

This transcribed message has been lightly edited and formatted for the Web site. No attempt has been made, however, to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript.

Teaching: Carlon Tschetter
Series: The Sermon on the Mount
Message: Blessed Are The Meek

Transcribed Message
October 1, 2017
Matthew 5:5

A quick survey of world history reveals the ambitions of many men to take over as much of the known world as they possibly could. When you look through world history, the names are familiar to all of us. Names like Genghis Khan, who was the most successful of all of these guys. Alexander the Great. Cyrus the Great. Napoleon. In more modern history, Hitler had designs on taking over the world. Every one of these guys was ruthless. They were aggressive. They were relentless. They were violent in their ambitions to conquer all that they could. In some ways, you could say that is the history of humanity. This desire that if you want it, then you just take it. If you want it, go and get it. It's yours for the taking. It truly is survival of the strongest on many levels. Then along comes Jesus as He has done two previous times and He says blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Let's look at Matthew 5:5 this morning, this third beatitude, and see that when we put ourselves second something amazing happens. We trust God to care for us, to provide for us, to meet our needs, and it really puts us on this pathway of meekness. So when we think of the Beatitudes, let's remember three things. Let's remember first of all the Beatitudes are counterintuitive. You read through these Beatitudes and they are in many respects the opposite of what we intuitively think we should be doing. If somebody is going to take over the world, you don't tell them to be meek. You tell them to be aggressive. You tell them to go get it. You tell them to win by intimidation whatever it takes.

Jesus says blessed are the meek, so it really is counterintuitive. It goes against what we would describe as simply common sense. Because it's counterintuitive, it also ends up being countercultural because if there's anything you can count on any given culture at any given time, the masses of people are going to go with their intuition. They're going to go with common sense. They're going to go with what they normally

think is the logical path to take. God calls us in the Beatitudes not just to be counterintuitive, but He is calling us to be countercultural, not looking out for our own best interests. Jesus calls us to go against the flow.

I want to suggest thirdly and everybody doesn't agree with this in its totality, but I think they are connected. I think they're connected in the sense that you begin with blessed are the poor in spirit. They are going to mourn. Then, as we'll see this morning, blessed are the meek. I especially think the first three are connected. I see these as foundational to all of the rest of them.

Bonnie loves to watch "American Ninja Warrior". She tells me that she thinks I could do that. I have to be honest with you ... I think I could. She loves to watch that show. There are different obstacles of these courses set up. One of them that is pretty familiar are rings or things that the contestants have to grab to advance. You don't see anybody grabbing the first ring and then going for number five. I think that's true here. I think the only way we're going to get to the fourth beatitude of hungering and thirsting after righteousness is if we do the first three. It begins with being poor in spirit, which is to say we're humble before God because we understand the spiritual bankruptcy that is our situation before God. Because we're spiritually bankrupt, it is pretty easy to understand that there's a need to be mourning over sin in my life and the things that we looked at last week that are going on in our world. Then what happens next? There's a spirit of meekness, of gentleness. It seems to me that we have a flow here that follows along.

We want to look this morning at meekness and I want you to think with me. Meekness is not what you think. Meekness is not what you think. Let's do four things with this idea of meekness. Let's start off by explaining what this word is. The word meekness appears nine different times in the New Testament in three different forms. The point I want you to see is this is a word that appears in the New Testament in different uses and different ways. We're going to look at some of those, but I want to step for a minute into secular Greek. I want to give you a snapshot of how this word is used outside of Scripture because I think it gives us a broad understanding of what Jesus means when He calls us to meekness. This word is used to describe the gentle blowing of a breeze of the wind. Plato uses it to speak of a doctor who is ministering

gently with the spirit of meekness. It is even used of the application of medicine. It is used of the horse that has been trained and broken and now he's doing the bidding of his master. It was Socrates who said he had a friend who was contentious but now he is characterized by meekness. Think of those different ways this word is used in secular Greek context. You get the sense of the breadth of this word.

I want you to think with me secondly, what is the meaning then of this word? The meaning of the word meekness. I think it is fair to say that when most people hear the word meekness it's not necessarily the most appealing thing. It is not necessarily viewed as a virtue that we want to go after. I would just ask the guys here, not to exclude the ladies, but just think for a minute, guys, if you were to be characterized by a friend as being a meek man. Would that be something that you'd go yeah, that's me. It generally is not a word that we think of in a positive way. Hence, we need to get a grip on what Jesus means when He calls us to live in meekness. If we were to do a word association right now and I said I want you collectively as a group to think of one word that comes to your mind when you think of meekness (by the way it rhymes with meekness), you would all say what? Weakness. We have been trained by our culture to think that meekness is just another word for weakness. I want you to think with me about the fact that meekness is not in fact weakness. Meekness is not somebody who's wimpy and timid and wishy-washy. Meekness does not require you to wear a T-shirt that says kick me, I'm meek.

Think of Jesus in this 1st century. Think of the audience that He's teaching. These are by and large Jewish people. The Jewish people have had a history of oppression going back to Egypt, then Assyria, then Babylon, and currently they're living under the thumb of Rome. Here is one who is presenting Himself as the Messiah and they're already attracted to Him on some level because of the amazing things that He's doing and saying. He comes along in that context and says to them if you want to inherit the earth, you know what you need to do. Yeah, they know what they need to do. They need to throw off the rule of Rome. They need to get an army together. They need a leader. They need to do all the things that the world would suggest needs to be done. Jesus said what you need to do is you need to be meek. It certainly was not what they were hoping for in terms of inheriting the earth. Someone said of course the meek

inherit the earth. They're too timid to refuse it. So somebody hands it to them and because they're so meek they just take it, right? So we need to disabuse ourselves of the idea that meekness and weakness go together.

Here's what I want you to see. Meekness, as Jesus speaks of it, is a positive virtue. It's a positive characteristic that we're to pursue. There isn't in our English language an exact equivalent to this word that Jesus uses. That's why even in our Bibles in these nine different times in these different forms that this word is used it is translated differently. It's translated meekness. It's translated as being humble. It's translated as being gentle. It encompasses all of those as the writers and translators of the Bible brought this into our understanding. Let's define it like this. Let's define meekness as strength under control. Strength under control. To say it another way, it is power under control. Think back to those secular Greek uses. A horse being broken and trained is described as being meek. We know a horse is an incredibly powerful animal. In what way could a horse be meek? It could only be meek if its power and strength that is under control. The wind can be meek. It can be a gentle breeze. We could ask any recipients of these recent hurricanes and all that they endured and the incredible destruction that they saw and they would never pick the word meek to describe what they experienced. There is strength that is under control. Think of it in that way. I bring it into our experience and I would say it's the idea of being teachable. We're not overly impressed with ourselves. In a world that looks out for number one, in a world that thinks you win by intimidation, Jesus says to us meekness is what we are to pursue. It is strength under control.

One of the best ways to have a better understanding of this word is for us to see it in people's lives. That's what we're going to do. We're going to go back into the Bible that Jesus used. So where are we going to go? We're going to go back to the Old Testament. We're going to go to the Old Testament and I couldn't help but wonder when Jesus was teaching, maybe He even elaborated on it in this way. Maybe He even opened the Old Testament and began to draw on some of these actual life experiences from people in the Scriptures to illustrate these points as He taught throughout the day.

The first person that would come to my mind is Abraham in Genesis 13. You remember the story. Here God has just in the previous chapter given Abraham the

promise that he would have a land, seed and a blessing. He was going to give him a land for his people. Abraham moves into that land. He takes with him his nephew Lot. Because God is blessing Abraham, guess what? God begins to bless Lot. Their herds and their flocks are increasing. Their families are growing, and pretty soon we read in Genesis 13 that a disagreement comes up between them. There's just too many people and too much livestock and they have to have some kind of decision-making. Abraham called Lot, his nephew, to him. Even though he is the recipient and all of it is his, he says to Lot: we don't need to have disagreements between us. Our families don't need to be fighting. Our servants don't need to be at war with each other. It's all mine. It's time to move on, Lot. See you later, nephew. It's been real, and it's been fun, but it hasn't been real fun. No. So here is what really happens in Genesis 13. You have Abraham saying to Lot take a look at wherever and he could just pick what he wanted. It's big enough for them both. Abraham says if you go over to the left, I'll go to the right. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left. You pick whatever you want. You know the story. Lot picked the best for himself. Abraham, in the spirit of meekness, this great strength and power under control, accepts what God is doing in his circumstance and in meekness receives that.

Another illustration is Moses. Here is Moses. The one thing about Moses that is written to describe him is that he is a man who is meek. I would say to you that if you read the story of Moses and you don't have that verse in Numbers 12 telling us that, I don't think I would use the word meek to have described Moses unless I have on my biblical glasses of meekness. Moses does not come off as a particularly meek man from the way the world looks at it. Do you know what God says in Numbers 12? God says in Numbers 12 that Moses is the meekest man who ever lived, except of course we'll see one other person. But in terms of humanity, Moses is described as being the meekest. Moses is the guy who goes before Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world, and said let my people go. He goes and does the same thing time after time. He calls down plagues on Pharaoh and on Egypt. He's the guy who goes up Mount Sinai and there's thunder and there's lightning and the people are so afraid that they don't want to go near the place because they know the presence of God is there. Moses goes up to meet God. He is the same guy who comes down from that mountain and he hears of

the rebellion that is going on down below and the failure of God's people to even in that short amount of time walk with God. They give themselves over to idolatry and immorality. In great zeal, he responds to that rebellion. This is the man that is described for us then for the rest of his life he takes about 600,000 men, women and children. He is their leader as they wander around the wilderness for 40 years. That's Moses. Yet God says he is the meekest man who ever walked the earth.

My last one to illustrate is David. We don't know when this incident took place in David's life. He had a lot of times where people were attacking him and causing him trouble, but I want to read from Psalm 37. I'm going to read a number of verses because I want you to hear Psalm 37 through the perspective of strength under control. I want you to hear what David is describing as a very difficult time in his life. He's struggling with something. He doesn't tell us what. But listen to this picture of trust, of a man who is meek before God: "Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice is the noonday. 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. But the evildoer 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." Listen to this 11th verse: "But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace." In Matthew 5:5 when Jesus gives us this third beatitude, do you know what He's doing? He's taking us right back to Psalm 37. It's David who reflects the spirit of meekness. The greatest king of Israel, King David, said I trust in God. Whatever is happening to me, I can wait on Him. God is in control, not me. He is in control so I can adopt this spirit of meekness as I deal with all of the things that are happening to me.

That's the Old Testament. We come to the New Testament and in the New Testament we're going to look at one person who is the single most powerful, most

significant person who ever walked the face of the earth. He is described for us as being a man of gentleness and meekness. I believe in that Matthew 11 passage that you know so well “Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest”. In that passage where Jesus describes Himself as being lowly and meek, I believe that is the only place in the gospel where Jesus ascribes to Himself a character quality like this. Obviously He is perfect in all of His ways. He has all of the attributes. He is filled continuously with the Spirit. They're all there all the time. He calls out specifically as describing Himself as a man of meekness. You don't mistake meekness and weakness in the life of Jesus. He's the one who confronted with great boldness, with great zeal, the religious leaders of His day. He spoke truth into their life in a very powerful way without fear. He's the one who would confront the business people in the Temple, turning the tables over, running them out of the temple. There's no weakness there. He's the one who confronted the civil leaders. He stands before Herod and He stands before Pilate, the powerful men of His time, and He speaks truth into their lives. It is in Jesus's life, and in all of these others as well, that we see meekness is not weakness. It is strength under control. It's power that is brought under control.

The apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 1: “I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ”. He appeals to them to see in Christ someone who is meek and gentle. Power and strength under control. Okay. So we have defined it and explained it in that way. We've seen it illustrated.

Thirdly, I want you to see how meekness is applied into our life. How is this applied? I believe the Scriptures speak very specifically to how it is that meekness is to be realized in our life. Let's look at these together. The first one is we're to be meek when we receive the Word. Isn't that interesting? We're to be meek when we receive the Word. A meek person is submissive to the Word of God. A meek person is teachable. A meek person is correctable. Those are characteristics of someone who's meek. They welcome and receive the truth into their life.

If I were to say to you, let's turn to the letter in the New Testament that is like the Sermon on the Mount, you would already be going where? The book of James, remember. James is the epistle of the letters to the churches that most reflects the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. James is Jesus's brother. He was there when the

Sermon on the Mount was taught. When you get into his letter, you realize James is teaching a lot of stuff that his brother taught. of course he is because that's what Jesus said the apostles would do. Listen to what he says in James chapter 1 and verse 19: "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." That's power under control, right? Meekness is power under control. Anger is power out of control. "The anger of man does not produce the right of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." You're familiar with this teaching already.

James gives us two different choices. He gives us two different outlooks. He puts before us two different kinds of people. The first person that he puts before us is somebody who doesn't listen to the Word. They don't welcome the Word. They don't adopt a spirit of meekness. They chafe under authority. I suppose it's probably true in their life that they chafe under authority of any and every kind. They filter the Word of God through their own perspective. It's possible that they sit and they hear the Word, but they receive the Word selectively. They hear just what they want to hear. They are affirming themselves, even in their poor behavior, because they just selectively hear the Word and they don't welcome it with the spirit of meekness, which is to be teachable and correctable. Verse 22. "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." It's possible to do that.

The other person that he describes is slow to speak and quick to hear. What is that? They recognize their own limitations. They recognize their own fallibility. They're eager to learn. They have a spirit that is teachable. How important is that in our lives, that we have this spirit of being teachable before God and before His Word? Listen to what happens when you get into the 3rd chapter and verse 13. This is what James says: "Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom." Verse 17: "But the wisdom that comes from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere." Do you see what he just did? He just linked together the concept of wisdom with what? With meekness. What is the book of Proverbs? The book of Proverbs is how to walk in wisdom. The book of Proverbs is how the meek person

functions and walks and lives in the world, because the meek person is the wise person. Wisdom and meekness, Jesus says, just go together. That's why you have in Proverbs the personification of the life of Christ. It is the life of wisdom. It is a life well lived. It is Jesus showing us what meekness looks like when you welcome and receive the Word and then you do it. You respond to it.

Secondly, we're to be meek in how we relate to each other. That doesn't surprise us. We're familiar enough with our Bibles to know there's a lot in here about how we relate to each other. This to me is a game changer. If we submit ourselves to a spirit of wisdom, if we become people who are striving after meekness, what he says in this second point literally is a game changer. What I mean by that is a meek person and the way that they function in their relationships with other people is unlike anybody else. There's just something about that person that is incredibly attractive. There's something about that person that is going to engage in life and in relationships that are counterintuitive and countercultural. They are a reflection of walking in wisdom. Look at this. What would that mean? Those of you that are married. What do you think it looks like for you to have a spirit of meekness within your marriage towards each other? It's a game changer, right? It is literally a game changer. You have two people that are moving toward each other, even if you just have one that is moving towards the other, in the spirit of meekness. Think of what that looks like in your family relationships – children to parents, parents to children, siblings, whatever those relationships look like. Home. Work. It just literally impacts every area of our life the way we relate to each other. Get comfortable with being a servant because a servant is by definition meek. That's meekness in action.

John Bunyan, the great writer of *Pilgrim's Progress* said: "He that is down need fear no fall." If you've got yourself down, you don't need to worry about falling. You're already serving people. You've already adopted the attitude that says no matter I'm here to serve you. Power. Strength under control. We'd like to do something else maybe but that's not the spirit of meekness. You don't have to be right all the time if you're meek. Isn't that wonderful? Maybe? You don't have to get in the last word. Isn't that wonderful? I know. Maybe. Maybe it is. Hopefully it is. You're not so easily offended when you're meek. You can stop with all the self-vindication. You can lay out all the defense

mechanisms. You are a person of meekness and are walking in wisdom. You can listen to criticism. There's something there. There may be a whole bunch of other things that aren't true, but there's something there generally. Isn't that the rule of life? In all of criticism, there is something for us to learn. All of those things are signs, but not of weakness. They are signs of meekness. Signs of strength under control.

Listen to what Paul said in Colossians. You remember when we were in Colossians 3 verse 12: Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience." Remember that clothing we were putting on in Colossians? It included the garments of meekness.

Number three. We're to be meek as we restore somebody who has fallen. Paul says that in Colossians: "Brothers, if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore that person in a spirit of meekness" so there's a brother or a sister. We go to them with the deep awareness of our own fallibility, of our own fallenness, aware of the log that is likely in our own eye, no sense of self-righteousness, very mindful of the grace of God at work in our life. That's what Paul says is going to be true if we're putting on the garments of meekness. We're going to move towards each other even in those painful times. we're going to do so in the spirit of meekness and gentleness.

Fourth, we're to be meek as we answer questions about our faith. As you know, the verse in 1 Peter 3 – we're giving a reason for the hope that is in us and we're doing it in a spirit of gentleness, of meekness. So we're doing it in a spirit of gentleness and meekness. What an incredible responsibility and privilege it is that we have as the people of God to be equipped and to go out from this place into the world and represent Jesus Christ. That's our calling. That's our privilege. That's our responsibility. We get to do that every day. We get to walk in the wisdom of God and be asking God if there's somebody that He wants me to share life with in a conversational way today about the hope is in me. God, give me the boldness to do that but give me the meekness to do it as well. What a good word in the day in which we live in where everybody is on some hyper-argumentative type of mentality, that we come as the people of God, not in the spirit of aggression, not in the spirit that we've got it all figured out. We come in the spirit of gentleness and meekness. The gospel offends people. We don't. we don't have to.

You share the gospel with people and they're going to be offended by that gospel because they really believe they're good. They really believe God's going to say welcome because they've done the best they can. So the gospel comes and says you've got nothing to offer God. You've got to take what He is giving to you as a gift. That offends people, but we do it in the spirit of gentleness and meekness.

Jesus says this last point. It is rewarded if we do these things, if we walk in this wisdom, if we are people characterized by meekness. After all, what are the Beatitudes if they are not the life of Christ being lived out before us? So we do that and what does Jesus say? Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. What does He have in mind? Some oil wells? A gold mine? Maybe some downtown property? What does He have in mind when He says blessed are the meek? At the end of the day, they're going to inherit the earth. I think there's two things here.

I think there must be a future aspect here because it says they shall inherit the earth. He is looking to the future and He's saying they shall inherit the earth. I think it's probably similar in what Jesus is saying to what Paul said that we are joint heirs with Christ. Being joint heirs with Christ, we're going to one day rule and reign with Him. I believe that is the picture Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6 we're going to judge angels. We're going to rule with Christ. We're going to reign with Him. so there is certainly a future aspect of this when every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess that Jesus is Christ and He is Lord and the glory of God. It's not the pushy and the arrogant and the bossy and the intimidators that are going to be moved to the front of the line and inherit the earth. It is going to be those that exercise meekness, strength under control.

I also think there's a present aspect here. There is encouragement about the future. With that encouragement, with that prospect, with that hope, there is in my mind a great confidence and a strength that comes in the present. In effect, the meek person owns it all. The meek person is totally satisfied. The meek person can be completely content. Why? Because they're related to the Father, and the Father owns it all. If somebody else has something bigger and better than you, who cares? You own it all. Who cares that they're pursuing stuff of this world that is attractive and appealing to so many. Who cares about that? I am in the will of the heavenly Father. I'm going to inherit

the earth if I walk in the truth of this promise. I'm in His will and testament and estate. He owns everything. I think it says to us that meek people are strong people. They have a power that is under control because they understand they are already inheritors of all that God has provided for us in His Son.

Putting yourself second and trusting God to take care of you. That's what this is. Meekness is being a servant. Meekness is adopting a humbleness of life that you don't know it all, that you don't have it all together. You can walk in that truth, trusting God who does have it all together and is in total control. What do we take away? Let me just ask this question. How many people in your life who know you well would accuse you of meekness? If you were to say to your family, if you were to say to some friends: Is meekness a word that comes to mind when you think of me? It would be interesting. What would you need to change in your life for that to be true? Jesus puts before us an attitude and attribute of virtue and He says press into this. Pursue this. What would have to happen for that to be true?

If you're a believer in Christ, if you're a follower of Christ, it seems to me that what has to happen is we have to walk in the Spirit. This is after all part of the fruit of the Spirit. The only way we're going to exercise and see meekness in our life is if we're walking in submission to, in obedience to, and under the control of the Holy Spirit of God. People who walk in the flesh and the energy of the flesh are not meek people. For the child of God, it's really a matter of submitting ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit in our life.

If you're not a follower of Christ, then to me you go back to the beginning. You go back to the first beatitude where you have to realize that there's absolute spiritual poverty. I have nothing to offer God. Maybe your spiritual journey to this point has been one in which you have thought that what God wants for you is for you just to work the best that you can at living this life. While that's commendable and nobody would discourage you from doing that, it doesn't gain you grace or merit in the eyes of God with regard to eternity. After all, that's what we should all be concerned about. This life is but four score and 10, but there is an eternity that we will live out forever, either with God in the presence of Christ, or separated from Him forever. When you think of it that way, then the greatest thing that you can do this morning is to put your faith and trust in

Jesus Christ as your Savior. Receive the gift that God has provided of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's very simple. It's acknowledging that I've sinned and fallen short of God's glory. I can't do it on my own. God is not asking me for works, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He has saved me. Then it is exercising faith. It is believing God. It's trusting God. It's saying: God, what You said about me is true. That's me. What You said about Jesus I believe is true as well.

Let's pray. Father God, thank You again for this amazing description of the life of Jesus. Lord, not only do we have His teaching that is so amazing. He taught like nobody else taught. Lord, we see in His life these very qualities that are an example to us for how it is that we're to live life. Lord, in this morning, in this place, and for those that will be listening, I pray that we would take the time to self-examine and look at our lives in light of this truth. Lord, I pray that we would walk in the spirit of meekness and gentleness and humility before you, that we would see our lives and our relationships transformed because we have nothing to prove to anybody. Father, we only have You that we want to live for and please and serve. Do that good work within us I pray. In Jesus's name, amen.