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Matthew 5:1-12 – *Blessed Are the Meek*

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Our vision here at Trinity is:

*Intentionally connecting
with Christ, each other, and our neighbours,
For the glory of God.*

As a church we want to be continually walking toward that vision.

For the last 2 weeks—

And for the next month—

We're looking at the Beatitudes.

Jesus is traveling throughout the region of Galilee:

Teaching in the synagogues;
Preaching the good news of God's kingdom;
Healing diseases and sicknesses;
And calling people to follow him.

Right before our passage...

He calls Peter, Andrew, James and John away from their boats.

They drop their nets after hearing Jesus...

And they begin to follow.

These are his first disciples.

Now, as the crowds start to swell...

Jesus pulls his disciples up on a hill...

Sits down...

And begins to teach them.

The crowds are probably gathered around listening too...

But Jesus' focus here is his disciples.

Jesus is teaching them about the kingdom of God...

What it looks like to be a member of that kingdom—

What it looks like to be his follower.

So, as we enter into this scene for the next several weeks...

Our focus is going to be the first piece of our vision:

“Intentionally connecting with Christ.”

Joining the disciples as they sit at his feet...

And receive his instruction.

Matthew 5:1-12

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

He said:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The Word of the Lord. (**Thanks be to God**)

We're looking at the 3rd Beatitude this morning:

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (5:5)

The way we're structuring our sermon is:

1. What is it?
2. Why is it good?
3. And how do we get it?

I.

So first, what *is* meekness?

What comes to mind when you think of someone who is meek?

Maybe it's the image of Greg Heffley...

From the book *Diary of a Wimpy Kid...*

A stick-thin pre-teen, hunched over with a surrendered look on his face.

Maybe for you, meekness = weakness.

You have in mind the image of someone timid or indecisive...

Easily pushed over and controlled.

Meekness is a trait not easy to define...

And it's often misunderstood.

So, let's tell some stories of those who practice meekness.

First, there was a woman named Maureen who worked for a promising, young organization.

Maureen was the right-hand person of the CEO:

He made sure Maureen knew the vision of the company;

She was entrusted to lead its people;

And empowered to speak on behalf of the CEO.

The CEO went on leave looking for perspective business partners...

And Maureen was placed in charge.

Some of the people under Maureen—

Actually, two of her friends who were also high-up in the company—

Started openly speaking out against Maureen and her leadership.

“I don’t think Maureen is suited to lead,” they said.

“Does this woman even know what she’s doing?”

“Aren’t we leaders of this company too?”

“Aren’t we better than her?”

“We need to take control to make sure things don’t go off course.”

But Maureen was confident in her appointment.

She didn’t fire back at her “friends” ...

The ones who were openly bashing her.

She didn’t post subtle or blatant messages to FB condemning them.

She didn’t rake them over the coals on the company messaging platform.

She continued to lead...

Confident that the CEO trusted and equipped her...

Confident that he would deal with this when he returned.

And he did:

He was so upset by what he heard that he was ready to fire the two when he came back.

This is the direction it was headed until Maureen stepped in...

Asking that they keep their jobs.

Meekness...

Content and trusting...

Exercising patience, humility, gentleness, and forgiveness.

There’s another story of 2 brothers from Northern Alberta...

Their elderly mother—

Holding on as long as she could—

Finally passed away and left the family land and house to her sons:

A big plot of hundreds of unusable acres;

And a modest house down in the city.

Shortly after her death a rich oil deposit was found under the land...

Which made the land very desirable.

The way the family will was set up said one son got the land...

And the other son got the house and lot down in the city.

The only problem was that the will didn't specify which son got what.

Of course there was quarreling—

Not between the two brothers yet—

But between their families...

Because everyone saw the value of the oil-rich land.

The older of the two sons—

The one we'd guess had rights to first choice—

Went to his younger brother and deferred saying:

“Look, I have more than enough in life.”

“I'm content with what I have.”

“I don't want this to come between us...”

“So, I'm going to give you first choice.”

Meekness...

Content and trusting...

Exercising patience, gentleness, and humility.

If I did a good enough job—

And if you know your Old Testament well enough—

You'll notice that I adapted two OT stories for present day:

The first is the story of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam from Numbers 12;

And the second is the story of Abraham and Lot from Genesis 13.

Meekness plays an important role in the Bible...

And it has 2 primary pieces:

First, it is a confident trust in the Lord...

That he will and does provide everything that I need.

“I am *content* in him.”

“If I don’t have it, I must not need it.”

And second, that confident trust in the Lord...

Is exercised toward your neighbor.

Meekness always has an outward facing element to it...

My trust in the Lord leads me to act in certain ways toward my neighbor.

The great preacher, Charles Spurgeon says that meekness is a combination of these:

Patience, gentleness, humility, forgiveness, and contentment.

This is meekness then:

Trust and contentment in God...

**Exercised toward your neighbor in patience, humility,
gentleness and forgiveness.**

II.

Let’s move on to our second question:

Why is it good?

When the society around me is telling me to:

Fight for myself;

To strike first and strike hard;

To punish people when they do me wrong;

To watch out for my interests and prosperity.

When society is telling me these things...

Why is it good to be meek?

Because, let’s be honest, this beatitude doesn’t sound right!

Shouldn’t it say:

“The strong shall inherit the earth.”

Or...

“The assertive shall inherit the land.”

Or...

“The powerful, those who are intimidating, will gain all of these things.”

That’s the way the world has arranged it—

That’s the way a lot of us are living—

But God says, “It’s the meek...”

“Their inheritance will be the earth.”

All of these things that people are pursuing through power and aggression...

God says, “I’ll give them to you...”—

“I’ll give you the whole earth”—

“As you walk in meekness.”

There is definitely a future ring to the 2nd part of this beatitude...

All of creation will be ours...

The earth will be ours...

As we steward it when God’s reign is complete.

Our inheritance of the earth is entering into the eternal promised land...

Where we dwell with God.

The future element is there—

And may it give us hope...

And may motivate us to live in meekness—

But I want us to think about the present benefits of meekness...

How it’s good today.

So, why is meekness a defining characteristic of Christ-followers today?

1. It’s attractive to the outside world.

In 1 Peter he instructs wives to be gentle...

Using the same word for meek...

Encouraging this inner spirit of beauty to come out.

A meek spirit may be attractive enough to turn a husband’s heart to Christ, he says.

That's why Peter also says to be gentle (meek) when giving a reason for your hope in Christ...(3:15)

People are drawn to meekness.

We may not like it for ourselves...

But meekness is attractive.

Think about it...

Would you rather be in community/relationship with someone harsh—

Someone who is always better than you...

Always knows what's right...

Full of pride and arrogance...

Always wanting to be the dominant one—

Or would you rather share life with someone meek...

Someone gentle, patient, contented, forgiving, and humble?

We're attracted to meek people...

Why? Because it images the divine.

It mirrors Christ to a harsh, competitive world...

Christ who is King yet takes the form of a servant...

Christ who is unjustly wronged yet opens not his mouth.

2. *Meekness is not just attractive, it's a healing balm.*

In Galatians, Paul says:

“If a fellow disciple is caught in a sin...restore them gently (meek).”

Is this the kind of response that is likely to lead to a transformed life:

“I can't believe you did that!”

“I have never done or seen anything like that in all of my life!”

“You should know better! Don't you ever show your face around here again!”

No, but meekness invites transformation when confronted with sin...

It gives people space to confess and repent.

Again, meekness is a blessing because it mirrors the divine.

Christ—

The Son of God...

Sinless in every way possible...

Standing with the woman caught in adultery...

Or standing with the tax collector...

Or with the disciples who deserted him—

How does he respond?

He acknowledges the sin—

Invites us to acknowledge it—

And calls us to turn from it and follow him.

God doesn't rub it in our face or shame us for it.

In meekness he says:

“I know what you've done...”

“I know what you've been doing.”

“Turn from it and come to me.”

“I've paid for that sin; it no longer belongs to you.”

“Come and follow me.”

Meekness is a healing balm in the face of sin.

3. *As we saw with the story of the 2 brothers (or Abraham and Lot)...*

Meekness also disarms conflict.

In Colossians 3 Paul says:

“As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with...gentleness (meekness)...Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.”

As God's people, we know that we are dearly loved.

We know that we already have everything we need in life...

Because we belong to the God who owns it all.

So, when our pride is tickled or pricked...

When we feel like we've been wronged or slighted...

Or when something is being withheld from us...

We have no need to react with a spirit of revenge or hysteria.

We can respond with patience, humility, forgiveness, and gentleness...

Being content in the Lord.

Our savior disarmed our biggest conflict when he stood in for our sin...

When we were separated from God...

Christ came and gave himself for us.

Now we, as his disciples, image the divine when we practice meekness in our conflict.

III.

What is it?

Why is it good?

Now maybe the most important question:

How do we get it?

Church, how do you think we grow in meekness?

Jesus.

Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23) ...

It comes as a result of belonging to Christ...

It comes as a result of being connected to Christ.

Here are a couple of suggestions for connecting with Christ this week...

Allowing him to work meekness in you:

1. 10 minutes a day of chair time

Set aside 10 minutes to read Scripture.

I suggest reading/reflecting on Psalm 37, Num 12, Gen 13 or Matt 11:25-30.

2. Take time to self-reflect before the Lord

At the end of the day...

Recall those times where you felt strong emotions:

Anger, pride, envy, self-pity.

Ask yourself, "What was going on?"

Was I being denied something I felt entitled to?

Was this something that I can't find in the Lord?

What would it have looked like for me to practice patience, gentleness, forgiveness, humility, and contentment?

If you need to confess, then confess to the Lord (to the other person as well if necessary)

Ask for forgiveness and the awareness to act differently next time.

3. *Go back to foundational work.*

In a sense, the beatitudes grow on each other.

Blessed are the poor in spirit...

Blessed are those who mourn.

Know your need and dependence on the Lord.

Come to Christ and confess your need of him.

Allow him to speak his delight over you and your worth to him.

Meekness is a trait of those who belong to God's kingdom.

Meekness is something that Christ is working in God's people.

But, if you don't see it exemplified in your life yet...

Fear not!

Think about Moses...

In Numbers 12:3 he was called the meekest man on the face of the earth.

Rewind a couple of decades and, in a rash decision...

Moses killed an Egyptian.

That's not very patient, gentle, humble, content, or forgiving!

So what happened?

After he killed the Egyptian, he lived as a shepherd for 40 years. (Acts 7:30)

My guess is that God was working on his heart during this long stretch of time...

Taking this arrogant, quick-tempered young man...

And transforming him into a patient, humble, gentle, forgiving, and content God-fearer.

Discipleship is a process.

Growing to be like Christ is a process...

It doesn't all happen at once.

We are saved by him and belong to him—

We are promised to be transformed into his likeness after this life—

But right now, we are still in the growing process.

And what helps that growth process is connecting with Christ.

So, may we know Christ's strength and his presence in us this week—

As we seek to live for God's glory—

Being content in God...

And exercising that toward our neighbor in patience, gentleness, humility and forgiveness.

Amen.