**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 9-20-2020 – Blessed are the Meek**

One of the exciting things about our family is that Kara is the second oldest of eight siblings. And what that means is that we get to see several new nieces and nephews --- well, pretty much all nieces and one nephew soon after they are born and we get to see them grow up.

About a month ago, I happened to be watching our youngest daughter, Mya and our nephew Dexter. Dexter’s younger sister Verma was scheduled to be born that day and Kara and our other daughters were all out and about that day.

Now Dexter is a happy little boy, but can be a bit of a bull in a china closet. He’s just full of life and energy. And I found myself doing my best to try to keep up with both Mya and Dexter for a handful of hours. I considered it a victory that we made it through about 4 hours without any injuries and minimal crying.

That day Dexter became a big brother and although he can be rough and tumble, he is very gentle and self-controlled with his new little sister. He holds her like fine porcelain.

Friends, this is a picture of meekness.

A couple of weeks ago we began considering Jesus’ beatitudes found in Matthew’s Gospel. Each of these statements of blessing help people see more clearly what a truly blessed life looks like from God’s perspective.

And many of his statements are surprising, including our focus for today.

Please turn with me to Matthew 5:5.

**“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”**

Meekness is an important and often misunderstand concept. Sometimes meekness is equated with weakness or being a pushover.

But true meekness is actually quite the opposite. True meekness is a gentle strength.

Dexter is not weak in the way that he holds and cares for little Velma. Rather, his gentleness is a strength.

Sometimes when we hear phrases like ‘Gentle Jesus meek and mild,’ we can picture people as a weak pushover or a doormat. But that was certainly not the case.

Jesus was extremely meek, but far from week. There is no one stronger than Jesus.

Several examples of Jesus displaying meekness are found in Matthew chapter 19. First, we read of some Pharisees coming to Him to test Him. The Pharisees were not really interested in becoming followers of Jesus, instead they were trying to trap Jesus in something that he would say.

But Jesus simply answers their questions. He’s gentle and self-controlled. He’s not rash. He’s slow to anger.

Then, His disciples ask Him a follow-up question and again, he gently answers it. He doesn’t insult them or call them names.

And then following this, we read of people being little children to Jesus for him to pray for them. And the disciples rebuke them. The disciples were not acting very meek.

But Jesus just says “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Again, Jesus doesn’t yell at his disciples for their actions, but instead displays gentleness towards them.

Friends, Jesus’ meekness was attractive. His gentleness and his self-control were so powerful that people were drawn to Him. **They knew that Jesus genuinely cared and would listen with deep sincerity**. They knew in their spirit that Jesus was slow to anger and would not pounce on people because of their sin.

In contrast to Jesus, again the Pharisees as a group do not display this beatitude as well. A great example is when the high priest Ciaphas, tears high robes in anger when he becomes disgusted by Jesus’ defense of Himself. Not only was he breaking on the OT laws that forbid the high priest do such a thing, but he is not displaying gentleness and self-control.

But again, Jesus, who is our eternal high-priest, does not lash out in anger, but is self-controlled and gentle when false witnesses are making up lies about him.

Sisters and Brothers, Jesus is our example. Like Him, we are to live lives characterized by meekness.

So the question this leaves us with is how is this done?

**The first step is to know that meekness or gentleness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit**. If we are yielded to the Person and work of God the Holy Spirit in our lives, meekness will come naturally.

**Second, meekness is a sign of humility**. Humble people are meek people. Meek people are not looking to condemn others, but to humbly and gently build them up.

So as we seek to live out blessed lives through meekness, it is largely an issue of the heart.

The Apostle Paul instructs the church in Philippi, **“Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.”**

It is as we remember our wonderful Lord and Savior and His nearness to us and his gentleness towards us, we can’t help but be like him towards others. Our gentleness is to be evident to everyone.

As we at Chestnut Grove and as all God’s people seek to live out this beatitude of Jesus through our attitudes and through our actions, people will increasingly recognize us as safe people whom they can trust. People will know that, like Jesus we are not seeking to condemn them, but to help them.

As they see our non-judgmental spirit, people will take steps towards Christ through coming closer to us. This doesn’t mean that we need to approve of and agree with the poor choices of others, but it does mean that we see people not according to those poor choices, but according to their potential in God’s Kingdom.

In conclusion, I would like to share one more story with you about meekness. One of my former professors is a man named John Tornfelt. And John loves to golf. And he shares with me a story about how he was out golfing with one of his friends. And this friend swung his club at the golf ball and it hits the ball and it begins to take off when suddenly, thug, it drops to the ground. His ball has struck a bird and the ball and the bird both come falling to the ground.

But thankfully, this man was meek and John shared how this man was filled with compassion for this bird and he scooped this bird up in his hands and held him. And he gently cared for him.

I don’t recall what happened to the bird. I do not recall the end of the story. But maybe I am not meant to, because meekness should categories our lives, no matter the outcome of any particular situation.

Jesus does this to us as well. We all have been struck sooner or later by something. And Jesus in His meekness scoops us and holds us close to Himself.

And friends, there are people all around us that have been struck down. Struck down by harms done towards them or people close to them.

Struck down by tragedy. Struck down by their own sin.

And as we live out our meek identity in Jesus Christ, we have opportunities to spiritually stoop them up and gently care for and support them. And there is so much power in that. We give them Jesus as we do this.

We all need this grace towards us in our lives sooner or later. But it pleases God when we make ourselves available as His agents of meekness in this world. For there is so much power in a life of gentle strength.

Jesus states **“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”**

Not only is living a meek and gentle, self-controlled life valuable today in our relationship with God and with others, but this beatitude highlights a future blessing that awaits God’s people.

They will inherit the earth. This seems to connect well with Ps. 37:11, which speaks of the meek inheriting the land and enjoying great peace.

Jesus is reminding His followers that the earth is the Lord’s possession and those who follow Him will inherit eternal blessing. In Revelation we read of the Lord remaking the heavens and the earth. And we as the meek will have an important place within His kingdom by his grace.

Sisters and Brothers, Christ is so meek towards us. He is our perfect Teacher. He corrects us in perfect love. He leads us into all truth. He is slow to anger with us and with everyone.

May we follow in the footsteps of our meek and mighty savior.

Let’s pray…