

Meek and Mild

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and meekness in our relationships with God and others.

Duration: 28:02

Scripture: Psalm 121:2, Proverbs 16:18, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 6:33, John 14:9, 2 Corinthians 12:9, James 4:6

Topics: "Meekness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the Beatitudes, specifically the first and third ones. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the meaning behind these statements. The first Beatitude states that the poor in spirit are blessed because they will inherit the kingdom of heaven. The preacher encourages the audience to recognize their need for God and to be meek, like Jesus, in order to maintain their testimony and power. He also addresses the pressure and agitation caused by worrying about how others perceive us, emphasizing the need to focus on how God sees us instead.

Transcript

There's four Gospels in the New Testament. Do you know what they are? Matthew, Mark, and only two of those people were part of the original 12 disciples. You know which ones? Matthew and John.

Mark was not. Luke was a Gentile who was converted, it seems, under Paul's ministry on his second missionary journey. And each has a different perspective.

Matthew was, of course, Jewish. All of Jesus' disciples were Jewish. Jesus, Jewish, according to the flesh.

And it's the Gospel that tries to prove that Jesus fulfilled all the promises in the Old Testament about being the Messiah. And this is the one that the Jewish nation was waiting for. But when he came to his own, his own received him not.

But as many received him, he gave them the power to become sons and daughters of God. According to Matthew, the first public words Jesus ever spoke, according to Matthew, was this. Now, when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down.

He had been healing the sick, according to Matthew. He had been preaching. And he had been saying, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

So crowds were gathering. He went up on a mountainside and he sat down and his disciples came to him. And he began to teach them, saying, and now we have what are commonly called the Beatitudes.

Everybody say Beatitudes. Beatitudes. And I wanna just do the first one and the third one because they sometimes get confused and they are very rich in meaning to us tonight and the musicians and all of us.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. That's the first recorded words that he has of a full message that Jesus preached. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You know what? Let's memorize them. One, two, three. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Then the third one, which we confuse with the first one, is this, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Say that with me. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

So there we have the first words, the first doctrinal teaching of Jesus, let's say. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are, the third one, in between are blessed are they that mourn, they shall be comforted.

And there's probably a sequence that's there. We won't go into tonight, but blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

So let's just notice this. The first word that Jesus said was blessed. That word means happy, to be envied, full of spiritual joy and peace.

That's what it means. God wants us all to be blessed. He doesn't want anyone here to be cursed.

He wants everyone to be blessed. Can I get a loud amen? Amen. That's the first thing he taught.

So whatever your picture is of God, tune it correctly and see the face of Jesus as he taught the image of the, the exact representation of the invisible God. He told everybody, bless it. I want you to be blessed.

And then in the first beatitude, he says something that flies in the face of everything about our culture. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who feel their need of God. Some have said blessed are the beggars, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the people who know they can't make it, who know they're not smart enough, who know they're not strong enough. Blessed are the poor in spirit. The opposite of that are those who are rich in spirit, their own human spirit, which would be pride.

But God resists the proud, but he gives grace to who? So Jesus is saying, you wanna know the people really to be envied? The people that are filled with spiritual joy? They're not the ones who are walking around saying, I can do this, I can do that. They're the ones who are always reaching out their hands and saying, fill me, Lord. Help me today, Lord, I can't make it.

Got a lot of pressure on me, Lord, can't make it. Got that wayward son, whatever, God, help me. God, help me.

Oh, God, I need wisdom. God, I got decisions to make, give me wisdom. He said, that's the happiest person in the world, because when you're poor in spirit and you keep reaching out to God, God is gonna fill you with everything that the kingdom of heaven can give you.

Can we say amen to that? That flies in the face even of a lot of Christian principles where pompous showboating and presenting yourself as somebody who's all that is sometimes the rule, and that is totally against what Jesus taught. He said the happy person is the person who doesn't have, because then God will give it to them. The person who says, I have everything I need, I don't need God, that's the person to be pitied.

What a poor soul that person is, because they're weak and they don't even know it. They can't make it and they're not even aware that they can't make it. But you wanna be really blessed today? This is, notice, vertical relationship to God.

Vertical relationship to God. Blessed are the poor in spirit, because wherever God sees somebody low, he says, I will lift you high. If you acknowledge your need of me and you're always reaching out to me, then the kingdom of heaven is yours ultimately, but even here on earth, you're gonna get all my resources because I would never let you down.

You acknowledge you're weak and poor. Notice that fits together with 2 Corinthians, doesn't it, where Paul says, I glory in tribulation and trials and difficulties, because then I sense my weakness and I found out that when I am weak, then I am what? This to the world is totally like crazy. You don't ever admit weakness.

You just boast and you use positive thinking and you do all of that stuff, but Jesus is teaching us here now, as someone once said, God's main task with all of us, all the deacons and deaconesses, starting with me, this pastor, all of us up in the balcony, God's main job, because he loves us every day, is to humble us. If he can just get us down low, with our hands up, saying, I need thee, oh, I need thee. Every hour I need thee.

If he can get us there, everything's gonna work out. He'll come, he'll bless, but we tend, all of us, to be pompous and self-sufficient and walk around saying, I might need a little help around the edges, but really, I got this thing together. Pastor, you don't know how long I've been a Christian, but the truth is, we all need him every hour of every day.

Can we say a loud amen to that and clap our hands? We need him. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who beg for a living. That is so excellent.

Blessed are those who, in their vertical relationship with God, are always saying, give me this day, my daily bread, my daily wisdom, give me my food, give me my strength, give me my power, give me my direction. I'm coming to you every day, God, I'll keep coming because I have nothing in myself. All I do is reach to you, Lord, because I have nothing to bring you except my poverty, and God loves to take poor people and make them rich in him.

I know why it's hard to say amen and get all excited, because that rubs us all the wrong way. Past simple, you make it like I'm helpless. Yep, that's exactly what I was trying to say, because I'm helpless, and Jesus put the capstone on it when he said, without me, you can do nothing.

But that's one thing to quote at that verse, it's another thing to live it, and that's why we're gonna pray in a moment. Oh God, give us poverty of spirit. Open our eyes so that we might know how much we really need you.

See, preachers need that. Let me tell you what happens to preachers. They preach for a while, let's say God opens the door and they're gonna preach a sermon, so they get desperate for God, God help me make this alive and all of that, and then they preach.

Let's say God blesses the message, right? And they see how God has touched people and people react to it and all of that. So then two months later, they're invited somewhere, and someone says, would you preach? And they go, oh, I don't know what I should preach on. Oh, I know, I'll preach that thing I preached two months ago.

That one works. That's the bomb.com, boy, I'll tell you. And then you fall flat on your face.

Because no sermon works, God works. And when you preached it the first time, you felt your need of God. Oh, preachers, we talk about that all the time.

And sometimes when a man is used a lot by God over the years, then they feel self-sufficient. Like when a person started, they were desperate. Oh, God help me.

But now they're used to doing this. Isn't that the truth for all of us? To walk with God and keep humility of spirit, poor in spirit, and what a blessedness that is. Listen as I close this part.

It's so blessed because now you don't have to strain or do anything because you know you have nothing to work with. You just come to God and you keep saying, I got no pressure on me, God, because whatever I need, you have to supply. So I bring it to you, God, and lift this burden and remind me that without you, I can't do anything.

So let's say the one together again, just that one. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Come on, start from the beginning.

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs. And a lot of people who look like their numero uno here on earth, and people are at the last, in heaven it's gonna be possibly turned around. And the first shall be last, and the last shall be first in terms of God's acknowledging them because some walked in their own strength, like we all have to battle with, and others were just like, oh God, I need you every day.

Then horizontally, this is what Jesus taught. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. What are meek? What's the difference between meek and poor in spirit? Poor in spirit is our relationship with God.

Blessed are the beggars who just keep coming to God, I need you, I need you. If you think that someone ever gets to another place where they're not needing God every day, then you don't read the Bible correctly, you don't understand spiritual living. You never get past that.

There's no maturity where you don't need God every day. Come on, do I get an amen there? Someone, well, I started out that way, but now, praise God, rah, rah, rah. No, no, no, we need God every single day.

Now, that's vertical. Now listen, horizontal. Blessed are the meek.

Who are the meek? The meek are the people, oh, it's gonna get real quiet. The meek are the people who don't defend themselves. They let God take care of it.

In their horizontal relationships, they don't have to push back. Remember what Jesus said to me? You that are burdened and heavy laden, come to me, take my yoke upon you, for I am meek and lowly at heart. Do you realize, everybody, that when Jesus was lied about, he never lifted his voice back? And when they spit on him and reviled him, he never said a word back? He never opened his mouth like a lamb brought to the slaughter? He just went there, and he gave up his life, and he was meek, and he said, that's where you get rest, when you have to defend yourself, and fight back, and justify yourself, and tell everybody how special you are, and where you came from is so special, and everything's so special about you, and all of that, that's constant tension, because someone always has a pin for your balloon, am I correct? But, when you're meek, when you're meek, it's like, whatever.

But God is great, and he's greatly to be praised. And, oh, you don't like me? Well, I'm sorry, if I hurt you, I apologize, and then you just move on, and all the stress is out, and all the worrying about, what are people thinking about me? That's how the meek are. The meek are, let God take care of it.

And that's how Jesus was. So, I've told you that when I went to Argentina, the first time I ever went, I saw a cow shot. In fact, the brother that shot him, the cow was here today, he works here, but he was in Argentina as a pastor then, and he took out a rifle, and he put on a cowboy hat, this is true, and he went, pew, and he killed the cow, because we were at big campgrounds, and someone donated seven cows, and it was amazing, because when he went in the pen to get the cow, like the cow knew.

They know. They know this is adios, muchacho, we're done. And they pulled the cow, and the cow started dragging its hooves, and they pulled it out and shot him, and then later, that was feeding 700, 800 ministers, and people had come from all over Argentina.

So, I had never seen, I'm from Brooklyn, we don't kill cows on Parkside Avenue, right? So, then they told me, oh, but pastor, last year, you should have been here. They tried to kill a pig. I said, how big? They said, oh, 350 pound pig.

And they said, the way to do it, these are what they call in Argentina, gauchos, like cowboys, right? And they said, you gotta take a knife, and you gotta put the knife in a certain spot here with the pig, you get to the heart, supposedly, and the pig dies quickly. If, when you're doing it, you don't do it right, you have a bleeding, very angry pig. And they did it, and it missed, and the pig started running around 350 pounds.

This is not, come here, porky, come here. This is out of control pig, bleeding, spurting, horrible. They told me it was so disgusting.

It was terrible. I said, wow, I'm glad I wasn't here, didn't see that. But then this older guy said to me, you know what? I've killed cows, and I've killed pigs, but I won't kill a lamb anymore.

And I said, why? He said, no, through a translator. He said, no, pastor, no, nunca, never. Because when you kill them, they look right at you while you're killing it and slitting its throat.

It just stares right at you and never says a word. Well, they don't talk anyway, but they never make a sound. Forgive me, this is not a good story.

I gotta get off. So, they never make a sound. They never make a sound.

They never make a sound, they just look at you. Like a lamb, he was led to the, he opened not his mouth. Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light, for I am meek and lowly at heart.

Probably 50% of everybody's personal pressure here and agitation and things that bedevil us is because if we were only meeker, it wouldn't even matter. But we're so nervous about what they teach in Sociology 101, the looking glass self, how you think people perceive you. Oh, they're not thinking good about me.

I gotta do something. That brings tension, pressure. See, not who you are, not what God thinks.

How do people see me? Put your best foot forward. Jesus wasn't doing any of that. He was meek.

In all his relationships with people, he was meek and lowly. And when you're meek and you just live for God's glory and then whatever people think about you, that is really irrelevant because you're living for his glory. Oh my, does that not change everything? Come here, do I get a witness here from this church? Just think, and I know that that's not something you're gonna take and run around the building with here and shout glory, but it's God's word.

The third beatitude, poor in spirit, vertical with God. Well, I don't know what God, how am I gonna make it today? Oh, how blessed that guy is. I know, but he's got nothing.

I know that's why he's blessed because since he has nothing, he keeps going to God and God will give him everything he needs. He's so blessed. That poor lady over there, she thinks she's all that and she's gonna flop and fail because she doesn't keep coming to God.

She's not poor in spirit. And then blessed are the meek, that's horizontal. That's how we treat each other.

That's what the Bible describes the perfect wife who has a meek and a quiet spirit. Ladies, I thought I would hear a lot of amens in that. Is that not the scripture? I said, is that not the scripture? That's a beautiful woman and that's that handsome man who has a meekness to him, not self-assertive, not having to push himself on a person.

When someone disagrees with them, they don't go off because they don't have to assert their will. What do you mean you disagree with me? So meek is not weak. Most people think meek means weak.

Don't say that because Jesus was meek and trust me, he was not weak. In fact, the lamb was the lion of Judah. But in his dealings with people, never returning, reviling for reviling.

You know, if we just prayed for that tonight that we wouldn't repay people how they treat us because in our, oh, our society, our society, this country, politics, racial politics, meek, meek, meek, are you kidding me? The other is glorified. You know, I'm gonna go Brooklyn on him, I'll tell him. But God wants us and we've all failed at this.

We all failed at this. Some of you know this story. I graduated Erasmus Hall High School.

I had skipped a grade. I had made All-City but the school's recruiting me, they said, you need one more year to catch up with your grade. You're playing with everyone's older than you.

So we're gonna send you to a prep school. I was recruited, I ended up going to Naval Academy because my mom and dad wanted me under lock and key with a uniform and someone watching me at all times, that's the truth. So I was gonna go to the Naval Academy, they sent me to a prep school in Silver Spring,

Maryland.

I had a roommate, the rooms were so tiny. Bear with me if you've heard this. Guy was from Pittsburgh and strong wrestler but smaller.

I tried to witness to him after a while. I had a Bible that my mother gave me, King James. I couldn't understand most of it but I would read it the best I could.

Tried to witness to him and I slept on the top of the bunk bed and he slept on the bottom and we would talk in the night. I didn't know how to explain it, I was 16 years old and all this and doing my best. But then he would get argumentative sometime and I didn't like that.

I wanted him to accept Jesus or I was gonna punch him out. It was basically that. So one night we got in a light talk and he said some things, I said some things I'm trying to witness and then he said some other really outrageous things and he got profane.

And I talked back to him, I said don't talk like that. You're just acting stupid here. And he jumped out of the bed, very dim light in the room, tiny room, little bathroom off to the right there and grabbed my Bible, excuse me, my mother's Bible as in my mother gave it to me.

Are you following what I'm saying here? And he took the Bible and he threw it against the door which was closed and the things that were in it and the cover, everything went flying. I jumped down off that bed, the top. And in the name of the Lord, I beat the living daylights out of him.

And he was strong, he was strong, but I had so much adrenaline. That was my mother's Bible. Forget that I didn't read it, that's my mother's Bible.

So I pinned him down on the ground. I'm not proud to say this, I pinned him down and I just punched him out until I had no more strength in my arms and he was fighting me back, trying to block it, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Just a pop, pop, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, you know? I'm getting that spirit come on me right now here.

So after a while, he took it. And when he took it and didn't fight back, I couldn't do it anymore. I left him there, the next day he was swollen up, all of that, he told a lie that he fell down a flight of stairs, nobody believed it, but he didn't want to get me or the whole floor on trouble because they would have grounded all of us.

I got to the top of the bed, I remember, you know when adrenaline comes and then it comes out, you're just, oh, oh, oh, oh, like that. And I never could talk to him about Jesus again. Rest of the year, never said a word.

How could I? I punched him out. It's very hard after you pound people or talk nasty to them to say, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. Am I right or wrong? So Satan tempts us to not be meek so that we will lose our testimony and our power and our strength.

Meek is not weak, meek is to be like Jesus. How many want to be more like Jesus, lift your hands up. You know what, I want to be poor in spirit toward God.

If you're with me, say amen. Amen. And in my dealings with you and the pastors and everyone else, you got to make decisions, you got to be a leader, but I want to, when it comes to personal things like that, I

want to be meek.

I want to take one for the team and just say, let him say, let him do whatever, person, whatever. Just, God, make me meek. Now, can you teach meekness? Mm-mm.

You can speak about it now and hopefully God will create a hunger in the band and all of us that will want to be more like Jesus, but you got to go to God to get that because the spirit of Jesus is the spirit of the lamb, the spirit of meekness. And Paul says, when you get dressed and you come to church, don't worry about your clothes, put on meekness or else you're not dressed. Put on meekness and kindness and put on mercy.

So someone did you wrong. Why, you never did wrong? Why are you treating that person different than the way God treated you? Has God been good to all of us? How many have found him good? Has he been merciful? Yeah. Let's all stand.

Every man, turn and find a man and pray together. Every woman, find a woman, come on, and pray, God, make us meek. God, give us poverty of spirit.

Take away pride, take away self-sufficiency. Take away harshness. Take away, I got to have my way.

Come on, everybody pray. Come on, this is according to the will of God. God, help us, Lord.

Help me, Lord, help us. Lord, your word must be true. There must be a place in you.

There must be a grace from you where we can turn the other cheek. That's just not like something we recite, Lord, and go the extra mile. And when reviled, not revile back.

When insulted, not insult back. God, once again, we cannot do that. But we come with poverty of spirit, and we ask you, make us meek.

Make us like Jesus. Make us like lambs, not wolves or lions. Not touchy and arrogant, but lowly and meek.

With us, it's impossible, but with you, all things are possible. Get us home safely. I thank you for such a blessed meeting.

We have sensed your presence from even before we sang the first song, Lord. Thank you for the deacons and deaconess and the pastors who prayed so diligently with the people. We thank you.

Would you honor their service and strengthen them today? And now we dismiss ourselves from one another, but never from your presence. Thank you, God, for loving us so much. We love you back.

In Jesus' name. And everyone said. Amen.

Turn around and give somebody a hug. Come on, give them a good hug now.

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