Blessed (Happy) are the Meek

**Matthew 5:5**

*Pastor Paul Anthes*

**Introduction:** When Jesus started The Sermon on the Mount with the word “blessed” He meant “happy.” Webster says that happiness is a state of well-being and contentment. A happy person takes pleasure in their life and its circumstances and is deeply satisfied by it. How many people consider themselves happy based on this definition? The most recent surveys put the percentage of “happy” people at around 40%. But polls really do not tell the whole story. Many people tend to answer the question “how are you?” with a pat answer … “fine!” The same is true of “are you happy.” We do not want to be considered whiney, entitled “snowflakes” even if we are unsatisfied and discontent with our lives. The only statistic that really matters is your personal, inner answer to the question. So let me ask you, “do you have an inner sense of well-being? Are you content with your life circumstances? Do you take pleasure in your life and does it satisfy you?

You may be surprised to know that many believers do not even believe that Christians are supposed to be happy in this life. “Happiness and joy are for the next life. Misery, pain, discontent and despair are for this one,” they say. But… “do they know what God says about happiness? Are Christians supposed to be happy in this life or are we just supposed to be happy about our coming eternal life and just bear up silently while here on earth?

To justify our ongoing unhappiness and joyless existence many try to make an unwarranted distinction between happiness and joy. The arguments I have heard my entire life go like this:

* Happiness is just an emotion while joy is a state of mind.
* Happiness depends on good circumstances but joy does not.
* Happiness is of this world but joy comes from heaven.
* Happiness comes and goes but joy is permanent.

Now…the only problem with this analysis is that it is not Biblical. There is no discernable difference between joy and happiness in Scripture. God is happy! He loves being God and He takes pleasure in what He has created and in what He does. Joy and happiness are part of God’s nature and you were created in His image and likeness. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Joy and Happiness are among the many gifts God gives to His image bearers. Consider what He says about disobedient Israel when they were in exile:

**Jer. 32:40-41** "I will make an everlasting covenant with them. I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. 41 "I will **rejoice** over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.

Jesus also was a joyful man who was satisfied with His life and circumstances because both had eternal meaning. His intention for you is that your physical life and all its circumstances will also have eternal meaning and bring you great happiness and satisfaction.

In His book “The Pleasures of God” John Piper comments on God’s happiness. “

“It is good news that God is gloriously happy. No one would want to spend eternity with an unhappy God. If God is unhappy then the goal of the gospel is not a happy goal, and that means it would be no gospel at all. But, in fact, Jesus invites us to spend eternity with a happy God when He says “enter into the joy of your master (Matthew 25:23). Jesus lived and died that His joy- God’s joy- might be in us and our joy might be full. Therefore the gospel is ‘the gospel of the glory of the happy God.’” ***John Piper***

So why are so many people so unhappy, fearful, unsatisfied and discontent? Because they do not know God through Christ and are only able to seek their happiness in a world that offers happiness that is partial and fleeting. The same is true of many professing Christians. As the church has become more enamored with the world and unwilling to preach Christ it has lost its happiness. Believers are always looking for the next thing that will give them the temporary pleasure they desire.

Jesus began His ministry on earth with a sermon intended to make us happy. The first word of The Greatest Sermon ever preached was … “Happy” in Greek. “Blessed” is the word used in the time of the KJV and it has stuck. Later on in His ministry Jesus stated clearly that His teachings (commandments) were intended to make us happy. He even prayed to The Father that we would **Be Happy**!

**Jn. 15:10-11** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

**Jn. 17:13** "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

**Matt. 5:2-5** He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying, 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the gentle (meek), for they shall inherit the earth.

The “poor in spirit” are destitute of spiritual resources. They knows they have no spiritual influence with God and position of honor.

”Those who mourn” describes the emotion of intense loss. “Sorrow and grief are the things we are all trying to avoid so how can mourning make you happy?” When any man comes to see that nothing he has ever hoped in will help him be saved, his first reaction is to mourn.

Blessed are the gentle (*meek)* : The original word is “gentle” and means mild or soft. Meek and gentle are the same so we may interchange them as we look at this beatitude. It sometimes was used to describe a soothing medicine on a painful wound or a cool breeze on a hot summer day. God used the word to describe Jesus Himself.

**Matthew 21:5** "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, **GENTLE (MEEK)**, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'"

Meekness is not weakness. Jesus was anything but weak. He was the LORD God Almighty who became a human man. His meekness so hid his power that He had to tell Peter, that He could have called a legion of angels to rescue Him in the Garden. He could have spoken the universe out of existence from the cross and He would have suffered no loss or gain from it but His meekness entrusted His life entirely to God.

**1 Peter 2:23** and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

He was entirely sovereign at every moment, but He was also always meek. Before Satan in the desert, He was meek. He could have destroyed the devil right there and ended the temptation. Before His murderer s, He was meek. Do you just hate not winning an argument. The meek do not feel the need to win. Do you hate it when your friends or relatives mocked you for your opinions on Covid? The meek do not feel the need to be vindicated and proven right. Meekness brings inner peace. It is full dependence on God and His Holy Word. Jesus defined and demonstrated what meekness is. He assumed the role of ultimate dependence in the manger. Joseph, a mere man had to save Him from Herod. Friends and women fed Him and clothed Him during His ministry. Strangers buried Him in death. The Father raised Him from the dead.

Meekness goes against our fallen human nature. The cry “I can do it by myself” from a young child or “I cannot accept help or charity” from adults is the very antithesis of meekness.

Meekness is not cowardice either. It is not a lack of convictions over what is right or wrong. It feels no need for revenge or to “put somebody in their place” or to have the final word.

By the time a person has clearly seen themselves as spiritually destitute and has mourned the loss of their self-righteousness and good works, meekness follows logically. The meek do not need to win at any cost. They do not need to be proven right. They can accept that others think they are fools for trusting God and be at peace over it. He does not curse anyone because he knows he deserves cursing himself. His only concern is what God thinks of him.

And it is not just taught here and in the life of Christ. Scripture is awash with instructions and exhortations to meekness.

We could start with Abraham. God promised the whole land of Canaan to Abraham but when Lot wanted more land and better pasture, Abraham (knowing full well that it was actually all his) let Lot pick the best of the best. Abraham did not need to defend his right to the land. He trusted God to take care of him and his family.

**Gen. 13:8-9** So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. 9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if *to* the left, then I will go to the right; or if *to* the right, then I will go to the left."

When David was driven from Jerusalem by Absolom an obscure member of Saul’s family saw him and threw stones and cursed him. When one of David’s soldiers wanted to kill him David said this;

**2 Sam. 16:11-12 …** Behold, my son who came out from me seeks my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him. 12 "Perhaps the LORD will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day."

Divorce would end if all husbands and wives were meek (gentle) and treated each another the way God instructed them to.

**Eph. 5:22-25** Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

Our anxiety over the future draughts, food shortages, crime and coming war would end if we had God-given meekness.

**Job 5:8-12** 8 "But as for me, I would seek God, And I would place my cause before God;

Whodoes great and unsearchable things, Wonders without number. 10 "He gives rain on the earth and sends water on the fields, 11 So that He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety. 12 "He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, So that their hands cannot attain success.

There would never be another church split if believers were meek.

**Ephesians 4:1-3** Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness (meekness), with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**The Meek shall inherit the earth:**  It is amazing how many people in the world know this verse. Even more in the church but give it no thought whatsoever. Inheriting the earth is a distant and far off event, but being meek is for right now! Today in fact. It is a stop on the road to glory and eternal salvation through Christ. The Kingdom of God is entered on your knees. You have nothing with which to purchase entrance or to repay Christ for having bought it for you. You are spiritually destitute and yet Christ says that you will be given the kingdom of heaven as a gift from your beloved Savior.

Kingdom men and women know this. They have internalized that all the things they have ever thought about salvation, religion and morality were wrong. They experience a deep sorrow (a mourning) for their mistaken ideas and have willingly embraced their total spiritual poverty… and then …they are immediately comforted by God. Their sorrow over their own hopeless condition gives way to peace and relief that Christ has so loved them as to bring them into His Kingdom.

Poverty of Spirit and Mourning for our Sinful Condition make men gentle (meek). They feel no need to justify themselves or to be proven right. They do not seek revenge for wrongs done to them. They do not judge others because they know deeply in their hearts that they should be judged too but were loved and redeemed by Jesus instead. They forgive because they are constantly aware of how God has forgiven them. They do not worry that they might be cheated, have their vote subverted or cancelled, taxed too much or not get what they deserve because they know that the entire earth will be theirs when Jesus returns. The gentle do not obsess over what Washington and Sacramento are doing and getting away with. They know that God is watching every perversion and blasphemy of our earthly leaders. They can seek to impoverish us but God plans to remake the earth when He returns and to give it to His children…The Poor in Spirit! Those Who Mourn! … and to The Meek!

**1 Cor. 3:19-23** For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "*He is* THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS"; 20 and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS." 21 So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

We know that all attempts to classify and hide evil and sin will be brought to light in the final judgment. That acquitting the guilty will not go unpunished.

**Proverbs 17:15** He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

**CONCLUSION:** How important is meekness or gentleness to God? Without it you cannot be saved because you will trust in yourself and not in God alone. This is not a question of degrees. Either you trust only in Christ for every spiritual and earthly need or you do not. We need meekness, gentleness and humility to be saved. We need it to be instructed by God and we need it to even testify to Christ’s love for men.

**Psalm 149:4** For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the afflicted ones (the meek) with salvation.

**Zephaniah 2:3** Seek the LORD, All you humble (meek) of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility (meekness).

**James 1:21** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility (meekness) receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

**1 Peter 3:15** … sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness (meekness) and reverence;

Based on all we have seen in Scripture let’s ask ourselves a simple question … “are we meek and gentle?”

Do we fight for what we want and to be proven right? Do we read the Bible and come under its preaching ready to respond to what God says? To change and obey?

Do we seek peace with our family, parents, children, spouse and fellow believers?

When you instruct (parents and Bible teachers) do you do it knowing that you are flawed and have been guilty of ignorance and disobedience yourselves?

Blessed is the destitute and mourning sinner who looks to God alone to save him and comfort him. Blessed is the one who is full of tender mercy, humility and gentleness toward all men and who trusts God to care for his life and bring him justice. Not only are we happy and joyful but we shall inherit all that God owns.

**Rom. 8:16-17** The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

To inherit means to receive a portion that is rightfully yours. But Satan, for now has usurped God’s rule over the earth (with God’s permission and for His purposes) and the evil seem to prosper and deprive the righteous of their due blessings. The Spirit prompted David to give us the meek and gentle response to this world of injustice and depravity.

**Psalm 37:1-20**  *A Psalm* of David. Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers. 2 For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. 3 Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday. 7 Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. 8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; *it leads* only to evildoing. 9 For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land. 10 Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be *there*. 11 But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity. 12 The wicked plots against the righteous And gnashes at him with his teeth. 13 The Lord laughs at him, For He sees his day is coming. 14 The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow To cast down the afflicted and the needy, To slay those who are upright in conduct. 15 Their sword will enter their own heart, And their bows will be broken. 16 Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many wicked. 17 For the arms of the wicked will be broken, But the LORD sustains the righteous. 18 The LORD knows the days of the blameless, And their inheritance will be forever. 19 They will not be ashamed in the time of evil, And in the days of famine they will have abundance. 20 But the wicked will perish; And the enemies of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures, They vanish-- like smoke they vanish away.