

Meekness

by Don McClure

The sermon explores the transformative power of the Beatitudes, emphasizing the journey from spiritual poverty to true happiness through mourning and reliance on God.

Duration: 49:44

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-10, 1 Corinthians 15:31

Topics: "Christian Humility", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a personal transformation and the passing of authority from a powerful man to a seemingly insignificant Christian. The speaker acknowledges his previous desire to abuse power and contrasts it with the humble and approachable nature of the person he aspires to be like. The sermon emphasizes the importance of being meek and gentle, even in competitive situations like sports. The speaker also highlights the change in perspective that occurs when one becomes a Christian, noting that while external circumstances may remain the same, there is a newfound awareness of beauty and a desire to speak kindly.

Transcript

All right, hopefully you're already found your way to Matthew chapter 5. If you're not there, turn to it. The Beatitudes are something I suggest to every Christian. I think it's wonderful to memorize them and to study them and to meditate on them.

They're the type of things to me that they never grow old. You'll always get new insights in them throughout your life. It's not one of those things that two and two is four, and once you know it, you've got it.

They're so deep to me. They're so profound. They're unsearchable in the sense of the extent that they can reach into our heart, and that the happiness that we even discover the first time through them, it only continues to grow.

And a deeper joy that goes on all the way through our life. And of course, as you recall, that is what the Beatitudes are all about. Oh, how happy.

That's what the word blessed means. This inexpressible, this profound, deep joy, the greatest joy in all the world. That's what we're talking about here.

A joy that no one else could ever even begin to imagine. I don't care what they've achieved, what they've got, what they've acquired, what position they have in the world that's been brought to them, whether through fame or money or fortune or talent or any acquisition, any other relationship they've got. God has saved the highest and the greatest joy for those that know him, that look at him as the greatest of all riches, the greatest of all discoveries.

And when we are learning that ourselves and really being, coming to the realization, as our lives go on and we find ourselves looking for happiness in other things, in other places, as deceived as we so easily can be at times, constantly having the Lord bring us back again and again, though, to this great joy. And for the Beatitudes are really, to me, you go through them. They're all, when you put them together, you'll recall, they equal happiness.

What is really occurring in the Beatitudes, from one end to the other, is by the time somebody starts off and says, oh, happy are the poor in spirit and they who mourn and they that are meek, and then those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and then the merciful and then the pure in heart, and then the peacemaker. As you're watching this, what has actually occurred as we go through these, you realize there's been a complete transference of life. It's a complete transference of power, of the throne.

We're born sitting on the throne of our own heart and of our own life, but as we grow in the Beatitudes, this is the way that Jesus really becomes Lord of our life. And through these wonderful processes revealed to us by Jesus here in this Sermon on the Mount. And here, just to reflect for a moment, he says, oh, how happy are the poor in spirit.

The fundamental key there to somebody that is on the road to true happiness, it starts off in a sense, first of all, realizing that they have every reason not to be happy. That everything that ought to have made them happy, that is the spiritual life, the life with God, the life with his love, with his life, with his power, with the life of Christ within us, filling us, leading us, guiding us, that what has happened, man was created to know all this, but through sin we forfeited it all, every bit of it. The wages of sin is death.

And man there as he found himself utterly robbed, poverty stricken spiritually, his spiritual life was gone. And there we find ourselves with maybe regardless of what's going on within us physically or mentally or emotionally, regardless of whatever else we can accomplish there until their spiritual life were poor. And Jesus says, just discovering that, just coming to the place that you realize that's the real poverty.

Many of us dream, I'm poor in talent or I'm poor in ability or I'm poor in relationships or I'm poor in money or I'm poor in this. As long as we think that's where my poverty is, then we'll seek riches in those things. But when I realize, no, the real poverty I have is in my own spirit.

And then when we realize that, it'll start heading us into a right and wonderfully new direction that's going to result in immense happiness. But then the next step that's going to happen when somebody is poor in spirit, they're going to mourn. We looked at that last time and as you may recall, the word mourn there, it means to lament.

It means a person to, it means to bewail someone, to grieve over them and it's more commonly used for the dead. The word that Jesus used there, oh how happy are they that mourn, is that there's somebody that is literally mourning over the death. It also means to mourn over the death of a friend, to weep and to be sorrowful.

And Jesus saying there, I'll tell you when somebody is poor in spirit and they begin to mourn over it. They mourn as if someone has died. At the death of a dear friend, as a matter of fact, the dearest friend we have, ourself.

And you know, one of the things that we live in a day and age, you know, it's interesting what psychology, I don't mean to bring that up again, but I guess you have to unfortunately. But we live in a day and age where, you know, psychologists want to tell us, well, your problem is you don't love yourself enough and how can you love anybody else until you love yourself? Well, that sounds reasonable in a sense, but you got to realize as far as Jesus was concerned, loving ourself has never ever been a problem. Jesus said the problem is loving somebody else as you love yourself.

Jesus looks at every human being and says, believe me, you have no trouble loving yourself. The nearest, dearest, most precious person in the whole world is yourself. I mean, who do you get up every day? Yourself.

Who do you go in and spend all that time looking at in the mirror and all that money trying to make look nice to the rest of the world? Yourself. Who do we work at so hard to be so presentable and want everybody to love so much? Ourself. That's what we want.

We are absolutely in love with ourselves. That's never been a problem for anybody. And you know, that's why Jesus said if you could only love others as you love yourself.

But the great tragedy though that most of us have is that the person that we love so much, the person that we're absolutely in love with, none of the world seems to have shared that love. That's our problem. They look at us and we think we're so wonderful, but nobody else agrees.

Heaven doesn't agree. And most of the people, the closer they get to us, they discover how unlovely we are. And that's the great tragedy that we love somebody so much that it's so unlovely.

But this is what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. The person there that's come to that reality, and they realize that there's something been robbed from me. The person I love so much has died.

And we sorrow over it. We weep over that death. And when we do, then is when Jesus said, you're on the road to a great happiness, a tremendous joy.

You're on the road to a full restoration of your lost identity that was in sin. When you don't love yourself and you can't find that the one that you love so much is entirely unlovely and is poor in spirit and you mourn over it, you're on the road to finding the tremendous happiness, the great happiness. But unfortunately, a lot of times we try to find happiness or we try to find the solution to our problems.

And even as a Christian, outside of really being poor in spirit and mourning over it, I think one of the tragedies somewhat of the Jesus movement or the revival of the 60s and 70s that really swept much of the country, affected a lot of places in the world. But it was something that it was an awesome movement. Those of you that were around and remember it, you do.

Masses of people were coming to Christ. The fundamental theology of conversion was pretty clear. It was pretty commonly preached.

You're a sinner. You need Christ. He died on the cross for you.

Open your heart and receive him and you'll come in. He'll give you a new life. And masses of people were responding to it.

There's this tremendous hunger for God that the spirit of God was giving. But it's interesting, though the message of being saved was pretty clearly being preached in many ways. And the response was tremendously overwhelming in one sense.

But at the same time, I noticed as I look back on it, that there's a lot of theologies or doctrines as to now how that new born Christian grows. How do they mature in Christ? And here's where there was a lot of opinions essentially on spiritual growth. There was a lot of movements.

And those of you around may remember things in different theologies that promoted different things like the manifested sons of God. Perhaps you remember them, children of God and others, that essentially there was a theology that taught of what we called the perfection of the saints at the time. And in the 60s and 70s when this was going on with the manifested sons of God, it was there taken out of Romans 8 when the whole of creation waiteth and travaileth until now, waiting for the manifested sons of God, for the children of God to come into their own.

But they took that theology and said there that God wants the church perfect. A full manifestation of his children, because after all, Jesus is coming soon, but he can't come for a bride that isn't ready. And so the theology was is we all got to get ready.

And we got to get pure, and we've got to be holy, and we've got to be perfect. Because the perfection of the saints, Jesus, after all, he can't come for a dirty bride. You know, he's not coming, the holy God is not coming looking for a dirty woman.

You know, he wants a bride that's clean and pure. And that sounded reasonable enough. Therefore, we got to get our lives together.

We've got to stop sinning. And we've got to start getting, you know, as perfect as we can. And as soon as the church gets perfect, Jesus can come.

And so a lot of people kind of bought into that. Well, unfortunately, though, while this, while they're instructing everybody on how to get pure, and how to get clean, and how to get holy, it was fundamentally required a tremendous amount of human effort, of human sincerity, of human consecration, and human things there. And unfortunately, there was a lot of poor theology.

And particularly with how do you deal with sin. And if you're around, you may recall that, but it was something that sin was something there that when you become a Christian, that's no small issue. I never thought about being a sinner much until I became a Christian, then I discovered I was a sinner after I became a Christian, essentially.

And then you got a fundamental problem. You see, I think when I actually became a Christian, I thought, well, I'm going to stop sinning now that I'm saved and be Christian. And then it was quite an eye-opener when you realize you stopped, you didn't stop.

You kept right on sinning. On one hand, there was one thing in part of my heart. I knew I loved God.

I knew Christ was alive. I knew he died for me. I knew he'd risen.

I knew he was real. I knew my sins were forgiven. There was that reality.

God's Holy Spirit had borne witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. I was an heir of God. I knew that.

I knew it not because man convinced me of it, God convinced me of it. And yet right next to all this new life, this new hunger for God, this desire to walk with Jesus Christ, right next to it, there's this old nature that had always been there. I just never thought about it before.

This sin nature that had always been there, it's still right there. And if anything, now it was more real than ever. Not less real, it was more real.

There's a lot of things that I always do and didn't care one way or another about. Now I'm a Christian and I'm thinking about it and I'm getting convicted by it. I didn't like it.

You know, I used to be able to go down the road. Somebody bothered me, you could yell at them. You could give them all sorts of gestures and you could cuss at them and feel all the better for it, you know, and things.

And now I'm a Christian and now I'm going down the road doing the same thing, still yelling and cussing and giving gestures, only now I feel bad about it. I'm thinking, it used to be fun. Now it's not coming off right anymore.

All of a sudden there's somebody in the car saying, just stop doing that. How are you supposed to get anywhere if you don't get there this way? This is how you get places in the world. I don't have a donkey like you.

This is how we do it now. And, you know, somehow or another. And now we could be, you know, you play sports and of course you get all fired up and you get angry and you yell at each other and you cuss or whatever else you do.

That's how you play sports. It's what it's all about. You're aggressive and you're nasty and, you know, and you tell a guy just before he's about to go out for a pass what you think of his mother or something or whatever it is.

And then you become a Christian and then you try to think up different things to say about his mother that are a little nicer, but you mean the same thing. But now you feel bad about it. And you wonder what in the world is going on here.

And, you know, I'd walk around campus before I was a Christian and see a pretty girl. Wow, it's a pretty girl or something like that. And you'd walk around campus after you're a Christian and, wow, they're still pretty, you know, or something in the, you know, and only now I feel bad that they're pretty, you know, or whatever else it is.

And you're trying to struggle. What do I do with this? I don't know how to solve this thing. I solved it a little bit.

I actually transferred out to Cal Poly in Pomona. Went to school there. It's an agricultural school if you don't know about that.

And it was a little, little less problem there because the homecoming queen was also state champion for bull riding and calf roping. But temptation was a little better when the homecoming queen, she came in over the hills at five o'clock at night. Let's see, which one is she? But anyway, but no matter what I did, it just seemed like now I did the same things.

I said the same internal things, only now there's a going on. Now there's a struggle over the whole thing. Go to a fraternity party.

I used to think they were fun. Now I go to a party and now they're no fun. I tried to make them fun.

I'd work real hard at making them fun. Get around, start chatting, or then I know we'll tell a joke or you'd tell the best joke. Maybe a little crude, maybe real crude.

And they'd laugh. I'd laugh. But inside me there's somebody saying it isn't funny.

It is too funny. You know, no, it isn't funny. Come on, God, you've got to lighten up.

Get a sense of humor, you know, or something. Or you, because you just, you're going through a battle and you don't know how to solve it. You don't know what in the world to do with all of this stuff.

And you find there it's not, not too long. You don't have to be a Christian very long until you come to realize that a carnal Christian is about the most miserable person on the planet. Oftentimes far happier before you're a Christian than when you become one.

Because you still go on, you still have this nature that you live fine with, so you thought before you were saved, but now all of a sudden it doesn't work any longer. But tragically, even at the time when I was a Christian, I would go to people, I'd ask them. Other Christians, older Christians or something, getting, you know, I'd get involved in ministry, I'd get involved in sharing.

I love sharing. I love sharing the Lord. I love leading people to Christ.

But still, no matter what I did, as much as I could do all of this stuff, I still had this nature. I could still, you know, read the Bible and love the Bible and talk to people about the Lord and share, you know, on campus. But at the same time, while all of this is going on, there's this inner light that is just sitting there, almost taunting you, almost mocking you as a human being, as a Christian.

And you're there dealing with all this internal kind of condemning crud or something there that goes on, thinking it's just going to finally one day get tired and drop off, and it doesn't. And you wonder, well, what do you do with it? I remember one time I got up enough courage to talk to some older Christians, I thought, that more mature, that I could tell them this is the battle that's going on within me, the heart of my thoughts, my anger, my lust, or my frustrations, or my hostilities. And as I finally kind of poured all this out, I told this to somebody, and they looked at me, and they said, you know, we need to pray for you.

And I'll never forget, they told me, you're under the pile. That's what they told me, I was under the pile, and they need to pray for me. Somehow or another, that didn't do it.

You know, whatever it was, and in this time, you know, you got to get the victory. But I'll never forget, quote unquote, I was under the pile. And I found myself there wondering what in the world that was, you know, sort of a thing there, to be under the pile, and then I found out as time went on, it was kind of a catch-all Christian phrase at the time, that basically they should have said, hey, live with it.

I got the same problem, I don't know what to do about it either, so I'll pray for you. But nothing will probably happen, because it hasn't happened for me either. But then I just learned to be quiet, and work on the wonderful Christian of activity and art of hypocrisy, where you just kind of cover it up as if it isn't there, and if you aren't struggling with it, it's not real.

I got pretty good at it, I suppose, I think we all learned that. I remember one time literally telling this fellow, you know, what do you mean under the pile? I get out from under it for time, but then it finds me again, and I'm back under this pile, and I said, I got this sneaky suspicion, I am the pile, you know, sort of a thing there, and I don't know what in the world to do about it. But there's all these different ways that people deal with things.

In the 70s, one of the things that happened with the perfection of the saints, when they told everybody to go get perfect, and they weren't doing it, and it wasn't working. The next thing that kind of happened back then, is it kind of got followed up with the whole, the big doctrine of Christians being demon-possessed. Well, it's the reason you got this trouble with your anger, is you got the demon of anger.

And so all the angry people, you know, you just got to get the demon of anger cast out, or if, you know, you had the demon of lust, you just got to get the demon of lust capped out, or the demon of nicotine. There is the, you know, the demon of alcohol, demon of drugs. One time, I heard of the chocolate demon, you know, I'm serious.

My wife wanted that one cast in her, actually. Dark chocolate, but the, specifically, but sometimes, I mean, with all these just simple ways that here you got a problem, you just cast it out, you know, sort of a thing. And, but in the meantime, just coming to the realization that these are sin, and they're wrong.

A few years back, I remember when we were going through a move, I happened to come out, and some guys that were helping us move, they're from a moving company, one of my sons is talking to him, and evidently, the fella just, a gal had just walked by, and he'd made some real clear remarks about what he thought of this girl, and my son was telling him, he says, by the way, that's lust, and that's wrong. And he says, what do you mean that's wrong? And so my son came to me, he said, Dad, where does it say in the Bible that if a man looks at a woman with lust after her, and I told him, sure, I remember where it was, and he went in, got his Bible, and came out, and next thing I know, he and this fella, they got the Bible open, and he's reading it to him. He said, if a man looks at a woman with lust after his heart, you know, he's committed adultery, and this fella's reading it, and he's going, oh, no, no, that can't be there.

And he's, he was the most unhappy guy you'd ever heard, he's reading it over and over, that's, no. And he looked there, and he says, but this is one of my favorite pastimes. He says, I love lusting.

He's there, he's just quite honest. He obviously wasn't, you know, a fully grown Christian where you'd learn to say, oh, no, I don't do that. But the, I don't have any problem with that.

But the, but the answer for it isn't casting it out. The answer isn't hiding it. The answer isn't waiting for it to go away.

The answer is mourning over it. The answer is the same answer that Jesus had over sin. He mourned over it.

He wept over it. He died. And when something happens within me, I don't believe we're ever free of these things until something grieves us so much that we find ourself wanting to die.

And then when we realize that the issue isn't having, you know, that we physically need to die. And one time years ago, and I don't recommend this, I've never done it again, but I did it one day, the woman called and wanted, she said she was going to commit suicide. And I said, oh, and she's, it was kind of a last ditch effort.

And considering it, and that's where they're at and they're going to do it, but made one last call, see if there's any hope. And so as she went on and talked about her life, I said, you know something, it's not often I do this, but I agree with you. And I said, I recommend suicide in this case.

But I said, I have a couple of questions to ask you before you rush off and do it. And she said, what is that? Desperate now, she's more desperate than ever. But I said, is your heart beating? Okay, yeah.

Blood flowing? Yeah. Body works? Yeah. So nothing really wrong with your body.

No, it's just the person that lives inside then. Yes, I guess so. Well, then there's no reason to kill the body.

Just got to find out who is it in there that's doing all this stuff and kill them. And you see, this is precisely the battle. This is precisely the issue.

I was just hoping I could get through the conversation enough before she pulled the trigger, and fortunately I did on that time. But the thing is, is that when we realize, oftentimes I want to die, I just want to die. Well, that is so often spiritually when we realize that's what's got to happen.

There's got to come a place to where there is a true death. When we find there within our heart, and sometimes, but until we mourn over it, until we grieve. Many people, they live with their lust until finally some embarrassing thing happens.

They get caught with pornography, or they get caught in some affair. Something happens where finally it breaks their heart. Finally, they find God has got to die.

It's destroying everything that's precious to me. Or it's their anger that they just lose it. And the family finally says, we can't take you any longer.

Or they lose relationship after relationship, or job after job, or one aspect of their nature, whatever the addiction may be, whatever the problem. But when finally we mourn, and we grieve over it, is the day that then the Lord says, now we're ready. You know, the thing that so often we have the greatest trouble learning in the Christian life is that victory in the Christian life, it isn't by effort.

It isn't by promise. It isn't by trying. It isn't by crying.

It's by dying. It's by being able to spiritually put our head on the chopping block and say, God, this area of my life, it's got to die. It's got to be over.

I can't stand it. I know you can't stand it. You've been speaking to me about it for years.

I've hidden it for years, covered it for years, denied it for years. But now it's embarrassing me as a human being before you. It doesn't have to go to full exposure.

It doesn't have to go to where it ruins necessarily anything else in our life. It's just got to come to the place where it ruins us, where we cry out within us. And when finally that day happens, then the next one, where

we're in tonight, about to close, but these are like falling to me, you know, off a, you know, ladder or something.

You just go down one step and the rest you'll just keep going. But there, when he says, oh, how happy are the meek. What essentially is happening here, that a person there who is poor in spirit and they mourn over it, it has this wonderful way of where it produces within them a meekness.

It produces within them a gentleness, a brokenness there that happens within them. There it is something to where within their heart or within their life, now they stand before God knowing they deserve nothing but condemnation. They stand before God in their guilt.

They stand before God in their hopelessness and standing before God that way instead of now with their list of demands or God, you owe me or God, I want this or God, I want anything. Now they're looking there and they cry out for mercy and say, God, please don't give me what I've got coming. Please don't give me what ought to be mine.

And then when the Lord comes and he loves them and he forgives them and they understand his atonement, they understand his mercy, they become somebody there that becomes this tremendously meek person. They become somebody there that within their heart or within their life, they can't believe how good God is to them. They can't believe how merciful he is, how kind he is, how loving he is, how accepting he is.

Nobody else would ever accept me knowing what I know and what you know. And yet you knowing it, you still love me. Knowing these struggles, knowing this nature.

Of course, he knows it. He knows it so well, deeply. But the wonderful thing is that when we find ourselves there, you know, in meekness before God, gentleness, and Jesus said a happy man is a meek man, whether it be all that's happening is that meekness is just simply being before man what I am before God now.

I realize before God, you know, I haven't got what I deserve and then if anybody else will still love me and be my friend, anybody else will share their heart of their life with me, I'm as amazed as I am before God. I'm amazed at God's goodness. And meekness is a fruit of being poor in spirit.

It's a response to mourning over it. And then you realize you aren't dead, you aren't killed, you aren't done. God has only been letting the part that ought to die, cutting out the spiritual cancer.

That's all he's been ever wanting to do, never destroy our life. He's been wanting to give us life. But when we realize there, God forgive me and God cleanse me and God help me.

It's interesting, the Bible tells us about Moses that he was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. Moses of all people, look at this fella. And when the Bible tells me that Moses was the meekest man on the face of the earth, I would almost personally think he'd be just the opposite.

I think if ever there would be a proud man, it'd be Moses. I think if ever there was a guy that you'd come along to that in one interview and had a big head, probably you'd think it'd be Moses. After all, the man literally ruled the course of nature for 40 years.

This guy opened up river, got water out of rocks, manna from heaven, pillar of fire by night, a cloud by day over them, destroyed enemies, raised up his rod and armies fell. Literally, whatever this man did and whatever he seemingly wanted to do, stood before God, received the 10 commandments, came down, he opened the earth, people got sucked into the thing. I mean, this guy is something for 40 years.

But the thing is, the Bible says that Moses was the meekest man on the face of the earth. It's quite astounding, isn't it? How would that happen? Well, when you go back and you trace his life, you realize Moses, of course, as somebody once said about Moses, he spent the first 40 years of his life becoming somebody. Spend the next 40 years of his life becoming nobody.

And then the last 40 years of his life, God was everybody through him. I suppose if Moses actually had done what he did at 40, he would have been the most proud man without question. And Moses there, exceedingly fair, educating all the wisdom and the knowledge of the Egyptians, mighty in word and deed, son of the daughter of Pharaoh.

If he at 40 years old, when it came into his heart that God wanted, he used him to set the children of Israel free. If he'd gone out and opened the river, you know, and they'd all walked through and Moses would have done anything at all. And you'd interview him on the other side of the river and say, Moses, that was something.

If there's CNN and all of them, they're over there on the other side. Whoa, how did you do that? Well, I don't know. I am exceedingly fair.

Being educated in all the wisdom and knowledge of Egyptians probably played into it. Being mighty in word and deed has never held me back much either. Being son of the daughter of Pharaoh and in line to become Pharaoh, I was always poised for greatness.

Who knows which one of my attributes was really responsible? You know, I mean, he would I imagine at that point, but then God took him in there. He spent 40 years. Finally, he finds himself not before men and before himself and his own image of himself and his pride or his arrogance, but God broke all that stuff out of it.

He mourned and he grieved and he's before God, an empty, broken man at 80 years old. God says, now let's go do it. And Moses said, I can't and they won't listen to me.

I'm not eloquent. You know, they won't believe me. And now all of it was gone.

Everything was gone. He was nothing. But there he stood before God and the life of God and the power of God and God's mercy and God's grace.

And he took him and he sent him out there and he sent him before. Goes before Pharaoh, throws the rod down and became a serpent. Brings the plagues upon the, you know, the earth.

Opens the river. I imagine at 80 years old, if you'd asked Moses, how did you do that? He'd have probably looked at you and I and said, you know, I have the slightest idea. I have the faintest idea.

I was scared like everybody else. I had this stick in my hand. God said, stretch it out.

So I stretched it out and whoa, it opened. I couldn't believe it either. Was that something or what? I didn't do it.

I just, it wasn't like I went there, you know, or something. He just, he just told me what to do. And I just learned to do what I was told.

I just do what I'm told, just under orders. I love him and he's forgiven me and he's made me his own. He's called me to himself.

I can't believe that now he even wants to use my life and I just give it to him. Pouring spirit, I mourned over it and he still accepted me anyway, in spite of me, not because of me. And now I go out and I stretch it out.

I don't know how to open. And that, wasn't that something? If you ever figure out how I did it, let me know. Try it again.

You know, who knows what he, but he, a meekest man on the face of the earth. You see somebody there that has been before God like this, it'll always produce meekness. Always.

Man who's truly before God, the great fruit of it. I remember years ago, the first time, I've only met him a couple of times, but the first time I had the opportunity to meet Billy Graham, I was a relatively new Christian. And he actually was speaking in Pasadena, something to a group of pastors.

And I, my brother got me a ticket in to be able to go hear him. It was, the audience was just filled with leaders and pastors. And I went in to hear him.

He'd led me to Christ and his crusade. And so I just wanted to hear him so bad. So I got in, I heard him.

And then after it's all over, we're walking down the street, my brother and I, next thing you know, Charles Fuller is walking there. And so we start talking to Charles Fuller. And as we're talking, you know, he asked me a little about me and I told him, well, I got saved to Billy Graham's crusade.

He says, well, would you like to meet him? I said, yeah. He says, well, come on, I'm having lunch with him. So he takes us down a room, we come in and here's, you know, this good size room, maybe 50 by 50.

But over on the other side, there's just a couple tables set and for lunch. And, and over there, there's Billy and a bunch of, you know, spiritual giants, you know, all standing around talking. And, and we walk in there.

And as soon as we got in there, somebody needed Charles Fuller for something. He says, I'll be right back. And he left us.

And we're standing there over here and about 40 feet over there, they're talking. And then every couple minutes though, Billy would look over, we were staring at him. Then we'd look away like I'm not looking.

Did I look like I would? No, I know, honest, you know, and, and then he'd look back and we, and finally, after a few minutes, he saw him shake hands and, you know, excuse himself. And he walks right across the room. There was no place to go.

He's coming straight at us, looking at us. Oh, no, we're in trouble now. And he, you know, he comes out and he sticks his hand right out to me.

And he says, hi, my name is Billy Graham. What's yours? And when I eventually remembered it, you know, I, I told him and, uh, and, uh, he's, we start talking. I said, boy, this is so wonderful just to be able to

meet you.

I said, I came to the Lord in your crusade. He said, you did? Well, tell me about it. I said, oh, my parents got me.

I was up there and you know, you don't, yeah, you, you, you know, or whatever. And I'm talking to him about this. And he sat and listened to me like I was the only guy that led to the Lord.

He wanted to know everything about it. What are you doing now? You still walk? Oh, yeah, I'm serving him. Really? What are you doing? Well, as a matter of fact, I'm planning to take your place, you know, or whatever.

I didn't say that. I just thought it, you know, but the, but here, you know, we're kind of, you know, going on. But as I were talking away, you know, I look over and these guys are staring at us because these guys wanted to have lunch with him.

He's talking. I'm so embarrassed. I said, you know something? I thought we, I don't think we're supposed to be in here.

And I said, I think you're supposed to be over there and we're going to be in trouble. And he said, look, I'll never forget this. He said, I have lunch with guys like this all the time.

It's not often I get to speak to somebody about, like you and just talk about Jesus. And he says, so don't worry about that. You know, so I kind of leaned over a bunch of monkey.

We're talking about the passing of the baton. We'll be done in a while, you know, or whatever, you know, carrying on. But as I look back on that thing, I realized here on one hand was this awesome man with incredible authority and power that the Lord had given to him.

And yet he was about to meet this guy. And what a sad thing is I look back and realize here is this twerp of a Christian there standing there with him, dreaming of being like him to abuse the power that I dream of. With he who had it, used it the way it ought to be used.

Open, gentle, meek, approachable, love to talk, love to share. Realize, I look back and realize what an incredibly different, you know, when I realized there, I think Billy, he was amazed himself that so many people come to Christ by him. So amazed the way God had used him.

He was as blown away, I think, as Moses was. But then again, that's what happens when somebody lives before Jesus. He said, come unto me, all that labor and heavy laden, and I'll give you rest.

My burden is light, my yoke is easy, for I am meek and lowly of heart. Jesus, so incredibly meek, the ultimate of meekness, wasn't he? The example of it, the perfection of meekness. And when you look at Jesus there in his absolute meekness, he not only came, he took upon our sin, and he took our place on the cross, and he took our shame, and he took all these things upon himself, but he did it so gently, he did it so meekly, as a lamb done before the slaughter, he uttered not a word, didn't complain.

So meek, so gentle. A bruised wreath, the Bible says, he would not break. A smoking flax, he wouldn't quench.

Somebody there so meek, so gentle at life, so caring, so loving. And he dies quietly, lying in a tomb for three days, rose up some three days later, and then what did he do? He just came looking for those that would love him and want to follow him, that's all he was interested in. And he did it so meekly.

I mean, such power, incredible power, when you think of this. The capacity there, hanging upon the cross to call legions of angels, I say that's it. They don't need this.

Right there at his beck and call, just surrounding him, right there at that very moment, waiting for a motion, waiting for a word, while he's being mocked and spat upon and ridiculed, blood dripping from his face, from his back, from his hands, from his feet, from inside. And while they're shooting out the lips of others he saved, himself he could not save. No, himself he would not save.

So meek, so gentle. And when he's resurrected, he never, never, this is one of the most incredible things about him, so meek, he never shoved in the Sanhedrin's face, never did anything. To me, so meek.

Sometimes I think about Jesus, the opportunities he missed. You know, if he'd only had me as his manager, some of the stuff he could have done with that power. I mean, wouldn't it have been wild if right after the resurrection, while the Sanhedrin's down there having their big party, they killed him, you know, they got him out of the way, this huge problem they've got.

Wouldn't you just love after the resurrection, you don't have to do a lot, just go and tap on the door. Hi. Happy Easter, you know, or whatever.

I mean, you just shove it in their face, you know, or something. I mean, I still think he should have done it. It would have been great to me, but that's the difference, isn't it? But when somebody there, you know, what's happening, somebody, when they're no defense, nothing to defend.

Somebody's poor in spirit, and they mourn over it, and they honestly, you know, can say, I'm a sinner. And like Paul, you know, in Romans, you know, Paul says, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. Now, in the King James, that sounds kind of nice.

It almost sounds nice, oratorical sort of it. Now in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. I think, wow, that's heavy.

I like that, this particular one in the Living Bible, it says, I know that insofar as my sinful self is concerned, I am rotten through and through. Now that's getting to it. But when somebody comes to the realization that my sinful nature is rotten through and through, that's a person that's poor in spirit, and they mourn over it.

And that will produce meekness. Because if you've got something that you honestly have come to the realization, it's rotten through and through. It is sinful.

There's nothing redeeming about it. There's nothing good about it. Nothing hopeful about it.

And we honestly realize that about ourself. Then a meek person, there's no reason to defend it. No pride left, nothing to be proud of.

Nothing at all. We're only proud if we've got something. I mean, you go to the White House, they protect it, because they're proud of it.

Yeah, they've got all sorts of, you know, you go see the Hope Diamond. I don't know if you've been there. I've seen that.

You know, they're proud of it. It's beautiful. It's worth it.

It's precious. They've got all sorts of infrared devices and security cameras and everything to protect it. Because if there's something worth something, you protect it.

You're proud of it. You care about it. But when it's worthless, you don't care.

Who protects anything that's worthless? You ever driven by the city dump and seen any, you know, surveillance cameras there over the thing? Gone to city dump and there they got all, you know, infrared devices and motion detectors to see if anybody's trying to sneak in and steal the trash, you know, or something there. All right, who's after today's garbage, you know? I mean, you don't have to protect it. And meekness is when somebody, they don't have anything to protect.

A meek person is somebody who says, you know, you can't say anything bad enough about me. Every once in a while I hear stuff about me. There's something that somebody's got to say that maybe isn't that nice.

And tell you the truth, most of the time I just think, Lord, I'm so grateful they don't know the whole truth. They'd really get me, you know, I mean, they'd really have me dead. They only know half the truth.

And we oftentimes just want to argue technicalities because there's a pride that wants to restore self. But when we realize, God, there's nothing worth defending. I don't care to protect anything.

I just want what you want within me. And when there's somebody that teaches us a meekness, when in a home, when you find there a person doesn't have to have their will, doesn't have to have their way, something's died. And something's been mourned over and has produced a gentleness and a meekness within them, within their home and their marriage and their family.

That there they find themselves, you know, humbled and quiet. They can't believe God is so good to them. They can't believe God has blessed them so much.

Oh, everything isn't perfect, but it certainly isn't anything like it could be. And how wonderful God has been, how graceful he's been. The people he's given to me.

And instead of in my pride finding some little thing that I want to pick at and don't like, there when you find yourself there, God, I can't believe you've given to me all that you've given. And that's a person that affects their life. It affects their relationships.

And it ultimately affects their happiness. They find there, because they've hit bedrock and they find themselves, God, it's not hard being honest. You can be happy right now tonight, wonderfully happy.

But you've just got to be willing to put your head on the chopping block and let it die. And then not try to go out being proud of anything when we're done. I remember back in, oh, 60s, 70s, I can't remember when it is.

There was a big debate going on in Congress over Panama Canal, whether to give it back to Panama or not. And the debate was going back and forth, and Dr. S.I. Hayakawa, maybe you remember him, he was

a California senator. Hayakawa stood up there on the Senate floor, and he said, listen, we stole it fair and square, we ought to keep it.

That was his argument. We stole it fair and square, we got it, we ought to keep it. But you know, it's interesting, that's the way a lot of Christians are about their life.

We stole our life away from God and sin. It wasn't fair and square, but we stole it. We've got this ego, we've got this pride, we've got this self-life, something that was never designed by God.

It was just the response to the fall. Arrogance. I, me, my, myself, I'll have, I want, get out of my way.

And this flesh, this nature that crept up there and just formed and grew out of sin. Yeah, you know, we stole it fair and square, you might say, and sin. But there's no reason to keep it.

Wonderful thing as a Christian, I can come and say, God, I don't want to keep it. And to realize that God looks and he says, you know, there's a way you can give it back. It's called the cross.

And we're going to close, but one of the things I suggest, maybe afterwards, if you find yourself there where, God, I'm, you don't have to wait to get embarrassed, you don't have to wait for some terrible trial. There may be things in your own heart and life, even tonight, God is saying, this needs to die. This needs to be put upon the chopping block.

You need to let it go. You need to let it be buried. And you need to be crucified with Christ and take this.

You don't have to just try to get over it or hide it or be a hypocrite about it and say it's not there. And just come and you won't surprise God. I'm sure you won't surprise one person that you'll be praying with.

You may think you will. I want, you know, you may go to your wife tonight and say, honey, pray for me. I want to tell you something about myself that you don't know.

I know we've been married for 30 years, but I'm an angry person. She might say, oh, well, dear me, you know, kids, guess what your father said? What? Are we in trouble again? You know, but when you say I'm tired of it and it's wrong and I want to be meek, I want God to teach me his gentleness and his meekness. I'll tell you, you'll be happy.

Those around you will be happy. They're going to discover something wonderful. The Christian life, it's a wonderful thing, but it isn't cheap.

It'll cost you your life to get it. Whosoever would save his life will lose it, but whosoever would lose his life for my sake, the same shall save him. And Jesus there today, he says, I've got my whole life, all the joy of heaven for you, but you've got to be willing to pay the price.

And the price is that of death. Paul said, I die daily. It's a never-ending thing.

It isn't as you do it once and it's over. It's a constant work of God. Father, we thank you for your love and for your word.

And Lord, I thank you for the joy that you want us to know. I thank you, Lord, that you desire to take us and to give us a joy unspeakable. That you look at us and you don't tell us these things to make us feel bad.

You tell us because you want us to know you know. It doesn't make you love us less. It doesn't make you angry at us.

You're not even disappointed with us. You're God. You know these battles better than anyone.

It must break your heart to watch us try to fight it with all the wrong equipment. To watch us try to hide it or be done with it or ignore it. Or act as if it's not there.

Or to somehow or another psychologically just kind of smooth it over. Or excuse it and explain it. Because you see, I've had a tough life.

That's why. None of that does us any good until finally we find ourself before you, Jesus. Saying, Lord, would you please help me? This is probably one of the reasons you died, isn't it? One of the very things you died for.

So you know all about it. I know I'm not surprising you. Now will you please forgive me? I want to put my finger right on it and call it what it is.

Please forgive me. And Lord, more than anything, I'd love to be free. And the evidence of that freedom and that emptiness and that brokenness may it be meekness.

May I be a person that I just can't believe that you would give to me your love. That you would look at me and say, can we go home together? Can I fill you with my love and with my spirit? Oh, you're not perfect. You'll never be till you see me face to face.

But if we can keep meeting like this, now we're going somewhere. If we can keep opening our hearts like this, we're going to get to real joy. If you can deal with the things in honesty and what you're really all about, then I can tell you what I'm really all about too.

It's far more powerful than anything you are. Lord, may you help us to know your love. And as a result of it, may we not only be happy, but may it be a joy that we realize through it I've fallen in love with God.

The one who loves me, gave himself for me, and continues to do it all the time. So Lord, we thank you for your love. We thank you for your word.

And Lord, may we be free. Maybe some of us tonight, we just would like to die. But yet you'd look at us and say, well, I agree with that.

But let's kill the right thing. It's not your body. It's just the nature inside.

Lord, teach us this. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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