

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 5 Sep 2021

Sermon Title : Meek

Speaker : Rev Eddie Ho

Text : Matthew 5:5

INTRODUCTION

We are easily fascinated by secrets to success. If an old person looks young or someone becomes a billionaire we want to know what his secret is. While there is nothing wrong in wanting to know the secrets to success, you are not really successful if you are not truly happy. In fact, it is tragic, if outwardly you look good, but inwardly, you are empty. Jesus, in His 3 years of ministry on earth, has a lot to say about this. In His sermon recorded in Matthew 5-7, Jesus tells us what blessedness (happiness) is. In the beginning of Matthew 5, Jesus gave us 8 secrets to happiness – known collectively as ‘The Beatitudes’. They all begin with the Greek word “*makarios*” which literally means happy or blessed. In the 1st sermon of this series 2 Sundays ago, we learnt the 1st secret of ‘What it means to be poor in spirit’. In last Sunday’s sermon we learnt the 2nd secret on ‘How to mourn rightly on the right things’. In this sermon, we will learn the 3rd secret – ‘Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth’.

Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth - Matthew 5:5 (ESV)

1) Inherit the earth

a) What is the earth?

- This beatitude is a direct quote of Psalm 37:10-11 (*NIV*) from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the earth or land refers literally to the land promised to Abraham and the Israelite; the ‘Promised Land’ flowing with milk and honey given by God to them after Moses brought them out of Egypt. Yet it is more than just the physical land. The earth here is a place where there is true freedom and happiness; where there is no injustice but fairness, goodness and righteousness.

Such a place on earth can only exist if the people keep their covenant with God – where God is their King and everybody obeys His command, loves Him and worships Him. This was what the Israelites were supposed to do in the Old Testament, so that they could be happy, but they did not.

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- In the last book of the New Testament, we are told that it is a place where every tear is wiped away, no more mourning, crying or pain, a place where the old things have passed away, where sin and death are no more. This is the new earth, the New Jerusalem – a heavenly place that God has in mind from the very beginning.

God created us to be happy in this place. Unfortunately Adam and Eve could not keep it, the people of the old covenant could not maintain it. So, God sent His Son to purchase it for us. Jesus came and gave His body to give us the new covenant. Jesus also said that in His Father's house there are many rooms and He has gone there to prepare a place for us. But when He returns, we will join Him in the Father's House and at that time all things will be restored, His Kingdom will be fully established on earth as it is in heaven.

❖ *Happy is the meek, for they shall inherit this new earth.*

b) Why inherit?

Because it is yours – Whoever believes in Jesus Christ, whoever puts their faith in the Son of God, whoever clings on to the cross of Jesus Christ; your name is in the Book of Life, you are co-heirs with Christ of the Kingdom of Heaven.

❖ *One of the conditions to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven is to be meek.*

2) **Meek – *praus* (Gk)**

a) Meek like a lamb

The English dictionary often describes 'meek' as being quiet, gentle, submissive and humble - like a lamb. Gentle and humble is the correct translation. However, we will face 2 problems if we understand meekness simply as being gentle and humble:

- (i) Being 'poor in spirit' is also being gentle and humble – so what is the difference between meek and poor in spirit?
- (ii) Almost every religion teaches us to be meek – what then is the difference between Christianity and all other religions?

b) Meek like a war horse - *prautes* (Gk)

Besides being gentle and humble, the word '*praus*' was a Greek military term used also to describe a wild horse that was being trained to be a war horse and to be completely loyal to its rider. Yet the horse did not become soft like a lamb. It remained fierce, courageous and strong, but highly disciplined. In spite of its size, strength and capability, the horse will humbly put itself under the rider's authority. Even in the most dangerous situation where its life is threatened, it will still remain steadfast, putting complete trust in its rider.

❖ *To be meek is to be turned from being a wild rebel to being focused, disciplined, calm, highly effective and completely under the authority of the rider.*

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Why should you subject yourself to the rider - Are we being oppressed like an animal, to be manipulated and controlled by God?

The Bible is not just a book of instructions but also a book of revelation. It tells us who God is, who we are, and who we can be. We are not His animal but “like God” because we are created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26). We possess some of His divine qualities that animals do not have and we are given dominion over the earth, capable of cultivation, conservation, medication, preservation and protection to flourish lives on earth. But we need to be meek - yet we rebelled against it:

- Adam and Eve did not want God to be their rider and turned against God. We are all equally guilty. We are all naturally selfish, do not love God with our whole heart, disobeyed His will, not followed His teachings, rebelled against His love, not loved our neighbours and not heard the cries of the needy. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, betraying the Creator.
 - We have messed up His creation through deforestation, overconsumed the natural resources, over-fished the seas and dumped too much trash into the environment. Without God as our master, we are like wild animals. Without God as our moral compass, we will do things right in our own eyes; things best suited to our own interests, never mind others will suffer.
- ❖ *We are natural moral law-breakers. We do things that are hurtful and sometimes, even harmful to others.*

Meekness of Jesus

Because of mankind’s evil, God should be riding a war horse charging at us but God has an amazing way of dealing with divine anger:

- While the Son of God has all the right to mount on a war horse to come and destroy sin and wickedness, Jesus came riding on a donkey (Matthew 21:5) – ‘meek’ here is often translated as gentle or humble.

Yet, in Matthew 21:12, Jesus showed His rage in the temple courts, overturning the tables of the money changers and benches of those selling doves. Jesus could have used His power and might to turn the table and charge at evil to destroy sin, but if He were to do that, all of us will be destroyed together with it. That is not the desire of the Father. The Father desires all people to be saved, and come to the knowledge of His Truth.

- Jesus being meek took it upon Himself to submit to the Father like a Lamb to the slaughter. He went to the Cross to pay the penalty of sin and death, so that the salvation of all people is possible. This is what being meek is – Jesus listens to the Father, does the will of the Father and took your failures to the

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Cross. Your sins are nailed with Him at the Cross. He suffered and died, so that you can be freed from the bondage of sin and death.

- ❖ *God wants to reconcile with you. God wants you to inherit the earth and be happy. All you have to do is to be meek and submit to God as your rider.*

Be meek like Jesus

- To be meek is to be gentle like a lamb, which means the world may take advantage of you because the world treats gentleness as a sign of weakness.
- To be meek and follow Jesus means many will oppose you. Many will object and some may even abuse or persecute you. Yet we are to remain meek and gentle even under attack. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

To have Jesus as your rider does not mean your life will be smooth. You still have to walk, run, jump carrying the heavy load of life with you. Sometimes, you may even feel as if you are the one doing all the walking, all the running, all the jumping, carrying all the load. But, Jesus invites you to take His yoke and learn from Him to find rest for your souls, for His yoke is easy, and His burden light. (Matthew 11:29) Jesus has dismounted and is shouldering your burdens with you. He went through the highs and lows of life, knows what temptation, sorrow, pain and suffering are. Instead of directing you from a comfortable place, He is offering to hold your hand and He says to you "I will pull and bear the burden with you, because I am much stronger than you. The burden will be light for you."

CONCLUSION

We need to acknowledge our rebellious nature and need for God to be our "rider" so we will no longer mess God's creation, ourselves and others up. Let us put ourselves under the complete authority of God, so we can be focussed, disciplined, calm and highly effective and meek like Jesus to do the will of God. May we accept Jesus' invitation to take His yoke which is light when we face challenges in being meek like Him, and persevere in our walk, so we may inherit the land He has promised to those who are meek and be truly happy.

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A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Matthew 5:5 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, how has this verse spoken to you?

- b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Meek"?

- (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. Re-read “the earth” God promises the meek will inherit as described in the Old Testament and in the last book of the Bible (Pages 1-2). Think of the kind of “earth” that you believe would make you truly happy. Is it the same?
- 2b. The word “Meek” in Matthew 5:5 is described as being “like a lamb” or “like a war horse”.
 - (i) What are the criteria you need to fulfill from each of these descriptions so you can inherit this “new earth” that Jesus promises in Matthew 5:5?
 - (ii) What challenges do you expect to face in fulfilling these criteria in your life?
 - (iii) What benefits do you see in fulfilling these criteria in your life?
- 3a. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least, how meek are you with reference to the criteria in 2b(i)?
- 3b. What is one thing you need to change in your life so that you can move up the scale?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your testimony on how God has walked with you and lightened the burden on you, when you struggled to overcome challenges, to be meek like Jesus.

OR

Give thanks to God for His promise that the meek will inherit the earth and be happy.

5. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 3a, 3b and 3c to God, asking for the Holy Spirit's empowerment to accept Jesus' offer to hold your hand in your journey to be meek like Him.

As a group, discuss how your group can encourage each other in submitting to God instead of rebelling against Him. Pray for sensitivity to the Spirit's prompting whenever your "moral law-breaking" human condition creeps into your life so you will allow God to be your rider to direct you towards meekness so you may inherit the earth He has promised and be truly happy.

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