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Beverly E.C.C., Chicago, IL

“BLESSED ARE THE MEEK ~ Matthew 5:1-5; 26:36-56

☑ According to on-line sources, a man named J. Upton Dickson started a club called DOORMATS: The “Dependent Organization of Really Meek and Timid Souls.” Their motto was **“The meek shall inherit the earth – if that’s OK with everybody,”** and they chose the yellow traffic light as their symbol.

The DOORMATS club, if it existed, was a joke.

What’s disturbing is that many people assume that meekness is, in fact, equivalent to being a doormat. When Jesus says, {Mt 5:5} **“Blessed are the meek”** they (we?) hear *“Blessed are the weak. Blessed are the cowardly. Blessed are the passive.”*

Well! If biblical meekness is learned helplessness than Mack Bolan was spot on when he said the meek will inherit the earth **“Only after the violent have tamed it.”**

If biblical meekness is fearful acquiescence than Friedrich Nietzsche was right to reject it as the mechanism by which slaves collaborate in their own bondage.

If biblical meekness is apathetic inactivity than James Joyce and William Blake were correct to condemn it for promoting a life without striving.

But is that biblical meekness?

⇒ Jesus is the meekest man who ever lived. Consider his actions the night of his arrest on false charges.

☐ In Matthew 26:36-44 He anguishes over his imminent crucifixion, but resolves to do God’s will anyway: **“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”**

⊕ Jesus boldly submits to God. Not casually, as though obedience were easy; earnestly, because as hard as it can be, it is well worth the pain.

Is that the behavior of a human doormat?

☐ Next, in verses 45-46 Christ wakes his followers and says, **“Rise! Let us go!”** Not with the intent to flee, but in order to meet his calling head-on.

⊕ Jesus assertively fulfills his mission. He does not just allow it to occur; He makes it happen.

Is that the behavior of a human doormat?

☐ In verses 47-54 Judas arrives with a mob and they seize Jesus. **“With that, one of [the disciples draws] his sword... and [strikes] the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.”**

Maybe he expects Jesus to call down fire or strike his enemies blind; instead, the Lord says **“Put your sword back in its place. “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled...?”**

⊕ Jesus refuses to use coercive force. The powers of this present darkness compel obedience through intimidation and violence, and those things have no place in God’s Kingdom. Rather than cave in and go along with the status quo, the Lord stands against it.

Is that the behavior of a human doormat?

Christ’s actions in the garden are not weak, cowardly or passive. They epitomize true meekness.

☐ **“Blessed are the meek,”** He says in Mt 5:5. **“Blessed are the πραυς.”** Applied to animals,

πραυς means *trained*. In their wild state they are useless to us, even dangerous; made “meek,” their strength can be harnessed for constructive purposes. Applied to humans, πραυς describes one who is gentle toward those who are under his or her power.

☞ Meekness is power under control, channeled into positive purposes. But that does that look like?

- ◆ It looks like Romans 15:1: **“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.”**
- ◆ It looks like Colossians 3:13: **“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.”**
- ◆ It looks like 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15: **“Warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else”** – just as Jesus did during his earthly ministry.
- ◆ It looks like Galatians 6:1: **“If someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently”** (in a spirit of πραυς).

These verses highlight some often overlooked and misunderstood aspects of meekness.

✦ 1st, Meekness is active.

Jesus doesn’t just wait for things to happen. When the time is right, He makes them happen.

And did you hear all the verbs in the epistles? *Bear with, forgive, warn, encourage, help, be patient, and strive.*

✦ 2nd, Meekness is assertive.

As Jesus is arrested He says: {Mt 26:55} **“Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me.”** He does not lash out or curse them (that would be aggressive). He does speak directly and to the point, without shame or fear.

And the epistles call us to risk engagement in situations of brokenness, even when it would be easier to just ignore it or pull away from our brother or sister.

✦ 3rd, Meekness is redemptive. The Lord God uses the meekness of his people to save others and bring meaning to otherwise pointless suffering and injustice.

If Jesus was either an unwilling casualty or a powerless victim, his death would accomplish nothing, hence it would be meaningless; but since He chooses the way of meekness, his cross holds the power of salvation.

Likewise, if in meekness we **“bear with the failings of the weak,” “forgive one another,”** and **“warn those who are idle”** God will enrich the poor, liberate people in bondage, give sight to the blind, and work justice for the oppressed, starting with us and working his way outward.

✦ 4th, Meekness resists sin with compassion and humility.

⊗ As for resistance, Jesus is tempted to sin by taking the easy way out, by escaping, and by using violence. He rejects all three sinful options.

Likewise, the epistles exhort us to battle sin: sins of commission and omission; sins everyone condemns and sins that are socially accepted; sins of the bedroom and the boardroom and the religious room; sins that are individual and sins that are corporate.

The meek have strong moral convictions, and they act on them.

⊗ As for compassion and humility, the meek are convinced that even the most broken sinner was created in God's image, has infinite value, and is a potential brother or sister. And they are certain that their own sins are equally grievous, and that if it were not for God's grace they would be forever lost.

And so the meek do not carry "God Hates _____" signs. They do not bomb clinics or shoot doctors. They do not believe they are superior to any other human being.

If you want to know what meekness is, get to know Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane He boldly submits to his Father, assertively fulfills his mission, and refuses to use coercive force. He is the very definition of power under control.

His words and actions reveal that true biblical meekness is active, not passive. It is assertive, without being aggressive. It is redemptive. And it resists sin with compassion and humility.

I want to be more like that, even if there is no earthly benefit. But here's the kicker: there is earthly benefit in meekness!

☐ Matthew 5:5 ~ **"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."** {Wright} **"Wonderful news for the meek! You're going to inherit the earth."**

◆ At the consummation of history, when {Rev 21:2} **"the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, [comes] down out of heaven from God,"** heaven and earth will at last be integrated.

◆ {Rev 21:3- 4} **"God's dwelling place [will finally be] among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things [will have] passed away."**

◆ {Rev 21:7} **"I will be their God, and they will be my children,"** says the {Rev 19:16} **"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."**

◆ He warns that {Rev 21:8,7} **"the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars"** will have no place in new Jerusalem; but **"Those who are victorious will inherit"** the new heaven and new earth – and that includes the meek.

○ Even now, God is using the quiet strength of the meek to counteract the violence, intimidation and brutality of the powers of this present darkness, and to restore the courage of the fearful by pointing them to the One who is strong and gentle, mighty and tender, all-powerful and nurturing.

God does not intend for us to be doormats.

God is calling us to be meek.

{Wright} **"Wonderful news for the meek! You're going to inherit the earth."**