

# The Meekness of Christ

by Michael Durham

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*Meekness is the ability to be virtuous without feeling the necessity to prove it, and it involves a willingness to see God's power in difficulties and to trust him with one's reputation.*

**Duration:** 54:02

**Scripture:** Job 1:8-12, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:29, Luke 22:31-32, John 3:16, John 19:10-11

**Topics:** "Meekness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a woman who had a conflict with a customs agent at the airport. The woman's pride was wounded when the agent accused her of lying, causing her to miss her flight. The preacher then discusses the revelation of God's power and the importance of going through difficult situations to witness miracles. The sermon concludes with the message that Jesus teaches us to be meek and lowly, and that we should learn from him to be like him.

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## Transcript

Matthew chapter 11 and verse 29. Jesus said, you know the text, take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. I read the text from the authorized version, not because I believe the authorized version, that is the King James version, is somehow more inspired than any other version of the Bible, although there are some who actually believe that, you know, they believe that Paul and Peter and John spoke in King James English.

Nor did I read the text because I feel that all other English translations are somehow inferior, no. I read the authorized version because of one word and the word is meek. It's the only English translation that uses that.

All the modern, even my beloved new King James uses the same word that your English standard version uses or the new American standard version uses and it's gentle. And while the word meekness can mean gentle, I don't think it's the best word to convey what Jesus was trying to say to those that day. I think meek is the appropriate word and should not be interpreted merely as gentleness because meekness is more than gentleness.

Jesus wasn't always gentle. Remember Lucy's question about Aslan? Is he safe? And the answer was, no, he's not safe, but he's good. Jesus was not always gentle, especially with those who desecrated his father's house.

Remember, he made a whip out of cords and drove out the money changers and turned over the tables. He wasn't very gentle as he lamented the religious condition of his day and the leaders when he called them, you brood of vipers. I mean, you know, those are fighting words and they took the challenge and not very many days hence they crucified him.

Now he wasn't always gentle, but he was always meek. Is it wrong to interpret the word meek, gentle? No, not wrong, but you can't just leave it with gentleness. Meekness is much more than that.

It's much deeper than that. It gets to the very character of a person. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

The very first beatitude, the beginning beatitude, blessed are the meek. It's one of the qualities that is absolutely foundational and necessary for you and I as Christians. The Christian life cannot be lived as the New Testament orders without meekness.

You've got to be a meek person. Why? Because Jesus was meek. If a whole goal of God in saving you is to conform you to the image of his son, then no wonder Jesus would say, it's time for your lesson.

And here it is, learn of me for I am meek and lowly. Jesus is bidding you to come into his classroom. He's instructing you here this evening.

Christ is here. One of the most blessed thoughts that I know that warms my heart is that he is omnipresent and that means he's always with me no matter where I go, whether I was in Portland, Maine last weekend or here I am this weekend with you. Wherever I am, there he is.

And he's in this room tonight to teach us. And what will he teach you? What will he teach me? How to be like him? Learn of me. And the thing that he says is I'm meek.

This is a remarkable statement. He could have said many different things. Could he not? He said he could have said I am mighty, but he does not say I am mighty.

Learn of me. Why? Because your mind is not in you. It's not some self-help trick or remedy to make us strong.

No, no. Our strength is his. Be strong in the Lord and the power of his mind.

He could say be holy. Learn of me for I am holy. That he is.

But he doesn't say that. He says be meek because I believe one of the chief attributes of God is his meekness, his humility. Now Jesus uses two words here, meekness and lowly or humble humility.

What's the difference between the two? Really, actually none whatsoever. They both really are synonyms, mean the same thing. However, I do think if you must draw a distinction, if you must examine the frog's hair, you will find that meekness is really even foundational to humility.

I think meekness is the attitude that drives humility. Meekness is the cornerstone to humility. Humility is your attitude about yourself in relationship to others.

You don't seek the high end, you seek the low end. In other words, you don't seek the crown, you seek the feet to wash them as Christ did to serve one another. The word really humble means to put yourself low to

the ground.

It's not to take the exalted position, but to be willing to be a servant. That's behavior, that's actions. But those actions come out of a heart motivated by meekness.

So what is meekness? For years I defined it as I'd heard others define it, velvet covered steel. Have you ever heard it that way? The idea is, is it strength? It's again, gentle. It's strength, not being abusive.

It's strength that's not weak. But then again, that metaphor, I think we miss really what Jesus is and what he's asking us to learn with him. And so after years of experience, years of study, years of asking Lord, what is, what are you? Wouldn't you say you're meek? What do you mean? I think over the years I've come to understand this and here's my definition.

And if you want to write it down fine, but just remember where you heard it, I expect some royalties. No, I'm just teasing. Meekness is the ability to be virtuous without feeling the necessity to prove it.

Now, I want to prove that to you right now. What is meekness? It's the ability to be virtuous without feeling the necessity to prove it. There has never been man more virtuous than Christ.

He was perfect in his attribute and in his character. He walked blameless before his father. There was no variableness, no shadow of turning with him.

He was the same yesterday, today, and forever. He was perfect in his attitude. He was perfect in his ways and he felt no need to defend his perfection or his obedience.

Do you ever see him defending his righteousness? Do you ever see him being challenged, defending his personal character? This is meekness. Here, I think you find the word's definition in Jesus himself. Meekness is this amazing ability as well as quality to be virtuous without feeling the need to prove to others that you're virtuous.

It means really to take no pride in your righteousness. To take no pride in your righteousness. It is to be right without insisting you are right.

Husbands, I might want to suggest that. Wives, I might want to suggest that to you. You know he's wrong and that you are right, but meekness says I won't insist upon it.

It's to have the moral courage to stand for what is right without being wounded if you're accused of being wrong. And perhaps the best way to describe it is this. Meekness is the Christ-like attribute that only cares what God thinks about you and trusts him with your reputation.

Look at Jesus. See him there before the Sanhedrin. What is the charge? The charge is one.

Singular. You are a blasphemer. You've made yourself equal to God.

You're worthy of death. And this is the accusation. This is the charge that brings the judgment of the Sanhedrin and all the nation of Israel against Jesus.

He hangs on the cross with who? Malfactors. Criminals. But never was there a man hanging on a cross that was more right.

In fact, not only was he more right than any other man hanging on a cross, he was perfectly right. He was the very epitome of righteousness. He is the very revelation of God the Father in all of his perfections.

For the word was made flesh and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten, full of grace and truth. And yet he's hanging on that cross as a criminal, as a wrongdoer, as a sinner. And he's perfectly willing to take to himself such titles and to be thought of and to be despised.

That's meekness. That's meekness. My wife, Karen, asked me a question about a statement she was reading in the book.

The book was Corrie Ten Boom's book, *Tramp for the Lord*. I don't know if you've ever read it. And she asked me while she was reading, what do you think she meant when she said this? And then she read the statement.

It's easier to surrender one's sins than one's virtues. Let me repeat that because it's kind of tricky. It's easier to surrender one's sins than one's virtues.

What did she mean by that? That was Karen's question. Well, you got to understand the event in her life that prompted this statement. She was being detained in the airport right after World War Two.

If you don't know anything about Corrie Ten Boom, her and her sister were arrested by the Gestapo, Nazi Germany, the secret police for harboring Jews. That was a felony. It was a criminal case to do so.

And they were caught. Her whole family, her father and her brother died in a concentration camp. And her sister Betty also died.

And she would had not God and his providence had her released. And it's after the war. And she's traveling, preaching, sharing the gospel about her events and learn and life in concentration camp.

And she's crossed the border into an unnamed country to share the gospel. And she was asked by the customs agent if she had anything to declare. Well, she had taken out of her suitcase, one pair, a single pair of nylon stockings and laid it on the top of her suitcase and told this agent, customs agent, she was declaring her stockings.

He only saw the one pair that she put on. And when he rifled through her rest of her luggage, he found three more and said that she accused her of lying to him. You only declared one.

You've got four. And she tried to explain to the man that she just simply put them, the one pair on top of her suitcase as an example of what she had to declare. She never said how many she had.

And he began to attack her honesty by accusing her of lying to him. But he refused to believe her and proceeded to carefully inspect everything that she was bringing in all of her luggage. And the delay caused her to miss her next flight.

She stated that she was offended by the man for not trusting her. What was her problem that day? The customs agent? No, it wasn't. It was her pride.

Her pride had been wounded. And it was then in that moment, in that story of her life, she learned that it was less difficult to repent of your vices than your virtues. Miss Tim Boone put much value in her integrity.

And when it was attacked, she became angry and defensive. Now, do you understand what she meant? And isn't that true? We're ready and willing to repent when God exposes our sins. But are you willing to repent your pride and your righteousness? And the problem is we often are proud and don't even know how proud we are.

But let your character be attacked, whether it be from a spouse or a family member or a rank stranger. Let them doubt your integrity. Let them question your motives and see how the anger rages.

See how you feel then and you will know how meek you really are. Here is our Lord Jesus. He is crucified as an enemy of God, cursed by man and even cursed by God.

And he was willing to suffer. Why? Because he was meek. You said he suffered because of me.

Well, of course he did. Yes, no doubt. But it wasn't forced.

This is the nature of our God. He's meek. He's lowly.

He's humble. Do you know how humble your God is? Do you know how far he has to step down to come and talk to you and fellowship with you? We sang some great hymns. It wasn't the power of the stanzas that brought him down from heaven.

No, no. It was his meekness, his willingness to condescend and rub soldiers' hearts, his heart with our heart, with people who deserve it not. Oh yeah, you're his child, but you don't deserve any of God's loving kindness.

I'll tell you how far he has to condescend to do that. Infinity. Infinity.

And he does so. He delights to do so. He feels no less in doing so.

Why? Because he's meek and lowly. Well, that's a tall order, isn't it? It's kind of hard to keep my spirit contained talking about this. Trying to preserve the voice, but my heart tells me, pump it out.

You're bragging on Jesus. How can you do that softly and quietly? Well, it's a tall order, isn't it? Learn of me. Be willing to repent of your virtues as well as your vices.

Be willing to take no pride in your spiritual advancement. Be willing to advance and have no one recognize your achievement. Learn of me.

How do you do that? Well, let me explain that the foundation of meekness requires one thing. You want to be meek like Jesus, you've got to have one of his qualities, and that is a real desire for God's will. Turn in your Bibles to John 19 verses 10 and 11.

John's gospel, chapter 19, beginning with verse 10. I'll give you all that I have tonight, and Karen and mom and Victoria will have just but a whisper tomorrow, and they'll probably be happy. John 19, beginning with verse 10, then Pilate said to him, he's on trial.

Jesus is on trial. Are you not speaking to me? Notice the question. Do you not know that I have power to crucify you and power to release you? Notice what Jesus answers.

Jesus answered, you could have no power at all against me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore, the one who's delivered me to you as the greater sin, what's his answer? Sovereign will of God,

his father. I can set you free.

Why don't you just answer my questions? And even without answering the questions, what was Pilate's declaration? What was his finding? I find no fault in this man. Right. And Jesus does not concern himself that he could be released.

The only thing that he desires is the father's will to be done. My friends, that is a sure sign of your meekness. How do you know if you're meek? Let me give you an example.

You can remember this, I pray, and see if you pass the test of meekness. Meekness is evidenced by the sign, this sign. You experience complete peace when obstacles arise to your plans.

When you are at perfect peace, even when all of your plans have fallen through and have been destroyed, and yet you can rejoice, that means you are a meek man or woman. Why can you and how can you do that? When you desire God's will above all things, then problems give you no worry or fear. Rather, they give you a kind of pleasure.

This is why meek people are so misunderstood. The world cannot savvy how you tick. They don't understand what pleases you.

And it's simple. What pleases me is God's will. I'm most delighted when God's will is being accomplished.

And that means that when a problem does arise, when my plans are thwarted or brought to a screeching halt, I have a new opportunity to see God's power. This is the attitude of Christ as he stands there before Pilate. He's not worried about it.

He knows that God's will will be done, and that's all he desires. Let me give you another example from a meek man. Who was the meekest man on all the earth described as such in the Old Testament? His name is Moses.

And an example of meekness, again, gentleness is not the right word, I don't think. I think it's much deeper and stronger than that. The example of Moses' meekness is never more, I think, better illustrated than in the crossing of the Red Sea.

Moses and the children of Israel were clearly manifested, showing that Moses was meek and the people were not. The Red Sea did not discourage Moses. He realized that this afforded him and Israel to see the intervention of the Lord.

He knew they would see the mighty hand of God, and they did. But the people worried, complained, murmured, and said, isn't this the reason we told you we didn't want to come out with you? Is it because there were no graves in Egypt you brought us out here? That was their complaint after seeing the ten powerful miracles. Why? Because they're meek, not meek as he is.

They couldn't see what Moses saw. You think Moses knew what to do? No. He's praying too, remember? And God tells him to get up.

What are you praying for? Tell the people to go straight forward. Moses is praying because he's just simply needing instructions, and God seems to insinuate, Moses, you don't need instruction, you ought to know. So what? The Egyptians are behind you, so what the Red Sea? Just watch me.

No obstacle comes your way except by my divine permission, and I mean to do something with it. Show my power. And when you are so carried away, delighted, and enthralled with God's will, you never will see an obstacle again the same way.

That is at the heart of meekness, and that's how you know you're meek or not. What happens when the schedule goes awry? What happens when there's not enough money to stretch to cover the bills? What happens when the doctor's diagnosis is not what you'd hoped? What rules your spirit? The peace of God, the joy of knowing that God's will will be accomplished, and that he will have an opportunity to manifest himself to you in a very special and extraordinary way, or do you collapse under fear, anxiety, and worry? You may accurately discern the degree of your surrender to the will of God in any matter by the measure of impatience you feel at any obstacle in your way. To the degree self-will controls you, to that degree you will feel anxious or angry whenever your plans are hindered, instead of resting in what? Desperate dependency upon the Lord, leaving all difficulties of the Lord to deal as he pleases.

You'll manipulate, maneuver, and scheme, and struggle to remove the obstacles and fulfill your plans. That's not meekness, that's the opposite. Jesus said, learn of me for I'm meek and I'm lonely.

I'm not there. I need some more schooling in the school of Jesus, but I am learning that his will is best. I am learning to start looking at my problems differently.

I'm now learning what a fellow told me many, many years ago. He would never use the word problem. He always substituted the word opportunity for the word problem.

Well, that was just a self-help suggestion. It was something he'd learned in sales training, but now this has nothing to do about sales training and achieving some goal, financial goal, or some strata in the company. No, no, this is the will of God to see that every difficulty, every hindrance, every obstacle is an opportunity.

Here's how, two ways, it's always an opportunity. One of two ways, either God has allowed the obstacle to come in order to display his power, or secondly, he's stopping you from doing something he doesn't want you to do. Either way, God's will wins.

So why shouldn't you rejoice and be at peace? You can't lose if you're meek, but the opposite of meekness is, no, no, we got to solve this, and the problem solvers among us, the task-oriented kind of individuals in this room get to work, and the strategy comes to life. You lay awake at night, and you get an idea, and you can't wait till the crack of dawn to put it into practice to see if it'll work, and if that won't work, you'll try something else. The opposite of meekness, and sometimes, as in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, he uses enemies.

There are times when God delivers you from the hands of your enemies, and then there are times he delivers you into the hands of your enemies. I think of Joseph. It's an obscure verse, but it's Genesis 39 verse 1, and now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, brought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.

Why? The detail. In chapter 47, the Lord told us that the Ishmaelites had bought him, and had taken him to Egypt. Why does he insert it again? It's one of those little obscure things that we just kind of read over, and gloss over, and say, I know that, and move on.

One day, I read it, and I said, why does he do that? It dawned on me, who are the Ishmaelites? The avowed enemies of God, God's people. Ishmael, the older brother, the child of the natural, the flesh,

persecuted the child of promise, Isaac, and since then, they've been doing it all these years. God turns Joseph over to his enemies, and then there's Job.

You're studying Job on Sunday nights. I'm sorry I'm not here to hear it, but you remember that first chapter of Job, and that great discussion between the Lord and Lucifer. The Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? But there's none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil.

So Satan answered the Lord and said, does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You've blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land, but now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he'll surely curse you to your face. Brother Kyle shared most aptly on that text. Satan's argument is, no, I haven't considered your servant Job, because I can't get to him.

And why would I even want to bother? Why would he not want to serve you when you bless him the way you do? But you turn the tables on him. You trade in his prosperity for poverty, and see that he will not curse you. And what does God say? Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not lay a hand on his person.

God turns us over to our enemies. And then there's Peter. One of the most remarkable discussions in all of the Bible is the discussion of Jesus to Peter in Luke 22, verses 31 and 32.

The Lord said, Simon, Simon, indeed, Satan has asked for you that you may be sifted as wheat. But I've prayed for you that your faith should not fail, and when thou art converted, strengthen your brethren. Isn't that a remarkable insight into some heavenly, the heavenly realm? I get some encouragement to know that Satan can't touch me unless he has my daddy's approval.

And my big brother's always there. Now, I don't mean to be sacrilegious or irreverent, but he is my father, and Jesus is my older brother, my kinsman, redeemer of my own blood and bone. I have some comfort in that, but there's no comfort to know that there are times the father says yes, and the son says, I'm praying for you.

He turns you over, and then there's Paul, the great apostle Paul. We wanted to come to you, he says to the Thessalonians, even I, Paul, time and again, but Satan hindered us. And there he is at Philippi, he and Silas, their feet and hands fastened to stalks with their backs bruised and battered and bleeding.

Shipwrecked at Malta, messenger from Satan to buffet him in the flesh. He said a thorn in the flesh was given to be a messenger of Satan to buffet me. But all of these men cannot be compared to the sufferings of one.

Jesus Christ. And even our Lord Jesus was turned over to the enemy, handed over to him. I wonder what kind of discussion there was in heaven that day or prior to that day.

I'm only speculative here, hypothesizing, thinking out loud. I wonder if Satan and the Lord had another discussion. I wonder if the Lord allowed Satan to approach his throne and said, have you considered my servant, my son, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and not right man who fears God and shuns evil.

And I wondered if that did happen, what would Satan say? Would he have said as he said in the case of Job? Yes, I've considered him, but he seems unsaleable. I've done combat with him and he's too strong for me. And besides that, you have a hedger around him and he's clothed with your power.

You've blessed the work of his hands. He has power over sickness, might, demons, and even death. And he has followers and the world has gone after him.

But now stretch out your hand and touch him. All that he has, make his disciples to forsake him and deny him and betray him, abandon him, turn your back on him, curse him, and he shall surely curse you to your face. And the Lord says to Satan, behold, he is in your hand.

Do not spare his life. Now, of course, I don't know if that conversation took place or not, but it's very close to what happened. He's turned over to his own enemies and he does so with tranquility, full presence of mind.

Oh yes. You may cite to me the garden of Gethsemane where he says his sorrow is to the point of dying and he could die of a broken heart over what is about to approach. But my dear friend, the man passed the test in the garden.

Right. Unlike our predecessor and ancestor Adam, who did not pass his test, this one, this perfect one, this holy man, under what a force severe test and Adam or Eve put together. And he passed.

He took the cup. He took the cup from the father's hand and he drank it. Why? Because he was meek and he was lonely.

I want you to see his heart. Yes. He loves you.

Yes. God demonstrated his love for us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. But listen to his heart.

Learn of me. I'm making lonely. That's how I can do this because in the end, all I want is the father's will.

And even if he turns me over to my enemies, I can rejoice. Now, what would be the purpose of doing this in your life and the life of our Lord? It's namely one. Actually, there's three.

But when it comes to you personally, it is one to teach you humility and meekness. It's to advance your sanctification and you're not going to be any more sanctified than you are meek and humble. I'm sorry to tell you that.

I know that's not what you came to hear tonight, but I'm glad the pastor did pray. Even if I get rebuked tonight in the sermon is rebuking. Well, here it is.

If you want to grow in your sanctification, you won't be more like Jesus. You're going to have to go to his classroom and learn meekness and humility. You see, in the case of Joseph, he was not so humble.

A young man. I can prove it to you. He made sure his brothers knew that he was not only the favorite son, but the one who would one day rule over them.

I mean, listen, he cared a wee bit too much about what his siblings thought about him. I know that if you tell a dream and you get a negative reaction, why do you do it a second time? I'll tell you why you get

second time. You want to rub their noses in it.

That's what he was doing. Don't tell me he's a humble young man. He was preferred.

He was privileged and he was proud. Lord had to get Joseph to experience his blessings without being proud about them. And that's what he has to do with you and me.

If you stop and think about how blessed we are, how good God has been to you. It's hard for me to imagine that you're so holy tonight that you've never had to battle. I must be special.

God blesses me because, you know, I'm walking obediently before him. No, it's not why he blesses you. He blesses you because he just loves you undeserved kindness.

It's not about you. It's about him. The Lord had to get Joseph to experience his blessings without being proud about it.

He needed to be virtuous without being vain. And that's the work of sanctification. Let's get you to be virtuous without being vain about it.

And then Job, what did the trial prove about Job? There was a sliver of vain self-righteousness running through that blameless heart. And it was exposed through the endurance and prolonging of the trial. What about old Peter? What did we discover with Peter being turned over to Satan? He too was a very proud man.

Lord, I'll never deny these guys. Yeah, they'll do it. Not me.

I'll go to prison with you. I'll even die. Hours later, he denies the Lord.

Right. What about Paul's thorn in the flesh? Why was a messenger of Satan given to him? He tells us unless I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelation, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me lest I'd be exalted above measure. You hear what he's saying? Paul is telling you he it's not that I might be a proud man because of all of this marvelous revelation given to me.

I would have been and to prevent it. God has given me a messenger of Satan. It's the lesson of meekness and humility to be able to be so blessed by God and not become proud because of it.

But there's another reason. It's the advancement of the kingdom, the advancement of the kingdom. Who better to preach on the day of Pentecost to a bunch of sinners and God haters and deniers than the chief backslider himself, the apostle Paul.

And who better to preach it without getting proud about it? For in one hour, he saw more people say than Jesus did his entire ministry over a course of three years. And what about Paul's imprisonment in Philippi? What about that? The advancement of the kingdom. There happened to be a Philippian jailer and a household that needed the gospel.

Shipwreck at Malta. No problem. Paul is not worried, even though before they step on that ship, he warns the centurion, please don't do this.

I know this is not going to end good, but much loss of life. The centurion looks at the seafaring captain, a man of the sea. This has been his whole profession.

He looks at the apostle Paul, a preacher, not the best one either. Ah, captain, what do you think? We'll be fine. On board they go.

And then they end in shipwreck. Why, why, why were they forwarded? Why were they delayed? Why? I'll tell you why. There are some ladies on an island that needs to know that Jesus died for them too.

You see, it wasn't a delay. It wasn't a hindrance. It wasn't an obstacle.

It was the will of God. And a meek man could see that and rejoice in it. But there's one more reason.

As I've already alluded to, it's the revelation of the power of God. I told a group not too long ago, I think I said this to you all one time. We all say, boy, I'd like to see a miracle.

Boy, I wish we saw more miracles. And I just tell you right now, no, you don't. You don't want to see a miracle because you know what you got to have in order to have a miracle.

You've got to be between a rock and a hard place. You've got to be in the place of impossibility. Now, how many of you want a miracle? You see what I mean? But thank God, his will often takes us through the valley.

And there in the valley, he gets to reveal his splendid power over all enemies and triumphs over them. There's our blessed Savior hanging there. There he is on the cross.

And we look at those soldiers as they jeer him, mock him by taking his poor garment and gambling over it. Jeering him as they nail on top the king of the Jews, placing the crown, but not a crown embedded with royal diadems, but a crown of thorns. There's that crowd of mockers as they come by him, their beautiful priestly robes jutting out their jaws, accustomed to deride someone and show that this is a person, a person who should be the object of derision.

Oh, you say, God, save yourself. Come down on the cross. Friends, there were others there jeering him that day, tormenting his soul.

They're unseen and they're not heard by anyone except Jesus. David prophetically writes, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? But David is not just communicating something that he was enduring. No, no.

He sends out a ray, a prophetic ray that passes through the centuries into the future. And Jesus takes those very words and expresses his own soul. My father, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Did you notice, did you notice my mistake? My father? No, he doesn't say my father.

Why not? Every time he prays, he says, my father, he teaches us his prayer. He says, our father, this is the way you'd pray our father. But no, he doesn't address him as father.

But my God, why? Because at that moment, the feeling, the consciousness of the fatherhood, the fatherhood of God has been severed, reached into his soul and ripped out. He doesn't sense that God smiles upon him as a father to a son. There are others there that are tormenting his soul.

David gives us again another glimpse. He's called them the bulls of Bashan. It's a term that I believe is prophetic of demonic powers themselves.

And there on Calvary's mountain, around the cross, there he hangs. Not only does he have the Gentile soldiers who are mocking him and killing him and treating him cruelly, not only does he have the religious leaders taunting him, not only does he have these passerbys jutting out their jaws and wagging at him, but there are demonic spirits. All of hell is allowed to be released upon the soul of our savior.

I wonder, I wonder if that legion of demons whom he had set free from that lone man wandering about in the tombs, if they too were there that day mocking him, yes, yes, you cast us out, but now we have you. Now we have you where we want you. You're ours.

You've been turned over to us. Even Jesus said that the prince of this world has come in. This is his hour.

It's been given over to him, including himself. And all hell gives him their rage and anger. Do you not know they hate him? He made them, but they also had them expelled when they turned on him in heaven, splendor and beauty.

There they were expelled. Now with a vengeance, they wreak upon our Lord, a torment and a pain and an agony that you and I have no idea. Why? Yes.

For our sins. Yes. For our punishment.

Yes. For our curse that he bore. Yes.

Yes. But man could not have endured that had he not been meek and lowly. This was not an obstacle.

This was not God's will gone awry. This was on God's timetable. And three days later, Jesus had the last word and demons scurried.

They tried to flee the tombs as fast as they could. They could not remain where the light of God had burst forth and broke the bands of death. There comes for the conqueror.

There comes one. Yes, meek and lowly, but overcomes all his enemies. Not so gentle, but very meek.

I was thinking the other day, what would David have done? Had he seen Jesus when he was on this earth as a man? Here was a man who'd take your head off as quick as he batted an eye. If you were his enemy, he was a man's man. He was a hero, was a champion of Israel.

Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands. What would this warrior King done when he looked into the eyes of this carpenter from Nazareth? I'll tell you what he would have done. He would have seen a strength he had never experienced before.

He would have witnessed and acknowledged that this man was far stronger than him. He would have seen the meekness and lowliness of Jesus and he would have driven him to his knees and utter worship. This man wasn't just gentle.

He just wasn't mild. No, no. He was as strong as they come clothed with infinite power and glory, but meek and lowly.

And so I want to suggest to you tonight, as we approach the table, you approach the table of the Lord tomorrow, that you too must be meek to be able to be strong in the Lord. I want to remind you of a passage. I've already alluded to it a couple of times tonight.

It's a second Corinthians 12, eight through 10. This is Paul's argument for meekness. Although the words not used in the text, you can't read this understanding meekness and not see it.

It's replete all through it. You remember he's prayed three times verse eight concerning this thing. I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

He didn't want it. It's obvious. He's not just a happy-go-lucky camper who just says, okay, no problem.

No, no. He's heard him in some fashion, whatever this thorn in the flesh, this messenger from hell. He prays, but the Lord answers and said, my grace is sufficient for you.

For my strength is made perfect in weakness. And maybe you'd like to be strong for Jesus. We want to be strong for Jesus.

Yes, the proud always do. Meek realize they have no strength. Right.

Let me understand this text. My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore his conclusion is this most gladly, most gladly.

I'll rather boast in my infirmities. That word means weakness that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities in reproaches in need in persecution in distresses for Christ's sake.

For when I am weak, and I am strong, let me ask you, let's just be honest. You know, me, I know you, do you really rejoice in infirmities, reproaches and needs, persecutions, distresses. Do you really do that? Then I suggest more time in the school of Jesus.

And don't worry, you don't have to double enroll. You're enrolled already. Amen.

And you don't skip these classes. You try, but you don't succeed. You will never skip the class because the teacher is always with you.

If you can't take pleasure in infirmities, reproaches and needs and persecutions and in distresses, let me suggest to you that you need to redefine what you believe to be the successful Christian life. You need to begin to see that your life has been bought with this price of his precious blood that you will commemorate tomorrow evening. And it's more than a cracker and some juice in a little bitty cup that will not satisfy your thirst.

It's more than that. My dear friends, it is emblematic of the price, the infinite price that's been paid for you. You do not belong to yourself.

You belong to another. You belong to God because you've been bought both body and spirit. You belong to God.

And in your servitude and enslavement to God, God has purchased you to display to the world that he doesn't work for strength, but weakness. That's what the cross is all about. Weakness, death, hardship.

But in that weakness, power of God's revealed because God's weakness is stronger than all hell and all of humanity. And that's how God is glorified. As we discussed this morning about culture and society, Pastor and I, and we talked about roles and responsibilities in civil life and government.

I believe that if the church of Jesus Christ said, I don't need, I don't need the universal body. I don't even believe that it requires half of the Christians in America. I believe if this church right here can learn to embrace their weakness, things will start to change.

I believe the environment of this area will be transformed by you. Few salt in light, because what you do is you display the power of God because the power of God's always revealed in human weakness, not human strength. But the problem with most of us, we are weak in God's strength.

When we ought to be strong in him, the sin of this moment of we, his true children who know him, who are doctrinally sound, our sin denied is that we're so weak in his strength. Why are we weak in his strength instead of strong? Because we're proud. We want to solve our problems, our distresses.

We want to do the work of God in our own way. And we are not so meek to do it his way, content, rejoicing, taking this strange kind of pleasure and all of the obstacles that the enemy is allowed to throw at us because we've not learned that there's not anything he can do but help us. Why has Satan been allowed to remain as long as he has to help us? All he's there to do is prove how weak you are.

And then when you've proven it and you've embraced it and rejoice, then the power of God burst forth just as much as it did that morning on that third day as light broke through the stone barrier and pushed it back for all the world to know he's not here. He's risen. Is he alive in you? Of course he is.

If you're here, he's alive in you, but you're too weak in his strength and too strong in yours. You're too strong in your weakness. And so today I would just encourage you to look at the cross with this thought in mind.

Meek and lowly. There's my sanctification. There's the advancement of the kingdom and the opportunity to see the power of God revealed.

May God help us to see it. Amen. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for helping me to get through the message tonight. And I pray that we will learn of you, not of me or someone else, but of you. Expose our pride tonight.

Lord, it's what these services are about. They're about being real with you and also real with ourselves. We don't mind being real with you because you already know us.

It's that we just hate to know certain things about ourselves. You know me, Lord. No, I want to be right.

I want to be perfect. I want to be blameless. I want to be upright.

And I want to be proud about it. I thank you for what you're doing in me and in this body of these believers, these my friends. Because what you're doing is you're showing us how to embrace our weakness so that we can be strong in you.

And that's what meekness is. So Lord, do whatever you got to do here tonight, tomorrow. This is maybe a paradigm shift for some.

I know they won't maybe get it tonight, but I'm trusting you. If this is your word, you will bring this understanding. And for this, we thank you in Jesus name.

Amen.

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