, Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 5:5

Topics: "Meekness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Moses and how he was called by God despite feeling inadequate. Moses pleaded for the people of Israel even when God wanted to destroy them. The speaker also mentions how Moses learned meekness while looking after sheep, as they submit to being sheared without resistance. The sermon then shifts to the story of Job, who lost everything but still chose to worship God instead of questioning Him. The speaker emphasizes the importance of meekness and worshipping God in difficult times.

Transcript

Alright, let's turn to Psalm 37. We've been dealing with the Beatitudes, Matthew chapter 5. We deal this morning with the third one, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

And those words that Jesus used in Matthew chapter 5 are a direct quote from Psalm 37. And Psalm 37, and I trust that you will go home afterwards and read Psalm 37 again and again, because Psalm 37 really sums up the whole message of meekness. Again, a very difficult subject to deal with, because it is so foreign to the natural inclination, so foreign to what we want to do in the natural, in the flesh.

It is foreign to what the world tells us to do, and in fact it is today foreign to what most of the church tells us to be and to do. So let's read from the first 11 verses of Psalm 37. Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.

For they shall be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness.

Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret because of Him who prospers in His way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger and forsake wrath.

Do not fret, it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall be no more.

Indeed He will look diligently for His place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. And so you'll see that the issue of meekness here is compared to what happens with the evildoers and our reaction and response to those who do evil towards us.

That's really what he's dealing with here. And when Jesus speaks about meekness, there's a few misconceptions, a few problems we have to deal with before we look at some examples. And I'm going to look at five or so examples of men who were not meek and men who were meek, so that we can learn from those examples.

The first problem is that meekness that Jesus speaks about here is not a natural thing that we are born with. Some people are born more placid than others. And psychologists speak about A-type and B-type personalities.

A-type are people who are always hyped up and pent up and always want to do things and get things going, and they're very aggressive and very assertive. B-type people are more laid back. Generally, Natal people are more B-type, I understand, and Joburg people are more A-type, but anyway.

And so it's not that kind of thing that we are born with. It's not someone who is born just naturally sort of easygoing. That's something that we tend to think.

We say, well, that must be a meek person. And we can point to many people who are sort of easygoing, and we say, well, he's a meek man. No, that's not the meekness that Jesus speaks about.

That's just the way that he is. The meekness that Jesus speaks about is far greater than that. And in fact, you'll see that the men that we're going to use as examples this morning were not men who were naturally born to be meek or who were placid by birth, but in fact men who were very aggressive by birth.

And then the second important thing to understand before we begin to look at these examples is that meekness is not weakness, little rhyme. Meekness is not weakness. None of the men that we look at this morning were weak men.

They were very strong men. They were men who stood for that which was truth. Meekness does not mean that we give in to anything.

Meekness does not mean that we accept all sorts of error in the church. Meekness does not mean that we accept wrong being done to the name of the Lord. Meekness is far greater than that.

But at the same time, it is strength. And I think it was Martin Lloyd-Jones who says that meekness is strength under control. Meekness is strength under control.

Now, that's quite a statement. Now, let's have a look at some of these examples. And we're going to begin with Jonah.

And I'm not going to turn to the book of Jonah because we're just going to go over the story very quickly and just pick up some examples or some points in Jonah's experience and Jonah's life. Jonah is a good example of a man who is not meek. Now, it's interesting that Jonah was a man of God.

He was a man that God had chosen specifically to go and preach to Nineveh, you remember. And God says to Jonah, go and preach to Nineveh. But Jonah has his own thoughts on the matter.

Jonah says, no way, I'm not going to Nineveh. Now, remember, Nineveh was the capital of Syria. And the Syrians were the enemies of the Israelites or of the Jews.

And so, he was called to go and preach to the enemies. And he says, I'm not going. And so, when God says, go to Nineveh, he says, no, I'm going the other way.

And so, he goes down to Tarshish and he buys himself passage on the ship and he finds himself there on the ship. And so, the first thing about a man who is not meek is that he has his own mind and he does not submit to the will of God. In fact, the whole issue of meekness revolves around submitting to God rather than wanting my way.

That's really what it's all about. And so, Jonah says, no, I don't care about what God wants. I have my own agenda.

I'm going to go my own way. And so, he goes down and he goes into the ship. And you know the story how that immediately the storm comes upon the sea.

And the harder they row, the greater the storm becomes. Again, a meek man will try to get himself out of the situation. Instead of turning to God, Jonah just falls asleep as though there's no real issue.

And then you remember he's thrown overboard and the fish swallows him up. And there he is in the belly of the fish. And he cries out to God with seaweed around his head and it's quite a graphic picture.

And he says, God, I've learnt my lesson. I will be meek. That's really what he says.

Now, from that also we learn an important lesson. And that is that we cannot choose to become meek. Meekness comes as a result of the outworking of the person of Jesus Christ within our lives.

Meekness is one of the fruits of the Spirit as given to us in Galatians 5.22. And so, it is part of the fruit of the Lord Jesus within us. And it comes as a result of our relationship with the Lord Jesus. And we'll speak about that in a moment.

But Jonah says, no, I'm meek, Lord. I've decided I'm going to just do your will. And so, the fish spits him out.

He goes down to Nineveh. He preaches for three days. And sits on the side of the hill.

And now he's waiting to see God destroy the city because that was what he preached. He said, God is going to destroy the city. You remember what happened? The Ninevites all repented a great repentance.

And God says, no, I'm not going to destroy the city. And Jonah sits there on the side of the hill now waiting to see Nineveh destroyed. And Nineveh is not destroyed.

And what happens now? Jonah is angry with God. Jonah is angry with God. The second characteristic of a man who is not meek is that he easily fights with God.

He quickly argues with God. But God, you said you would destroy the place. And he wasn't so much concerned about God's honor than his honor.

And that's the third important lesson we learn about someone who is not meek. Is that he's concerned about his own honor more than the honor of God. And so, he's more concerned about the fact that he preached that the city was going to be destroyed.

And now the city is not destroyed. And so, he's angry with God. And he's fighting with God.

And then the Lord causes a little bush to grow up over him. A gourd, the old King James says. And the little bush grows up.

And Jonah's very happy because now he's got a bit of shade. And so, there he's relishing in his shade. And he says, well, at last something's going right.

And then God sends a little worm. And the little worm begins to eat away at the core of the bush. And the bush shrivels up at the same time a birgwin, or what we would call a birgwin, comes.

And the bush shrivels up. And Jonah's instantly angry again with God. Now, he wasn't grateful really in the first place that he got the tree.

He didn't recognize that God gave the tree to him. He felt that he had earned the tree. He felt that that was his dessert.

Now, remember that these Beatitudes are built one upon the other. Jesus tells them to us and teaches them to us in a specific order because there is a specific reason. And when we are poor in spirit, when we recognize that we have nothing, we are nothing, then meekness comes easy.

Because we didn't deserve the little bush in the first place. We didn't deserve the blessing or the ministry or whatever it is that God gave us in the first place. What we got was because of His goodness and because of His grace and because of His mercy.

And so if He chooses to take it away, well, that's His prerogative because I didn't deserve it in the first place. But when I'm not poor in spirit, when I think I deserve something, when I think that I'm entitled to something, when God gives me something and takes it away, I feel that God has been unfair because I deserved it in the first place. Jonah didn't understand that he didn't deserve it in the first place.

It was just God's goodness. And so he's fighting with God about the bush, fighting with God that the worm had now eaten the bush. And of course the Lord was using that as an object lesson to say to him, but you know, you're concerned about this little bush that's been destroyed, but you care nothing for all of the souls of the people in Nineveh.

And so you can see the problem. When we are not meek, we are fighting all the time. And you can see this in Jonah.

All the time he's fighting. He's fighting with God. He's fighting with the Ninevites.

He's fighting with the bush. He's fighting with the sun. He's fighting with all these circumstances.

At no stage do you find that Jonah is just happy to be in the presence of God. At no stage is he just happy to submit to the will of God. And if we compare that with Job, and while we're in Psalms we can go to the book before Psalms, which is Job.

And Job is probably one of the prime examples in the Old Testament of a meek man. Now remember, Job was not a weak man. Job was a very, very powerful man.

It says that, it lists some of his possessions in Job chapter 1. He had seven sons in verse 2, and three daughters. In verse 3 also his possessions were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and a very large household. So this man was the greatest of all the people in the east.

So he was very wealthy, but obviously also very astute. He was a good businessman, he was a good farmer. And to be able to administer an estate of this magnitude, and you'd have to work out how big his property must have been to be able to run this kind of herd.

But you'll see that he has 500 yoke of oxen, which means 500 pairs of oxen. That's 1,000 oxen. Now maybe Ken can tell us how many cows and bulls you would have to have if you had 1,000 oxen.

But probably something like 4,000 cows, a herd of 4,000 to support 500 yoke of oxen. And you'd need a huge amount of land to be able to run these cattle. And then all the camels and all of the other 7,000 sheep and all of the other stuff that he has.

And so he's a man who knows what he's doing. He's a man who's able to administer this huge estate. He's a man who is upright in his relationship and his work with God.

And yet at the same time he is a meek man. And you can see it when God takes things away from him. You remember what happens is the devil appears before God and he says, you know Job, he's only serving you because you made him rich.

But take his things away from him and he'll curse you. And so the Lord says you can do to him what you like but just spare his life and spare his body. Initially his health was to be left.

And so the devil comes and he destroys everything in one fell swoop. Everything is taken from Job. Now remember what Jonah lost.

Jonah lost one little bush. Job loses everything including his children and his sons and his daughters. And verse 20 of chapter 1 of Job says, Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell to the ground and he worshipped.

Here's the response of a meek man. Jonah immediately begins to fight with God. Job falls down and he worships God.

What a difference. Now we need to look at our own experiences and we're able to see whether we are meek or not just by the way we react when we lose something. Do we argue with God? Do we do like Job's friends? I suppose if one sums up the whole book of Job you would sum it up with one short little word.

The word why. Thirty-six of the chapters in the book of Job are spoken mainly by his friends and yet they can be summed up with this one word, why. Why did God do this? But Job does not say why.

Job falls down and he worships God. What a difference. And you know not only is this a measure of our meekness but you can see the tremendous blessing in our ability to deal with adversity.

So when difficulty comes, we're not uptight and aggro and fighting and arguing and trying to find a way out and trying to scheme and duck and dive and manipulate to try and find a way out of the difficulty. Job simply submits to God. And he says in verse 21, Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return there the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. What a response.

You know we use this in funerals but it doesn't just apply to funerals. It applies at any time. When you feel you've lost something.

When I feel I've lost something. Whether it's some possession or whether it's honor or whether it's whatever it is, friends or when you've lost something. When something is taken away from you.

We're able to say well God gave it to me in the first place. Whether it's my health. God gave it to me in the first place.

It's his goodness and his grace. And so if he takes it, it's his prerogative. And in all of this Job did not charge God with wrong.

In Job chapter 13 and verse 15 you find those well known verses also. Though he slay me yet will I trust him. Doesn't matter what God does to me Job says.

I will continue to trust him. I will continue to put my confidence and my faith in him. Now we've just got to look at the difference between Job and Jonah.

When the little worm begins to eat the bush, Jonah is fighting again. Job does not fight. Job does not argue.

He says I've submitted myself to God. Now remember who did this to Job. It wasn't God in the first place.

It was the devil who did this to Job. God allowed it. But Job recognizes that his dealings are with God.

In fact this is very important. His dealings are not with the devil. His dealings are with God.

And you know when we are not meek we begin to lash out against the instrument which God uses to deal in our lives. Or against the thing that has happened to us. And so often it's against the devil.

And many Christians are very good at fighting with the devil. And yet you remember that we are to submit to God and to resist the devil. But if we haven't submitted to God there's no way we can resist the devil.

But when we submit to God we don't have a problem because God will deal with the devil anyway. He's going to sort him out. So Job doesn't do what many Christians today would do and go and begin to bind the devil and to do spiritual warfare and begin to cast the devil out and do all sorts of things with the devil because he recognizes the issue is not with the devil.

His issue is with himself and with God. And so he simply submits himself to God. At no stage does Job address the devil.

At no stage and I'm not saying that we mustn't cast out demons. Of course we must do that. But you know when difficulty comes against us in the form of people or against in the form of what the government's legislation or because of financial situations or because the economy changes and folk in Zimbabwe are battling with us right now.

They want to lash out against the government. Lash out against the economic circumstances. Lash out against all sorts of things and fight with those things.

When in fact it's really got nothing to do with those things. The people or the instruments that God has allowed to deal in our lives. But our issue is with Him.

And when we trust Him we're able to fall down and worship Him and say Lord you know what you're doing. You know what you're doing. It doesn't make sense to me.

But I can accept that you're true and faithful and even if you slay me I will still trust you. If we look at a man like Moses and I'm just going to quote Numbers chapter 12 verse 3. It says now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. Moses was the meekest man upon the face of the earth I presume at that time.

Now remember Moses and let's just have a look because we have a bit more of a background as to Moses and who he was and where he came from. Was Moses always a meek man? No. No Moses was a typical do it yourself man.

Self made man. A man who had tremendous power and tremendous authority. A man who according to Stephen in Acts chapter 7 was skilled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

A man according to Stephen who was mighty in word and in deed. For 40 years he had grown up as a prince in a house of Pharaoh. For 40 years he had been schooled in all of the skills and the art and the craft of Egypt.

And he was a man who had some abilities. And then one day he sees the Egyptian mistreat one of the Israelites. And what is Moses' reaction? Immediately he rises up.

Immediately he is angry. Immediately he feels that vengeance needs to be taken. And this is one of the issues in the issue of meekness.

Is the issue of vengeance. When we feel we have to avenge ourselves. We are not meek.

And so he feels that he has to dispense justice. And so he rises up and he kills the Egyptian. Now we can see from that that he is not meek.

But we can also see from it that he was quite an aggressive man. He was a man who was used to having his own way. Who was used to doing what he needed to do.

And who was schooled to give direction and to give leadership in the Egyptian structures. And so a very aggressive man. And God says I can't use you like that.

And so we know how the Lord takes him and for 40 years causes him to look after sheep. And there looking after the sheep he learns meekness. He learns meekness.

And I suppose when you look at sheep that is one of the prime characteristics. Not that sheep have characteristics like we as people have. But I'm sure that if one looks at animals you can see certain human traits in them.

And so when you look at sheep you see that they are meek. When you look at sheep being led to the slaughter. And we'll speak about Jesus in a moment.

But when you see sheep being led to the slaughter. They just meekly follow. I don't know how they do it today.

But I remember as a young boy watching them at the slaughterhouse. And there used to be a goat called the Judas goat. I don't know if they still have them.

And the function of this goat was to lead the sheep to the place of slaughter. From the crawl or the pen where they were kept. This goat would lead the sheep.

And the goat would do this every day. This was the goat's job. And so because the goat was leading the sheep would meekly follow.

And they could smell the blood. They knew I suppose in a sense instinctively what was happening. And yet at the same time they just meekly followed this goat.

When you look at cattle or cows in that circumstance. They're totally different. There's a lot of kicking and screaming and mooing and lowing and all sorts of things going on.

And yet the sheep just meekly go. And you watch a sheep being shorn. That's why it speaks about Jesus in that context.

You watch a sheep being shorn. It's quite amazing. Because the shearer will take it and put it in the most unnatural position on its backside.

And then turn its neck this way. And turn its neck that way. And pull its legs this way.

And here and there it will cut it and nick it. And yet the sheep will never open its mouth. It simply submits to that whole process.

And so as Moses looks after the sheep. He learns meekness. Not only in what he sees in the sheep.

But obviously also because of the circumstance of having to deal with sheep that also characteristically always go astray. That's also within the nature of sheep. And as a young boy I had to look after sheep.

It was the most frustrating thing to do. Because you just think you've got them all settled and you've got them all together. Then one goes off in that direction.

Another one's off in that direction. Sheep instinctively or naturally just go astray. That's what sheep do.

And so for 40 years there he was in the wilderness. Without fences and without electric fences and all sorts of things to keep them in place. Having to keep this flock of sheep without losing any.

And for 40 years God teaches him meekness. And folks some of us it takes a lot longer to learn these lessons than others. Some of us it takes a lifetime of having to learn meekness.

And I'm sure that Moses after the third or the fourth or the fifth year would say, but God I'm ready. I've learned meekness. I'm ready to fulfill the mission or the calling that you have upon my life.

And yet God would say no it's not time yet. And so a year would come and a year would go. And after 40 years God finally says now the time has come.

And you remember we spoke about Moses and one of the other Beatitudes. That when God calls Moses, although Stephen says he was a mighty in word and deed, Moses says I can't speak. I have nothing.

And yet he was a man that God had uniquely called and uniquely equipped to fulfill this great ministry. And so no one else would have been able to fulfill that job. Even God at times said to Moses, I've had enough of these Jews.

I've had enough of these Israelites. They're constantly complaining. They're constantly going their own way.

They're constantly bickering and moaning and arguing. Let me destroy them. And yet Moses pleads for the people of Israel.

We know that Moses also lost his cool. So he struck the rock a second time and for that he was banished from the promised land. He couldn't enter in.

And so you can see that even in that I find great encouragement. Because Moses didn't receive a personality transplant. This is something we all want.

We want to just instantly be different people. That all of our old traits and characteristics just be wiped out and somehow by some kind of miraculous work of the Spirit we become new people and we just never react in the wrong way ever again. We all want that.

And yet God chooses not to do it that way. And so although he had taken 40 years to teach Moses and it took him another long time as he followed the people of Israel, the old man was still there. And folks, we think we've got it together.

We think we've learnt the lesson of meekness and then we stumble. And we find that the old man is still there. And so we have to repent.

We have to go back again. And so it's an ongoing process. And it's an ongoing work of the Spirit as he constantly moulds us and shapes us that we may become more like the Lord Jesus.

Let's have a look at a man like Paul. Again, Paul was not a weak man. Paul was a go-getter.

Paul was an example of a really zealous man who said, I'm going to build the kingdom of God and I'm going to keep the Jewish faith pure. And so he did everything that he needed to do. He studied.

He worked hard. He kept the law. He did all of these things.

And then when the sect of the way, which was called the sect of the way, the followers of the Lord Jesus, began to preach that Jesus was raised from the dead, immediately there was a reaction that welled up

within him, and he goes out and he begins to kill these Jews. And, you know, he was probably one of the prime movers, it seems, of the persecution that came against the church in the early days, and that it finally resulted in the whole church being scattered from Jerusalem, except for the twelve. And so here's this man with tremendous authority, with tremendous power, with tremendous charisma, with all of the things that we would say this is what one needs in a man who would really be able to take the church and move it on.

And yet he meets Jesus on the road to Damascus. And you remember what Jesus says to him. He says, it's hard for you to kick against the pricks.

It's hard for you to kick against the pricks or against the goads. Now, the example that he was using, and this is a very important example because we're going to come back to it in a moment. At the front of an ox cart that would be drawn by two oxen, there would be spikes, so that when the oxen would kick up, they would kick against these spikes.

And the purpose was to teach them not to kick up against the cart, but to submit to the yoke and to draw the cart instead of fighting the cart all the time. Now, this is the whole issue of meekness. You can see Job, he was constantly fighting against the load that he was called to carry.

Constantly fighting against God's will in his life. Kicking all the time. And this is what Paul was doing when he was still called Saul.

Fighting with God. Fighting against God. Fighting the church.

Fighting the Christians. Always in a state, going this way and going that way. Running around, trying to do the things that he felt that he needed to do.

And the Lord Jesus says, it's hard for you to kick against the pricks. And there he meets with the Lord Jesus. And he is changed.

Now, it's interesting because Moses took 40 years to go through this change. Paul seems to be changed almost instantly as he meets the Lord Jesus. And I believe that that's not without cause that we have both those examples.

Because some people do have an instant change like that. And yet others of us have to go through long and hard experiences to be changed and to become the way the Lord Jesus wants us to be. And so we can't say, because I had an instant change, you must be changed like this instantly.

Or because I have to go through long and hard experiences, you have to go through long and hard experiences. And so Moses took a long time. Paul was changed instantly.

Was Paul more select than Moses? No. It was God's sovereignty. And one of the aspects of understanding what Job understood was that God is sovereign.

God does what He chooses to do. And if God chooses to give, then God gives. And He is blessed.

And if God takes away, then He takes away, and God is still blessed. And so God is sovereign. And if He deals with one this way and He deals with another in a different way, that's His prerogative.

Remember Peter, when they were having breakfast with the Lord Jesus, and Jesus indicates that Peter would die a martyr's death. And Peter's immediate reaction is he points to John and he says, but what about Him? And Jesus says, never mind Him. You follow Me.

Never mind the way I'm going to deal with John. That's my dealings with John. You follow Me.

And so the way that God deals with you and the way that He deals with me is different. And we can't say, but God is unfair, because He somehow gives some people apparently just this gift of meekness. And yet others have to go through long, hard struggles of getting it drilled into them, so to speak.

So God is unfair. No, God is not unfair. That's His dealings with you.

That's His dealings with me. And so we submit to that. And so Paul was changed instantly.

And he becomes a different man. He becomes a meek man. And remember when they attacked him, he didn't attack in return.

When they stoned him, he just allowed it to happen. He had some power. I believe that he could have called maybe some angels to protect him.

He had miraculous power, maybe to translate himself to another place. I don't know whether he could really do that. But he certainly had powers.

But he just allows these things to happen. When they attack him in the one city, he just flees to the next city and he goes and preaches there. And when the same thing happens there, he just flees to the next city and he just preaches there.

You never see Paul reacting. But he simply submits to his circumstances. Why? Because he had submitted himself to God.

And yet at the same time, before his conversion, he's constantly kicking against those sharp pointed instruments that were given there to bring him into submission. And yet at the same time, for the rest of his life, there are still sharp pointed instruments in his life. With what purpose? It was given to me, he says, a thorn in the flesh.

Now the function of the thorn and the object, the picture, is very much the same as that of the sharp pointed instruments at the front of the cart. For what purpose? Lest I become puffed up. When we become puffed up, we forsake meekness.

We cannot be proud and meek at the same time. These two terms are a contradiction in terms. And in fact, when it speaks about Moses in the book of Numbers, some translation says that he was the humblest man in all the earth.

Humility and meekness go hand in hand. And so, although God seemed to give him such a change of heart and he became a meek man almost instantly, at the same time, God sees the need for him to be constantly kept humble and kept meek. And so he gives him still a prick, but not in the front of the cart, but a thorn in the flesh.

And so it's there all the time. Constantly reminding him of his weakness. Constantly reminding him of his poverty.

Constantly reminding him of his need for the Lord and for the Lord's intervention in his life. And so he walks as a meek man because of the thorn in the flesh. Now if we look at the Lord Jesus, maybe we can go to Isaiah chapter 53.

Although we hardly need to go there because I'm sure you know the verses off by heart. Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 7. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent.

So he opened not his mouth. And so Isaiah prophesies concerning Jesus in the context of the sheep that we spoke about earlier. The fact that he doesn't open his mouth.

The fact that he doesn't react. But he simply allows things to continue. That he simply allows things to happen.

Now let's go to the book of John or the Gospel according to John. And let's see this fulfillment of this prophecy as Jesus stands before Pilate. Now again when we look at the life of the Lord Jesus and maybe we haven't given enough time to look at the life of the Lord Jesus.

But when you look at the life of the Lord Jesus you can see meekness personified. And yet Jesus is not weak. Remember Jesus on two occasions, sometimes we think it was only once.

But if you read carefully you'll find on two occasions cleansed the temple. On two occasions he overturned the money changes. The tables of the money changes.

Chased out everything that was materialistic that had been brought into the house of God. Jesus opposes the Pharisees. He is not nice and gentle and friendly to them.

But he opposes them because they were blind leaders who were leading Israel astray. And yet at the same time he never defends himself. And I think that when one looks at the difference, the issue is how I react when it becomes personal.

That's really the issue and that's where we all fail. And I fail in that and I really battle in that area. It's easy to defend the truth when it is non-personal.

It's easy to stand for what is right and to make right judgments when it comes to other people's situations. But when the attack comes against us personally, that's when it becomes very difficult to react in the right way. And we see that at no stage when they attack Jesus personally does he react in any way.

And so here it is, he's brought before Pilate and Pilate is seeking to judge him and it's verse 8. Therefore when Pilate heard that saying he was the more afraid and went into the praetorium and said to Jesus, Where are you from? And Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to him, Are you not speaking to me? Do you not know that I have power to crucify you and power to release you? And Jesus answered, You could have no power at all against me unless it was given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin.

So Pilate pushes him on a number of occasions when you read the different gospels. Pilate asks him various questions. Jesus doesn't answer.

Now he does not answer in an insolent way. It's not like Jesus is just saying, Oh well, you know. But Jesus says, It's no good giving you an answer.

It doesn't matter what I say to you. I have submitted myself to the Father. The Father is working out something in this process.

And I recognize that. That was really what Jesus was saying. And so he says to Pilate, You've got no power.

He says, Really, what's going to happen is going to happen. Because I'm here because of the purposes of God. The Father has determined that I be here.

The Father has determined that I will die upon the cross. And so you really have no power in the whole matter whatsoever. And so what does Jesus do? He recognizes again, like Job, that the devil was not where the issue was at.

The issue was with the will of God. And Jesus recognizes that it's not with Pilate that he had any argument. Jesus has no argument with Pilate.

He recognizes that Pilate really is, in a sense, insignificant in the whole process. Because the issue that was at stake for Jesus was the doing of the will of the Father. And when we begin to understand that, we understand that... And I don't see any argo with Pilate.

I don't see Jesus being angry with Pilate or being upset with Pilate. Pilate's salvation, obviously, is another issue. But in his dealings, in his relationship with Pilate, at no stage did Jesus lose his cool with Pilate.

Because he recognizes that Pilate is simply an instrument in the hands of a mighty God. And that God is doing his purpose. And that Jesus simply submits himself, not to Pilate, but he submits himself to God.

Now, we would say, but Jesus was wrong because what he was doing is... He was acknowledging Pilate's authority. No, Jesus was acknowledging God's authority. When we work for bosses who treat us unfairly, we submit to them.

Not because they are good bosses, Paul says, but because we submit to the Father. When we submit to the government whether the laws are fair or not fair, it's not because we respect the government so much as that we respect God. And so our submission is not to the government or to our boss or to our unsaved husband in some cases.

Our submission is to the Lord. And when we're in a right relationship with the Lord, we don't have a problem submitting to governments and to bosses and to other forms of authority. Whether they are fair or whether they are not fair, it's got nothing to do with it because we're not submitting to them.

We're submitting to the Lord. Our relationship is with the Lord. And so when we go to Peter, 1 Peter chapter 2, and I want us to turn to this verse because it's a verse which really sums up the whole root of the meekness of the Lord Jesus.

And I believe that if we can understand this, and this is a verse which I have tried to come to terms with in my own life and yet have failed, and yet I understand that if we can come to terms with this verse, if this verse can become real to us, meekness will become real in our lives. 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 23. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return.

There's the meekness. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. His reaction was not vindictive in return.

When he suffered, he did not threaten. Now remember, Jesus had tremendous authority. When he was standing before Pilate, he could have called legions of angels.

He could have called fire from heaven. He could have spoken one word and Pilate would have fallen down dead. He could have done whatever because he was the Son, is the Son of God.

Yet he doesn't use that power. He doesn't use that authority to defend himself. And he does nothing to react or to take vengeance because he remembers that vengeance is mine.

I will repay, says the Lord. And so, when he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten.

And here's the key. But committed himself to him who judges righteously. He committed himself to him who judges righteously.

And folks, when that becomes real in our lives, then meekness will follow. When we're able to say, I have totally committed myself to God. I've totally submitted and surrendered myself, my will, my possessions, my health, my whatever I have has been totally surrendered and committed to him.

And he will judge. When that becomes real, there's no need to take vengeance. There's no need to vindicate ourselves.

There's no need to react and to respond in justification. Because we recognize that he is the one to whom we have submitted. And that he will judge.

And he will judge righteously. You see, we react when we feel that justice is not being done normally to ourselves. But it's not for us to see justice done.

It's God who will vindicate. It's God who will judge righteously. And God will judge righteously.

Not the way we judge. Our judgment is always tainted because it's always from our perspective. But God's judgment is righteous.

And when that comes into play, meekness follows. And so God give us grace that we may become like the Lord Jesus, that we may be able to say, I've surrendered fully to him. I belong to him.

And so whatever men do to me, whatever the devil does to me, whatever the economy does to me, whatever the government, whatever circumstances does to me, it doesn't matter. Because I'm surrendered to him. I'm committed to him.

And he will judge righteously. Finally, let's go to the book of Matthew. And we're going to draw to a close here.

Matthew chapter 11 and verse 28. Jesus 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 gentle, or meek, and lowly in heart.

And you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Now, you'll see there are two rests spoken of here.

There's one rest that we receive when we come to him. And there's another rest that we receive as we learn from him. And how do we receive the second rest? And I'm not going to get involved in the two.

We can deal with that maybe at another time. How do we receive the second rest? By taking his yoke upon us. And by learning from him.

And so, when you have two oxen inspanned, you don't inspan two wild oxen in the same yoke. Because they will break the yoke. They will break the ropes or whatever, using the chains.

They will just go wild. And so what you do is you use a tame one and a wild one. So that the tame one can teach the wild one to submit to the burden that is imposed upon it.

To submit to the yoke. And so the wild one is tamed by the tame one. Jesus says in the same way, come and be inspanned with me.

Walk with me. Walk side by side with me. Take my yoke upon you.

And you know, when we walk with him, he begins to speak to us. And I understand that oxen don't speak, but you can understand the metaphor. That if they could speak, the old wise one would say to the young one that's fighting all the time.

Kicking against the pricks. Trying to break free all the time. Just submit to it.

Speaking words of peace. Words of calmness. You know, when we take his yoke upon, when we walk with him, he will instruct us.

He will speak those words that will bring peace. He will speak those words that will bring us to a place where we can surrender to his dealings in our lives. Notice he's not saying I'm going to take all the burdens away from you and you're going to have a wonderful time roaming free out there in the felt.

No, he says we will still have to carry a burden. There will still be a yoke. There will still be a job to be done.

But in that process, he's going to walk with us. And if we walk with him, he will instruct us. He will teach us.

And we'll learn from him how to submit to the pressures. How to submit to the attacks. How to submit to the difficulties.

How to submit to the deprivations. How to submit to all of these things. Because at the end of the day, we're not submitting to these things.

We're submitting to the Father. And then he says we will find rest for our souls. When are we not at rest? When we're fighting.

When we're fighting God's dealings in our lives. When we're fighting circumstances. When we're fighting our lack of health.

When we're fighting our lack of finances. When we're fighting our loss of a job. When we're fighting the government and its policies.

When we're fighting all these many, many things that come against us all the time. We don't have peace. We're not at rest.

But when we learn from him, we're able to find rest for our souls. Now notice what Jesus says. In fact, again, we have to emphasize that there are many who are teaching today, and they use that verse out of context concerning John the Baptist, that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence until now, and the violent take it by force.

And so the people who are going to take the kingdom of God, the people who are going to take the church anywhere, are those who are assertive. Those who trust and believe in themselves. This whole self-esteem message that is being taught.

Let's just get up and let's arise and let's go and let's do things for God. This is the message that is being preached. Jesus says, no, I'm not interested in anything that you can do.

I'm not interested in anything you have. The meek shall inherit the earth. The meek shall inherit the earth.

Not the go-getters. Not the assertive. Not the aggressive.

Not the powerful. Not the mighty. Not the wise.

The meek will inherit the earth. In fact, God give us grace that we may become those people who are truly meek. Not just having put on a front.

It's easy to put on a front and to put on what I call a radio pulpit voice. You know, the special voice that religious people have and speak so gently and so softly and act so meekly and mildly. But inward there's raging waves and fight and turmoil and all of these things going on.

But that we may experience true meekness. That we may become like the Lord Jesus. And that in every way we may be those who would be blessed.

Because blessed are the meek. Because they shall inherit the earth. Amen.

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