

Sermon File # 751

Scripture Text: Matthew 5:5

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:1-5

Sermon Title: *The Blessing of Meekness*

Manuscript written by Roger Roberts and sermon preached

At International Baptist Church, Brussels Belgium

On Sunday morning 1 February 2009

**For additional information regarding this manuscript, contact
Roger.Roberts@ibcbrussels.org**

Sources cited in this manuscript are listed at the end.

All Rights Reserved.

The Blessing of Meekness

Introduction:

Open your Bibles with me to Matthew 5, as we continue to look at the Beatitudes in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' manifesto for the life of a disciple, for living as a follower of Jesus in the Kingdom of God. We have already considered the first two Beatitudes, where Jesus pronounces "congratulations" to those who are poor in spirit and who mourn, because they receive God's grace and comfort, which produce everlasting happiness and joy. Today we will think together about the third Beatitude, which again describes the candidate for God's blessings, this time the one who is meek, or humble, as we might prefer to say.

In order to provide the context for this third Beatitude, I will begin with the first verse of Matthew 5. Follow with me as I read: **Matthew 5:1-5**.

Once again, we see that the Beatitudes, the blessings of God, express the paradox of God's grace. The poor in spirit receive the riches of the kingdom (3), those who mourn are the comforted (4) and now, the meek, the humble, inherit the earth (5). The good news is that because of Jesus and the way he opened the door to the kingdom, human fortunes are totally reversed.

This reversal of fortune in today's Beatitude is so dramatic that one scholar calls it "revolutionary stuff" (Green, p. 90). This pronouncement of God's blessing is totally counter-cultural, as it was in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry. Aristotle declared that pride and high-mindedness were the best of virtues, while to be meek was to be weak (Roberts, p. 83, Blomberg, p. 99). And we can see the same estimation of meekness or humility in our time, in contrast to the image of the macho man and superhero. And in many of our countries of origin, we have learned the importance of self-assertion and equal rights for opportunities in school, the community and the workplace. We are told to be self-confident and strong, to not let anyone shove us around, and to make our opinions known and be certain that we're respected. And so, Jesus comes today, as he did in the power-hungry Greco-Roman world, and tells us we are blessed if we are humble and meek.

We realize that being a follower of Jesus is taking a different path from the unbelieving world, but isn't this just going too far? The first two Beatitudes focus on our personal character, and promise God's blessings on our personal character, and not so much on how we relate to others. But now we are beginning to see that God's blessings also are conditional upon how we relate to others (Wilkins, p. 207). And being people of humility and meekness is not the way we're used to relating to people in this "dog-eat-dog," "every-person-for-herself" world. But Jesus promises the blessing of his everlasting joy and happiness for those who dare to be different from the world and relate to others (God included!) and to circumstances with humility and meekness. It sounds almost like Jesus is saying, "You'll get ahead in life if you let others step over you, and it's better to let others have their way at your expense."

To understand just exactly what Jesus means by this third Beatitude we need to consider first...

➤ **The attitude of meekness**

Meekness is an attitude, a frame of mind that leads us to act in a certain way. Because this attitude of meekness, this humility, is a Kingdom of God virtue, it is first of all one that is...

- *Shaped by worship and surrender*

The attitude of meekness, or humility, comes from our experience of God in worship. In worship we encounter some of the greatness and glory of holy God (as much as we sinners can endure). Only through seeing the God who is there and who makes himself known to us in his word and by his Spirit, can we see ourselves as the sinners we are. This was the experience of Isaiah in the temple (Isaiah 6:5), of John on the Island of Patmos (Revelation 1:17) and Simon Peter, when he saw the power of Jesus at work (Luke 5:8). Before the greatness of God Almighty and his Son, the crucified, risen Christ of glory, we assume the attitude of humility and submission before him. Saul of Tarsus, the arrogant, opinionated scholar, zealously persecuting the church, was struck by divine light and knocked off his "high horse" and transformed into a humble, obedient servant of the Jesus

he had persecuted (Acts 9:1-19). As he testified to King Agrippa, he was “not disobedient to the vision from heaven” because now he had a new Lord and Commander, Jesus, who had appeared to him in glorious light and commissioned him in a redoubtable voice.

Pride and resistance to God are broken by a genuine encounter with him. No one comes to faith in Jesus in a casual manner, but only through the humility of sorrow for sin and brokenness before God and willingness to turn from one’s own way and follow Jesus as Lord. I recall how my college New Testament professor, Dr. George Redding, interpreted the Beatitudes as a “plan of salvation,” describing the way any sinner comes to faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord. He noted that the message of Christ comes to us when we are poor in spirit, realizing we cannot save ourselves. Then we mourn over our lost condition and over the fact that our peace with God came at the cost of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. Then, we humbly turn from proud self and a life of unbelief and sin and follow Jesus as Lord. Although I can agree with the late Dr. Redding that these Beatitudes reflect characteristics involved in coming to faith, I believe they are much more. And we who have experienced God’s saving grace realize that the Beatitudes, the blessings of God, are something we are to appropriate throughout a lifetime of faith and obedience.

The blessing of meekness begins when we realize who we are before holy God, causing us to fall before him in surrender to his will, being now...

- *Aware of human weakness*

I am saved through grace that comes to me in my weakness, but I continue to live in the awareness of my weakness before God and my absolute dependence upon him. Even as a being-converted follower of Christ my sinful nature resists the attitude of humility and meekness before God and others. How quickly do I forget who I am before the greatness of God, who has graciously chosen me, not because of my ability, but because of his mercy and grace alone! And he didn’t save me to put me on my feet and teach me to “stand on my own two feet,” but rather he chose me because of my openness to and dependence on his mercy, power and grace. I must remember what Paul told the Corinthian believers, who were prone to pride of giftedness, prestige and place. He told them that God chose them because of their human weakness and ordinariness, that he might get the glory in using the weak and insignificant people of this proud world (1 Corinthians 1:18-2:4). As Marva Dawn so poignantly reminds us, God graciously tabernacles, not in our strength, but in our weakness. God wants us to come to the end of our proud strength and self-reliance so that he can fill and empower us with his Holy Spirit. Only then do our lives glorify him and allow for his blessedness in our lives and churches (Dawn, pages 57, 60, 159, etc.)

If I could just see myself as God sees me (even though he loves me far beyond what I can imagine), I would have no trouble getting rid of pride and taking on genuine meekness and humility. The fallen world treats our feelings of inferiority with the therapy that seeks to make us feel better about ourselves by teaching us to assert ourselves and demand our rights to respect and privileges. But God wants us to find our self worth through a love relationship with him that begins with

repentance and leads to the transformation of our lives and character into the likeness of his Son. We find significance as the beloved children of God who has paid the ultimate price for a relationship with him and who is at work to transform us into the restored image of his perfect Son, Jesus. He also has called us to join him in his work of putting this fallen, sin-battered world to rights, through evangelism and working for a just world. When we realize this, we sit back in amazement and ask with Paul, "Who am I for such a calling as this?" (2 Corinthians 3:6ff).

The attitude of meekness is also...

- *Dependent on the Triune God*

Because meekness, i.e. true humility, goes against the very nature of unregenerate humanity, it's not within us to become the kind of meek men and women that God can bless. Nor, without God's grace would we even desire to be meek and humble people. Meekness is not weakness in the sense of being "pushovers" who yield to those who would exploit and manipulate us to their evil ends or who would coerce us to abandon our stand for Christ and his word. In fact, godly people who are truly humble are people of courage and conviction who stand up for the truth of God's word and the rights and needs of others and who speak the message of Jesus with boldness and live their Christian convictions with courage.

GK Chesterton noted that modern culture has "dislocated" humility, applying a spirit and attitude of surrender (which we try vainly to enable as "tolerance") to areas of truth where instead we are to be people of strong conviction. Thus, says Chesterton, in the name of Christian humility, meekness has become intellectual and spiritual weakness and God's absolute truth has become relative. Modesty, he says, has moved to conviction, where it was never meant to be, and people are "too modest to believe in the multiplication table" (Chesterton, page 31. I'm indebted to John Piper for reminding me of this quote from GKC).

I like the Dutch word for meek/humble because it's a compound word, "zachtmoedig," combining the word for soft and gentle ("zacht") with the word for brave and courageous ("moedig"). Meekness is the spirit of Jesus himself, who was the mighty Son of God, who referred to himself as "gentle and humble in heart" (11:29). Matthew quoted Isaiah and Zechariah as prophesying the gentle strength of Jesus (12:18-21, quoting Isaiah 42:1-4 and 21:4f, quoting Zechariah 9:9). Jesus was "zachtmoedig" in the way he gently sought the lost and yet bravely confronted the forces of evil and overcame the devil's work of destruction and death, humbling himself even to death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).

The only way we can approach the heavenly Father is with reverent humility, realizing our dependence on his grace. Yet the Father is gentle and merciful, as David says, not treating us as our sins deserve (Psalm 103:10). And we come to Jesus, receiving the gift of his love, responding to his invitation to come with our burdens to find his rest. He invites us to take on ourselves his yoke as we learn from him, who is gentle and humble in heart and will give us rest for our souls. His yoke is easy, he tells us, and his burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30). The way

to learn humility is to walk with Jesus and learn from him, as we let Jesus live in us and live his life “as us.” The way of Jesus is the way of the cross, which is one of obedience to the Father’s will and willingness to share in his sufferings. Paul admonished a quarreling church to relinquish, die to “selfish ambition” and “vain conceit” and “in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you,” he continued, “should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” And the supreme example for the attitude of humility is Jesus: “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus,” and then Paul gives his great kenosis hymn (Philippians 2:3-8).

Kent Hughes describes the way a young ox is trained to pull a plow by being yoked with an older, trained ox. Jesus uses this analogy when he invites us to yoke up with him in a personal, life-changing relationship that surely will teach us to walk humbly with our God (Matthew 11:28ff; Micah 6:8, and Hughes, p. 38). Our walk with Jesus is made possible through the indwelling Holy Spirit, who produces in us the fruit of the Spirit, which includes meekness, humility, and what Paul calls gentleness (Galatians 5:22-23). In fact, the late James M Boice calls his chapter on this third Beatitude, “God’s Gentlemen” (pp 35ff). This Beatitude is God’s blessing of joy upon those who, by walking with Jesus in step with the Spirit, become God’s gentle women and men.

So, we are called to live differently from the world, as James says, with its selfish ambition and striving to get ahead of one another (3:16). We are to live by the wisdom of Christ through the Spirit, which is “peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy....” (3:17). As James says, quoting Proverbs (3:34),

“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble” (4:6).

To be humble and submissive is to be Christ-like, counter-cultural and counter-intuitive and counter human nature. Even some Christians may excuse themselves for their pugnacious, pugilistic attitude and disposition by saying, “That’s just the way I am” (Hughes, p. 36). “I’m Irish. I have red hair,” etc. But as Christians, with the Spirit of God in us, we have no excuse for allowing the old sin nature of pride and self assertion to gain mastery over us (Not even in traffic, I have to remind myself. That’s the most difficult place for me to be humble and submissive!). We must, as James said, “humbly accept the word planted in (us),” allowing God to shape our character by the word and Spirit of God at work in us (James 1:21).

Dallas Willard describes the meek as those who “step off the sidewalk to let others pass,” and who refuse to assert their “legitimate claims.” The meek, says Willard, trust that the Lord is their shepherd, and thus they shall want for nothing (Psalm 23:1). And Willard notes though we are not naturally meek (and I know that I’m not!), God takes the unlikely personalities and transforms us (pp. 117, 124f). I think of Simon Peter as an example. During his first three years or so of following Jesus, his brash self-confidence that bordered on arrogance frequently got him into trouble. His low point of denying the Lord, despite his proud insistence he would never do so, was followed by his brokenness and gracious restoration by the Lord. Only after he was filled with the Spirit was he prepared to be a servant

leader and write about the need for humility and meekness in service to Christ (1 Peter 5:1-7).

I suppose the first place for us, in receiving this blessing of God's great joy and everlasting happiness, is to decide to have the attitude, the mindset of Christ (Philippians 2:3-8), which is one of humility and surrender, soft courage, and strength under God's control. And when we've decided to take on the attitude of Christ we are ready for...

➤ **The actions of meekness**

It's one thing to say we want the attitude of meekness; but the sincerity of this attitude will be shown in concrete actions, as was seen in the sacrificial actions of Jesus. The meek and humble child of God...

- *Relinquishes self will*

The meek and humble are those who have learned to trust in the sovereignty, love and wisdom of God and thus are able to submit their will to his will. And we have to admit, sometimes God's will doesn't make sense to us. And that's because his will is by the way of a cross, as it was for Jesus. God wins his victories, not by overcoming people in their fleshly will, but by our living in weakness, dying to the world, and trusting him to vindicate and deliver us. God does his work through our taking up our cross and living a trusting and self-denying life. Again it is Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 20th Century martyr, who reminds us that the disciple is one who has renounced all personal rights and that our only remaining right is to do the will of God (pp, 109-110).

As we noted, the life of faith begins with a humble surrender to God's will and a glad acceptance of his gracious forgiveness and gift of salvation. But we must continue in the grace of humility. The pilgrimage of faith is one of continuing to die to self will and accept the will of God, which is to serve others and give preference to their needs.

Abraham, our father in faith, exercised humble trust when he yielded to his nephew Lot, giving him first choice of land in which to settle (Genesis 13). Lot made his choice based on what seemed right in his own eyes, without any thought of the spiritual and moral consequences, and God honored Abraham's submission to Lot by his everlasting blessing on his willingness to take second choice. And Abraham passed the supreme test of his faith when he obeyed God in his willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac, a command that surely made no sense to him (Genesis 22).

This spirit of submission is difficult, even in the little "pedestrian" incidents of life. I must learn to practice submission, for example, in stressful traffic when I feel that my right-of-way has been violated. I realize, however, that it's more a matter of my hurt pride when someone cuts in front of me or enters to my right when he has a stop sign than it is my concern for the safety of other drivers and passengers.

And often it's most difficult for us to practice the humility of Jesus in the church than anywhere else. Our selfish pride is likely to surface in the most unlikely places and at the most inappropriate times, such as when we are involved with fellow believers in worship, fellowship and/or service. Thus Paul and James give their warnings and admonitions to fellow believers (Ephesians 4:1ff; Philippians 2:1-4; James 1:19ff; 3:13-4:12). And our humility is most likely to be tested in the church, where we have expectations of others, perhaps more than for ourselves, to act like Jesus!

As John Stott says, we can manage, during a time of worship, to think of ourselves as poor in spirit and to mourn over our sins and humble ourselves before God as unworthy sinners. So, we can call ourselves "miserable sinners," but should anyone intimate to us after the worship service that we are "miserable sinners," we're ready to punch him or her in the nose! But with true humility, says Stott, we are amazed that God and men treat us as well as they do (page 43). The truly humble, the ones God blesses with his joy, cannot be offended because they have died to pride and to their rights and privileges. We would only agree with those who say we're sinners in need of God's grace (although, hopefully, we would be gentle and generous in what we say to and about others!), because we have a fair and accurate assessment of ourselves and are grateful for God's love, mercy and grace.

And the one who is meek...

- *Relies on God's deliverance*

Humble submission is possible because of our faith in God's deliverance. Joseph was a man of God who trusted in his deliverance and vindication. Although he had been falsely accused by Potipher's wife, he didn't retaliate or become bitter, but simply remained faithful and trusted God that in his time he would be vindicated; and so, in God's timing, Joseph was elevated to the top of Pharaoh's empire, despite the machination and intrigue of his enemies, brothers included (Genesis 39ff).

And likewise Moses, when Aaron and Miriam rebelled against his leadership, criticizing his choice of a Cushite wife, simply allowed God to vindicate him, which he summarily did. In the midst of this rebellion of his siblings, we read that "Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). Moses exhibited humility in his unwillingness to defend himself and in his trust that God would vindicate him and exonerate his leadership.

In his Psalm 37, which Jesus quotes as this third Beatitude, David calls for commitment to and trust in the Lord, who will protect us and deliver us from wicked men and worrying circumstances that seem to threaten our well-being. David, no doubt speaking from experience as well as by the inspiration of the Spirit, exhorts us to commit our way to the Lord, trust him, be still before him, and wait patiently for the Lord, our deliverer (verses 5-11).

Translating this to your life today, it means that if you are fully committed the Lord and available for his purposes, you can trust that he will take care of you, regardless of unjust actions and decisions that militate against you, your future, and your financial wellbeing. God takes full responsibility for the life that is fully committed to him. If you get unjustly removed from your present job, it only means that God has something else, no doubt something better, for you.

The meek are the broken and the weak people that God makes strong in himself. The Meek is the soft, gentle woman or man of courage and faith, returning again to the Dutch word, “zachtmoedig,” who relies on God and thus...

- *Reaches out to the fallen*

Again, the meek realize their own weakness and thus rely on the strength of the Lord, who carries them in his strength and takes care to deliver and to vindicate them. The humble are the ones Paul seems to have in mind when he says that “you who are spiritual should restore” gently the one who has fallen into sin (Galatians 6:1). And he adds that the one who restores the fallen must maintain a spirit of humble dependence on the Lord, “or you also may be tempted” (2). The arrogant and self-confident are disqualified to restore the fallen. First, their arrogance and self-righteousness makes them unfit to minister with understanding, gentleness and compassion. They lack genuine spirituality, which includes all the fruit of the Spirit, including gentleness/humility (Galatians 5:22f). Secondly, their pride makes them vulnerable to falling into the same sin as the one needing restoration (Proverbs 16:18).

Only the person broken to self-centeredness and pride is prepared to care for others. Only the one who realizes how much he or she has been forgiven can offer, in all humility, God’s gracious forgiveness to others (18:21ff). The meek continue to be amazed that God would forgive them, and if he would forgive them, they reason, he will forgive and restore anyone.

With the attitude and mindset of Jesus-like humility, meekness, trust and submission, we can with confidence look to...

➤ **The acquisitions of meekness**

As we noted earlier, this Beatitude is “revolutionary stuff” (Green, p. 90). Jesus says that the way to gain the earth is through meekness and humility, which is not the way the world’s tyrants and empires have gone about attempting to gain world domination. Yet Jesus, who now is exalted as King of kings and Lord of lords, and who some day will be acknowledged as the only rightful Ruler of all his creation, says he will give us great acquisitions, namely, the earth! As one scholar says it, this is a “startling paradox,” that promises the meek this “solid earth,” and not just an ephemeral concept of a Greek afterlife (Bruce, p. 98, who also gives as an example the “meek of England,” who were driven from their land by religious intolerance and inherited the continent of America!).

And this begins for us with...

- *Present possessions*

The humble are perhaps those who are not looking for rewards, but are amazed at what God has already given and surprised, and thus greatly blessed, when God gives his abundance. To “inherit the earth” could in fact signify contentment and satisfaction with our lot upon this earth.

Eugene Peterson paraphrases our Beatitude,

"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought."

So, as Paul says, “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6). The humble and meek are those who seek after the eternal, trusting that God will supply everything we need for this earthly pilgrimage (Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:19).

And the meek live in the awareness that their greatest riches are found in their relationship with Christ, who is our inheritance and the source of every blessing in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3ff). As was true for Paul, to live is Christ, who is our life (Philippians 1:21; Colossians 4). With Christ as our life, we can then enjoy even this earth as our present possession. We may not hold the title to the things we can enjoy on this earth, but as Paul says, we are to put our hope in God, “who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” (1 Timothy 6:17).

Clovis Chappell told about an old friend of his who spent a day sight-seeing in New York City, USA. Chappell said, “He had a delightful time. But when he returned to his hotel, he bowed reverently before God and said, ‘Lord, I just want to thank thee that I haven’t seen a thing today that I want.’ This man,” noted Chappell, “is inheriting the earth. He can admire without coveting, and enjoy without owning” (pp. 46f). God’s humble people enjoy and inherit the earth, knowing it’s all God’s and we are God’s children (1 Corinthians 3:21ff). Paul noted the irony of having nothing yet “possessing everything” (2 Corinthians 6:10). God’s humble people know that because they belong to God and God owns everything, we can trust him to supply everything we could possibly need. (This is a word also to us here at IBC, reminding us that, although the title is in the possession of the UBB, God is the real owner and he’s allowing us the privilege of using it and enjoying as our own. And it is our own, not because our people paid for it, and we did, but because we are God’s children and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, our Elder Brother See Romans 8:17).

As James Boice said that it’s in the same spirit with the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:21ff and 2 Corinthians 6:10 that “I can cross the Alps, gaze upon the Bay of Naples, visit a museum, cross the wide expanse of the American Continent, attend a concert, listen to the teaching of the Bible, or do anything else, and I can know that these things are mine as much as anyone’s. And I can thank God for the people who maintain them for me” (page 41). And conversely, if we are privileged to hold the title to our dream house (or church building), someday

someone else will own it, and take care of it perhaps for some of God's other people to enjoy.

- *Future inheritance*

Even as I was writing this sermon, I checked my e-mail and my inbox contained a message from Open Doors USA, reporting the deaths of members of the persecuted church in Eritrea, plus stories about many other believers facing persecution and possible martyrdom for their faith in Jesus. I wonder, what is the "inheritance of the earth" that Jesus promises to these faithful witnesses and martyrs? For them, the promise is for the future, of exceptional eternal glory, when they will possess the earth, renewed and freed from its corruption and decay (Revelation 6:9; 20:4; Romans 8:18ff). These modern-day heroes of the faith are looking for the heavenly city, which some day will come to this earth, which they will inhabit and inherit (Hebrews 11:8ff).

The humble child of God is able to trust himself to God's care and future vindication, and is able to entrust himself to the one who will finally deliver him or her from death. Jim Elliott, one of the missionaries martyred in his efforts to take the message of Jesus to the Aucas of Ecuador, had written in his Bible a quote later found by his wife, Elizabeth: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose" (Elliott, p. 172). Jim Elliott and others who follow the way of the cross in extreme suffering and self-denial will indeed inherit the earth as we can only now imagine it.

As God's children, we will inherit the earth, which will be renewed and fitted for everlasting life under God's perfect rule, when Jesus will be Lord over all. Then we will have access to all that God has made, as we join him in perfect dominion over his vast, measureless creation. The great reversal will be made complete, with the poor made rich, the grieving made glad, and the meek made owners and rulers over God's creation.

Conclusion:

Nothing is more counter-cultural and against the spirit of the age than meekness. Humility and submission are held in disdain as much today as in the First Century Greco-Roman world, when Jesus spoke this Third Beatitude. But meekness is not so much letting others step on you and over you as it is submitting to them as their servant. And nothing is more impressive to this "grab-all-you-can-get-for-yourself" world than humble submission and selfless service.

We must ask if we are willing to be counter-cultural in our attitudes, being willing to take on the Spirit of Jesus, the attitude of a servant. If so, we must be willing to be crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20), dying to self-will and natural, inbred pride. We must relinquish our personal rights and privileges in order to follow in the steps of Jesus, the supreme Servant, who emptied himself of privileges for our sake and has called us to follow in his steps as a servant of others (1 Peter 2:21).

We must seek the grace of God to give us the heavenly perspective that enables us to trust that anything sacrificed and relinquished for Jesus and anything suffered for his name's sake will be more than vindicated. God will compensate anything relinquished and suffered for his sake in the everlasting kingdom in the renewed heaven and earth. We *will* inherit the earth!

In other words, what we need is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5ff; Hebrews 12:2f). We need his heavenly perspective that allowed him to suffer the loss of all things and endure the cross. Jesus knew that the Father would vindicate his suffering and compensate him for his sacrifice. We need grace to trust the Father in the same way.

This same spirit of humility I pray for our church, a meekness that will enable us to trust God's care and provision for us and the maintenance of (and title to!) our property. I pray we will continue to be a meek servant to this community and to our brothers and sisters, with whom we can generously share our resources as a servant church. I pray we will humbly share the message of Jesus and trust that he will "tabernacle in our weakness" (Dawn) and enable us to gain a harvest of disciples and worshipers in this community and nation.

I pray that God will give us grace to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, trusting that he has given us, with Christ, the earth. Let's prepare to celebrate Jesus' self-humiliation to his death on the cross as we partake of his Supper of Memorial. As we are reminded by this supper of his gift to us and presence within us, may we commit ourselves to be the meek and humble, and submissive servant people he will bless.

Thoughts and questions for personal reflection and/or group discussion:

1. Define meekness, the virtue Jesus blesses in this Third Beatitude.
2. In what ways do you understand that meekness/humility is a counter-cultural virtue?
3. What are some misunderstandings of meekness?
4. Describe the meekness of Christ.
5. What are some situations you have encountered lately that have called for your meekness/humility/submission?
6. Meekness requires an attitude of submission to God and to others. In what ways must we trust God when we submit to him and to others?
7. Why is it that only the meek can reach out to those who have fallen into sin (Galatians 6:1ff)?

8. In what ways do you think the meek will inherit the earth?

Sources cited in this manuscript:

Craig L Blomberg, *Matthew: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (NAC)

James Montgomery Boice, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Exposition*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (Touchstone, 1995 edition)

AB Bruce, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, volume one, Robertson and Nicoll, editors

Clovis Chappell, *The Sermon on the Mount*

Gilbert K Chesterson, *Orthodoxy: The Romance of Faith*

Marva J Dawn, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*

Elizabeth Elliott, *Through Gates of Splendor*

Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew: The Bible Speaks Today*, John RW Stott, series editor

R Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*

Eugene H Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*

John Piper,

http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/14/529/_Blessed_Are_the_Meek

Roger Roberts, *Holiness: Every Christian's Calling*

John RW Stott, *Christian Counter-Culture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*

Michael J Wilkins, *Matthew: NIV Application Commentary*

Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*

All Rights Reserved