



“Letting Go”

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

Meek is for sissies!

It's such a “churchy” word, isn't it? Meek. On the surface, it sounds like Jesus is saying that those who are timid, passive, weak, flimsy, feckless, spineless, introverted and indecisive—these are the folks who will be patted on the heads by the big, hand of a grandfatherly God as they sit on his lap for all eternity (with their thumb in their mouth). How is a Marine or an Army Ranger or a Navy SEAL supposed to be meek? Or a police officer? State trooper? Is Jesus serious? Or, have we concocted a definition of meekness that Jesus never intended?

It's clear that Jesus was thinking of Psalm 37:11, “*The meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.*” Psalm 37 was written by King David to encourage God's people—persecuted and oppressed—that there will be a reversal of fortune in the Promised Land of the new heavens and the new earth. To be meek allows me to patiently endure the present earth confident of what God will give in the new heavens and the new earth. Interestingly, both Psalm 37:11 and Matthew 5:5 were spoken . . . by kings. There's a clue. Meek isn't for sissies; it's for royalty.

Meek describes what kind of King Jesus is . . .

Bible scholar William Barclay talks about how the word *meek* has three sides to it: (1) the happy medium between too much and too little anger; “always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time”; (2) a wild animal that's been domesticated, “who has been trained to obey the word of command and answer to the reigns”; the idea is not someone who is completely self-controlled, rather one who has become God-controlled; (3) humility—“an attitude that expresses itself in patient submissiveness to offense, free from malice, and the desire for revenge.” The fact is, biblically, someone who is meek is anything but flimsy; they're mighty!

The meek know that whenever we set our sights on possessing something—anything—but God; we end up being possessed by it. “The possessive find it all but impossible to avoid being possessed and the pursuit of a grand inheritance disinherits us.” (Howell) Think of the different addictive idols that become our master when we try to take possession of them:

I only have worth if I have power over others	(power idolatry)
I only have worth if I am loved by others	(approval idolatry)
I only have worth if I have a particular look	(image idolatry)
I only have worth if my children/family are happy	(family idolatry)
I only have worth if I have money and possessions	(materialism idolatry)
I only have worth if I have certain substances	(substance idolatry)
I only have worth if I my professional group lets me in	(inner ring idolatry) ¹

The meek have stopped pursuing what only God can give. The meek have learned to let go. The meek have changed their definition of willpower.

Our willpower needs to become the willingness to accept God's power. We don't need more self-will; we've already tried to run our lives on our own willpower, and it has left us broken and empty. Now it is time to exchange willpower for the willingness to accept God's power to run our lives. Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. (Baker 2007, 70-83)

The meek—it's not that they lick their chops and proclaim, “Finally, I have what's coming to me!” Rather they have entrusted all things to the Father; they leave the kingdom in the hands of the Lord of the kingdom . . . for the benefit of others! (Howell)

. . . And what kind of followers the King wants us to be.

What does meek look like for us? Here it is: God wants us—his royal children—to leverage our influence, leadership, and power not for our own good but for the good of others. That's what it means to be meek. I'm surrendering my agenda, my grip, and my grasp on any kind of control for my benefit; and instead, I'm going to leverage such power for the good of others. This is what Jesus did when he washed the feet of his disciples in John 13. He who had all things under his power took off his outer robe and put on a towel and washed the feet of his disciple. Being meek = *“He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped; but made himself nothing and taking the very nature of servant . . . he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.”* (Philippians 2:5 NIV)

¹ Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life Study Guide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), p. 43.