

**Sermon:** Blessed are the Meek – March 21, 2015 (Scripture is from the ESV)

**Location:** Jeremiah Prayer Meeting (JPM) – New Philadelphia Church, Sillim Campus

### **Introduction**

Good evening everyone. Please open your Bibles to Psalm 2:8.

**Psalm 2:8 – Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.**

In the NIV this verse reads, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance.” Heritage and inheritance have pretty much the same meaning. Psalm 2:8 is a key verse for any Christian desiring to affect a nation. It is a key verse that my orphanage ministry staff claims as we pray for North and South Korea every Friday. It’s a key verse for this prayer meeting as we lift up this nation. We want the nations as our inheritance. Amen?

And in order to inherit the nations there is a key quality that God’s people must possess. It’s a quality that I have despised and ignored for much of Christian life because the word for it seems so weak and unattractive. Let’s turn to Matthew 5:5 to see what that quality is.

**Matthew 5:5 – Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.**

### **What is meekness?**

**The title of tonight’s sermon is, “Blessed are the Meek.”** I had wanted to title this sermon, “Inheriting the Nations” because that sounds so much more powerful and appealing than hearing about meekness. But the true sons of God will discern which is actually greater: meekness or the nations. The word meek is despised here on earth, but it is exalted in heaven.

### **Slide 1**

The basic dictionary definition of meek is: “**quiet, gentle, submissive, and easily imposed upon.**” Quiet, gentle, submissive, and easily imposed upon. That isn’t appealing at all. In fact, it sounds like a weak, pathetic person who has no backbone.

### **Slide 2**

The more Christian definition of meek is: “humble, gentle, and patient under suffering.” **Meekness means restraining one’s own power, so as to allow for others.** It means power under God’s control. Now most people of this world are attracted to power, either to yield it or to be a part of it. But meekness is about restraining one’s own power, so as to allow for others. That isn’t appealing at all.

But Jesus wasn’t turned off by this word. In fact, Jesus described himself as meek in Matthew 11:28-30. Let me read this well-known passage to you...

### **Slide 3**

**Matthew 11:28-30 – Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**

The word “gentle” in the Greek is actually the same word as “meek” in Matthew 5:5. But gentle doesn’t give the full meaning of meekness. It isn’t the gentle who will inherit the earth, it is the meek!

The word meek is also found in the Old Testament. It's a different word in Hebrew, but carries the same promise. Turn with me to Psalm 37:7-11...

Psalm 37:7-11 – Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land. In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.

This word for meek in the Hebrew is, “Awnawv.” It's definition is perhaps the worst of the ones I have given you. It basically means: “Poor, humble, lowly, and oppressed.” This meaning sounds so pathetic and unattractive to those of this world. But we are not those of this world. Ours is an upside down kingdom. Ours is a kingdom where the least is the greatest and the greatest is the least. The way we please our God is by living by faith, which is a life that doesn't rely on sight. We might be temporarily oppressed in the natural, but we know in the spiritual our inheritance is eternal. So we live by faith, not by sight. **The way we live is not based on the earthly circumstances around us, but is rather based on God's truth and His promises.**

This is what meekness is. It's a deep trust in God. It's a trust that endures through every test, every injustice, and every difficulty. It's a trust knowing that God works all things for our good. It's a trust that throws entitlement to the wind. A humble, gentle, and submissive person to people on earth is usually a weak person. But a person humble, gentle, and submissive to God is a powerful person in heaven.

Psalm 37 is a rich chapter contrasting the good and the evil. It is a chapter warning good people not to envy the evil people around them and not to get wrapped up in the present circumstances. Throughout Psalm 37 we are encouraged to wait on the Lord. Wait patiently for him. Those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land. The meek shall inherit the land.

**Meek people are patient in suffering.** Meek people are so submitted to God that their trust is not in the physical circumstances, but rather in the Lord. A meek person may have all the power in the world, but will choose to submit that power to God. A meek person might be entitled to great things, but will trust in the Lord when those things are temporarily taken away.

### **Jesus' Example**

A great example of meekness was Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane before He was betrayed and crucified. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus could say a word and legions of angels would respond. Jesus had all power and all authority. But He chose to submit everything to God. And in the garden of Gethsemane, as He was in such torment knowing what was about to come, He was still able to pray, “Not my will but your will be done.” That is meekness. **That is a man restraining His own power to submit to God.** Jesus was patient under suffering. Jesus humbly trusted in God His Father.

The name of the garden of Gethsemane actually translates into English as, “Oil Press.” Olive oil was a precious commodity in Biblical times and it still is today. Oil was used to anoint kings and to signify the anointing of God's Spirit. To create olive oil the olives are put into a large bucket, or press, and people step on them to crush the olives so that the juice, the oil, will come forth. And where does the oil gather? It gathers in the lowest place. It is in the

lowest place that the anointing, the presence of God's Spirit, is the strongest. This low place is a place of submission to God. **It is not a place of weakness, rather it is a place of submitting your strength and power fully to the Lord.** Jesus was not weak in the garden of Gethsemane. Rather by His meekness and obedience to God He demonstrated a strength that was unworldly. He willingly laid down His life for our sins. That is true power!

### **Why witchcraft cannot inherit the nations**

Now there is a clear contrast to a meek spirit, and that is actually a spirit that has been tempting and dominating mankind throughout history. It is the spirit of witchcraft that we read about in Revelation 17 and 18 that seduces the nations.

In 2011 I preached a message at this prayer meeting, "Prostitution, Witchcraft, and Korea's Parents." I showed how closely connected prostitution and witchcraft are both in Scripture and in this present world. Witchcraft wants control. Witchcraft uses intimidation, domination, and manipulation to exercise **illegitimate authority** over people.

Babylon is a city that represents the wickedness of man and in the book of Revelation it is depicted as a prostitute that seduces mankind into evil. Babylon represents a number of things, including the commercial systems of this world, greed, materialism, power, prostitution and lust. Revelation 17:18 states that Babylon is a great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth. In other words, the men that seem to be great in the world's sight are actually under dominion to Babylon.

Revelation 18:21-24 depicts the fall of Babylon...

### **Slides 4 and 5**

Revelation 18:21-24 – Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your **sorcery**. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.

What were the nations deceived by? They were deceived by her sorcery; by her witchcraft. They were deceived by illegitimate control. **Like prostitutes who think they have control over their customer, they are actually being owned by their pimp.**

What do most entrepreneurs in our generation desire? They desire to get rich quickly. As pure as many people try to be, the longing for fame, for celebrity, for power, for attention, for wealth, and for influence runs deep in our generation. Bosses will force their workers to work inhumane hours so that they can make more money. Leaders will yell, threaten, and intimidate in order to keep control. People will cheat and lie in order to make more profit. They will oppress the poor so that their own power can increase. Such people intimidate, manipulate, and dominate to establish their own kingdom. But like all the past tyrants who once ruled, their kingdoms won't last. Their worldly kingdoms and their temporary riches will fade to nothing. And they will face an eternity of judgment.

A meek person won't try to manipulate things of this world to get ahead. A meek person won't try to negotiate things on their own. A meek person trusts in the Lord and keeps their gentleness and their integrity. A meek person may endure temporary difficulties and testing, but the inheritance of a meek person will be eternal and unshakable.

### **Jacob's Transformation**

In the book of Genesis we read of Jacob, whose name actually means, "He deceives." Jacob negotiates with his brother Esau to get his birthright. Then Jacob deceives his father Isaac to get his blessing. Then Jacob tries to negotiate with his cousin Laban in order to marry Laban's daughter Rachel. In all these stories we don't see him seek God's instruction once. And while Jacob thinks he is getting ahead by manipulating and negotiating, he actually ends up enslaving himself to Laban. It isn't until Jacob finally listens to God in Genesis 31 that he is set free from Laban's rule over him. And then it is when Jacob finally seeks God's full blessing that He receives a new name and a new identity. After wrestling with God for God's blessing, God names him, "Israel," which means, "strives with God." Jacob was finally becoming meek. He was finally submitting his power and his strength to God. **Jacob was finally no longer relying on his own force and deception to establish his own kingdom, rather he was relying on God's blessing.** And so he received a new name Israel and his own offspring would become a mighty nation. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

Meek people are not weak and submissive to this world. Rather, meek people are strong and submitted fully to the Lord. Meek people no longer care or fret over their present circumstances. Meek people are content to work with whatever they have, no matter how extreme things get. They trust that God is good. They trust that God is good. **They trust that, no matter what, God is good.**

Throughout Scripture we read, "Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up in due time." "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." For meek people there is no stress or fear or worry, because they are fully submitted to the Lord. So in that there is rest. It's a rest that enabled Jesus to sleep through the worst of the storms. It's a rest that enabled Peter to sleep in prison while awaiting execution. It's a rest that enabled Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to face the fiery furnace.

Anger, intimidation, manipulation, and force only establish worldly kingdoms. They will not establish eternal kingdoms. But trust and submission to the Lord will.

### **The example of Moses**

Just as Jesus was a beautiful example of meekness in action in the New Testament, Moses was a true example of meekness in the Old Testament.

### **Slide 6**

**Numbers 12:3 – Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.**

What made Moses so meek? Moses was a man who was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and was raised in the courts of Pharaoh. He had an education unlike his fellow Israelites. After Moses grew older he, like Jacob before him, tried to change things on his own. He exercised illegitimate authority by striking and killing an Egyptian who had been oppressing a fellow Israelite. **Moses was exercising force, or domination, to try and deliver his people.** But rather than becoming the leader of a great nation, he was rejected by his own and had to flee

out of Egypt in order to survive. He then lived in the desert as a shepherd for forty years. His own efforts of force had amounted to nothing.

After those forty years God appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush in Exodus 3. God tells Moses to return to Egypt to lead Israel out of slavery and into the Promised Land. Moses responds to God out of insecurity and fear and tells God that he can't speak well. But even after God encourages Moses and tells Moses that He will be Moses' mouth and will teach him what to say, Moses still begs God to send someone else. God becomes angry at Moses for his lack of faith and tells Moses that He has already sent Aaron to meet him to be his voice for him.

Why was Moses so concerned about his voice? It was likely because he was adopted and was raised in Pharaoh's house. Moses, being an adoptee, was likely fluent in the Egyptian language, but not as fluent in the Hebrew language of the Israelites. Moses was worried he would be despised. Moses may have appeared humble and lowly in not wanting the mantle of leadership, but the truth was that Moses was doubting God and not believing God would provide for him. Moses was trusting more in his own insecurities and weaknesses than in God's provision. Ironically, God already knew Moses' weakness and had sent his brother Aaron, fluent in the Hebrew language, to speak on his behalf. If Moses had just fully trusted in the Lord then he would have seen and rejoiced in God's provision in Aaron. This was God's first lesson to Moses to be fully reliant on the Lord for His strength and to not worry about his own weaknesses or present circumstances. God would continue to drill this into Moses during the 10 plagues.

Finally, when Israel departed from Egypt, Moses' confidence in the Lord had grown. He was able to stretch forth his staff in front of the Red Sea and cause it to part. He was able to strike a stone to provide water. He was able to go up Mount Sinai and meet with God for 40 days. He was able to follow the cloud by day and the fire by night without questioning God or trying to take matters into his own hands. When rebellions would happen in the camp Moses wouldn't try and manipulate circumstances on his own, instead Moses would just go to God in prayer. Moses' trust wasn't in his own leadership or power, it was in God who gave him the leadership and the power. Moses had indeed become a meek man, knowing his own weaknesses and his own strengths, and fully submitting them to God. And so Moses was credited with taking a great nation out of slavery and into freedom. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

You might think your inability to speak the language, your lack of education, your present humble job, or some other weakness of yours might block or forfeit your ability to impact this nation. You are wrong. When we submit our weaknesses to God, we become stronger than anyone of this earth. He will provide. He will release the inheritance. **Inheritance cannot be earned or worked for. It is simply given.** Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth!

### **The example of David**

David would be another example of meekness. David was humble, gentle, patient under suffering, and often restrained his own power to allow for others. We don't read of him ever complaining of having to shepherd the sheep alone while his other brothers were brought before the prophet Samuel. Some people read Psalm 51 where David wrote, "Surely I was brought forth in iniquity" and also see David's absence before Samuel as meaning that David was an illegitimate son of Jesse who Jesse was ashamed to present before Samuel. Despite David's humble and rejected background, David kept his trust in the Lord. We don't read of

him rebelling when King Saul tried to kill him and mistreated him. Even when David had opportunities to kill King Saul and seize the throne himself, David refused. David would not let take the crown of Israel by force. David knew the crown came from God, not from man. If David were to use worldly means to seize the crown, then he would have a worldly, cursed kingdom. David instead waited on the Lord. He endured the wilderness, he endured rejection and betrayal, and he even endured his own men almost rising up against him in rebellion.

**David was patient under suffering.** David was a mighty warrior, but consistently restrained his power in submission to King Saul. Even after David was made king over Judah, David did not kill King Saul's sons to fully establish his kingdom. Instead after seven years of waiting King Saul's son finally died and the kingdom was fully given to David. God's blessing was fully upon him because of his patience. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

So Moses, despite being an adoptee, was called to deliver the nation of Israel. David, being a rejected son, was called to become king over the nation of Israel. And David's line of royal blood would go down to Jesus Christ. His kingship would indeed endure forever.

And what of other mighty Biblical greats? Listen to their amazing resumes and think of how the world would have viewed them: Abraham was a wanderer who was labeled a Hebrew, or foreigner, among the people of Canaan. Joseph was a foreign prisoner, rejected by his brothers and despised by Egyptians for being a Hebrew. Daniel and his friends were exiled orphans. Nehemiah was an exiled cupbearer. Esther was an exiled orphan. Peter and John were fishermen. Jesus was a carpenter. While all of their backgrounds seem weak and their jobs were deemed as lowly, they all inherited the nations. Each of them chose to not allow the labels of the world to hold them down. Their trust wasn't in the physical; rather it was in the spiritual. They were humble, gentle, and patient under suffering. Abraham never yelled in anger at God for all his wandering. Joseph never rebelled or cried out in hopeless despair during his time in prison. Daniel, Nehemiah, Esther, and the other exiles never cursed God for their conditions. All of them kept in a place of worship and trust, patient through their suffering. And so God exalted them.

### **Slide 7**

**Hebrews 6:11-12 – And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

A man filled with faith and patience is a meek man, a man who will not use witchcraft or manipulation to get what he wants. A man filled with faith and patience is a meek man, not letting his weaknesses or his earthly circumstances hold him down. Instead, a meek man submits his weakness to the Lord, trusting God will provide.

Often it is what we despise about ourselves that God is wanting for us to submit to Him. These are the things that can either keep us meek or give us pride or insecurity. If we submit them to Him like Moses and David did, we will be okay. But if we do not submit them, we will end up like King Saul, overwhelmed by his pride and his insecurities and in the end losing the kingdom.

Now being meek doesn't mean we are robotic or dishonest with God. Moses and David were two of the most raw people with God. Their meekness led to submission regardless of the circumstances, but they were still very real in their relationship with God. We read their openness with God throughout the book of Psalms. They were honest about their feelings.

They would air their complaints and their struggles to God. But in the end they would hold on to His promises and declare His praise. **Their complaints were expressions of trust in God's promises rather than expressions of doubt in God's goodness.** The Israelites mistake in the wilderness was that their complaints were expressions of doubt in God's goodness. Their complaints were accusations of God being a bad God. Their faithless accusations angered God. God doesn't respond to doubt, He responds to faith. God responds when we stand on the truth of who He is and wait patiently for Him to respond.

I came to Korea back in 2005 with great visions and dreams of entering North Korea and caring for the orphans there. It is now 2015 and I have seen no signs of dramatic change in the physical. And yet my faith in God's plan is 100 times stronger than it was when I first arrived in 2005. God has chosen the Korean people for a special purpose. He demonstrated this 100 years ago when he poured out his Spirit over this people.

Korea, like Moses and David and so many other "weak" or "rejected" people in the Bible, has always been a small nation dwarfed between China and Japan, just trying to survive. Korea's similarities to Israel, another "weak" and "rejected" nation, are startling. And yet we see both Korea and Israel have not only survived but are prospering. God has mighty plans for Korea, both for the North and for the South. And God is looking for the Moses, the Davids, the Josephs, and the Esthers to inherit this nation. God is looking for those who are patient in their present circumstances. God is looking for those who can endure when things in the physical don't look good. God is looking in this room for those with faith to wait and trust in Him. And God will exalt such people. They will inherit the earth.

### **Pray**

Pray for those called to Korea/North Korea/10 Year Commitments (repentance, pledging) What weakness do you need to submit to God? What areas have you complained out of doubt in God's goodness? God is calling for faith and for patience! He is good!  
Pray for international students, those called to their nation (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther... all different job backgrounds, each used to secure the land for the Jews)... even if you're from a city that is doomed to eventual judgment, you're still called to pray and believe for revival. Daniel himself lived in Babylon and had a most wicked king (Nebuchadnezzar), but he never gave up in prayer.

### **The meek will inherit the earth (extra note)**

In the letter to the church in Thyatira in Revelation 2, the people are commanded to forsake Jezebel and her teaching. Jezebel represents witchcraft and sin. In this letter God promises that for those who are able to overcome Jezebel to the very end will receive "authority over the nations" (Rev 2:26). Blessed are the meek, they will inherit the earth! Blessed are those who overcome witchcraft, who do not submit to or exercise illegitimate control, they will receive authority over the nations!