

BIRTHMARK OF THE BELIEVER: MEEKNESS

Blessed are the meek: for they shall
inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:5

If we ever really become a Planet of the Apes -- and there's every possibility that we may one day -- the apes may sit around and wonder what it would be like to be a human. "I wonder what human nature was like." All they'd have to do to discover what human nature was like in the twentieth century would be to read the Beatitudes and then reverse them. Human nature recoils from everything Jesus says is a blessing, especially this third beatitude.

Let's reverse some beatitudes for a moment. Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The world says, "Blessed are those who are proud in spirit." Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn." The world says, "Happy are those who mock at sin." Instead of "Blessed are the meek," the world says, "Blessed are those who are determined to get ahead at any cost." The world would say the happiest people are those who don't have much appetite for righteousness. On and on I could go. Nowhere do the words of Jesus cut across the grain of human philosophy as they do in this third beatitude, "Blessed are the meek."

Does a rush of excitement pursue you every time you hear about the possibility of becoming meek? When I was a kid, I used to read comic books. On the back of these comics, they used to have a picture of Charles Atlas. Also, there was always a little cartoon strip of a ninety-seven pound weakling sitting on the beach with his girlfriend. A big bully comes along and kicks sand in the weakling's face, and the little fellow can't do anything about it. Then the reader was told, "In ninety days, you too can become a bully." So, Charles Atlas made a fortune because everyone wants to bully.

I wonder how much money he would have made if, on the back of that comic book, it said, "Are you tired of pushing people around? In ninety days you can become a meek person. Are you tired of kicking sand in the face of ninety-seven pound weaklings? Just write me and in ninety days you can become a meek person." Charles Atlas wouldn't have had enough money to pay for the advertising because most of us think that meekness is weakness, and we don't want any part of it. Yet, the opposite is true. The book of Numbers says that Moses was the "meekest man on the face of the earth," and I seriously doubt that anyone who knew Moses would have called him a weak man.

I have found a very interesting verse about this subject over in the book of Proverbs. Listen to what God says:

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

Proverbs 16:32

Now, the world has the opposite opinion. The world would say that the man to receive a hero's welcome is the man who is single-handedly able to take a city. We would exalt such a man. Yet, God says that he that is able to rule his own spirit is more powerful than he that can take a city by himself. That's God's estimate, and the truth of the matter is that it's easier to take a city all by yourself than it is to rule your own spirit.

Are you ruling your spirit as you read this book? Are you slow to anger? It takes more power for a person to be meek than it does to do anything else in the Christian life.

What does it mean to be meek? First of all, let's look at the meaning of that word meek. It's a very interesting Greek word that Jesus uses here. It's a word that was used to describe a wild animal that had been domesticated. For instance, it describes a stallion that no man has ever ridden. Bridle and bit have never been put upon him; he's wild. He's filled with energy and strength and spirit. I take that horse and break him; I domesticate him, and he becomes meek.

Now, I can put a saddle on him, bit in his mouth, reins over his neck, and I can ride him. What have I done to that horse? Have I taken away any of that horse's strength? None at all. The only difference between that wild stallion and the domesticated saddle horse is that the domesticated horse's energy and life

force has now been controlled by another power and is channeled into useful purposes.

The wild stallion is controlled by himself, by his wants, his desires, his emotions, and his passions. The domesticated horse is controlled by his master and has learned to obey the master's touch on the rein. Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek." He's not saying blessed is that man who is a milktoast type of preacher and has absolutely no strength. He's saying blessed is that man who has all his strength and all his energy, but he's allowed someone else to master him and control him. He is no longer at the mercy of his emotions or his passions. He is no longer self-controlled. He is now controlled by another. That's what it means to be meek.

God wants to domesticate every person. It's interesting how the Bible uses different illustrations and different pictures to describe what man is. We have read, "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that takes a city," and the implication is that the spirit of man, the energy of man, that part of man that controls him, is so wild and so powerful that it has to be ruled. It must be mastered. Some of you have never thought that your spirit needs to be mastered and needs to be ruled. You have let it run its course. You have let it do anything it wants to do. Friend, it has to be ruled. It will ruin you if you don't rule it.

Do you have an automobile? There may be a 460 engine in that auto. That car will run just as well down the middle of the highway as it will toward a brick wall. That engine knows no difference between heading for the brick wall and heading for the highway. It will run the same, get about the same mileage, and perform the same way. That's why they put a steering wheel in that thing! The auto needs someone there who knows the difference between the brick wall and the highway.

Likewise, your spirit, your appetites, your God-given drives and your God-given energy is going to run just as well toward the brick wall as it will toward the highway. You may be thinking, "It doesn't have to be controlled. It doesn't have to be ruled. I just do what comes naturally. I just let the chips fall where they may." If that is your attitude, you are going to run into a brick wall sooner or later. The spirit must be controlled. Jesus says one of the primary characteristics of his followers is meekness. He is a person who has learned to be controlled by someone else.

There are three things that ought to control us: God, love, and eternity. Let's read the portion of the Sermon on the Mount that explains meekness:

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5: 38-48

A meek person is God-controlled. Jesus said that you've been brought up to believe "an eye for an eye." You don't even have to read the Bible to know that verse; you just have to watch television. Any time there is a religious man in one of the stories and somebody kills his son or shoots his cattle, he always goes seeking revenge and quotes that verse. That's the way we've been brought up and that's human nature. You've been taught that this is the way to act and react. But, in verse 39, he counteracts all you've been taught or what you've always felt is the right way to act with the words, "But I say unto you."

Look also at verses 43 and 44. Again we find the phrase "But I say unto you." Verse 43 is the most logical thing that a person could ever say; that's human nature. It is so easy to love that person who loves me. That takes no effort at all! It's easy to hate my enemy, but Jesus says "But I say unto you" and contrasts human nature with what HE wants us to be. We are to be God-controlled.

There's something interesting here. I made a little note in the margin of my Bible when I discovered it. I wrote one word, and I put an exclamation point after it. REACTIONS! Everything Jesus is talking about here has to do with how you react. That's interesting to me and significant. Most of us evaluate our Christianity by how we act. But God never has that as a final and ultimate clincher in an evaluation. It's not how you act but how you REACT that shows whether or not you're following Jesus.

It's easy to act right, but it's tough to react. How are your reactions coming along? How do you react when somebody has injured you? I'm not talking about how you act on the basketball court when everything's going great and you're ahead. I've noticed it's easier to lose your temper when you're behind. It's easy to be gracious and benevolent to the other team when you're ahead. Listen, your Christianity isn't illustrated by how you act, but by how you react. That's what Jesus is talking about.

I don't care what you've been taught or what human nature is, you must be God-controlled. When God's Word cuts across every grain of my human nature, I must still obey God. The first step to becoming a disciple of Jesus is allowing His Word and His Will to control me, regardless of how I feel. That's what it means to be meek. It takes a lot more power to do that than it does to react the wrong way.

There's another Scriptural term for what we're talking about -- denying self or dying to self. What Jesus is saying is this: to be meek is to come to the place where I deny myself. I must realize that I am crucified with Christ, and I am dead. A dead person has no reactions! I must die to myself.

Let me translate meekness another way. Happy are those who are not sensitive about themselves. On the contrary, the most miserable person today is that person who is super sensitive about himself. He goes around with his feelings on his elbows; he evaluates everything in terms of himself. He keeps a 24-hour watch on himself to make sure he's always treated right, and he's scared to death that somebody's not going to like him. He's scared somebody's going to leave him out of this or that. The most miserable person in the world is this person who is all wrapped up in himself.

Have you lost your temper this past week? Have you had your feelings hurt this past week? I'll tell you why. It's because somebody didn't treat you the way

you thought you ought to be treated. Somebody violated your own personal evaluation of yourself. Somebody touched the old self, but that old self is supposed to be dead!

Do you know what marriage problems are? That's my old self-life irritating your old self-life. That's all in the world it is. Blessed is the man who's not sensitive about himself. Blessed is that man who is God-controlled, not self-controlled. Some of us are emotion-controlled; some of us are ambition-controlled. To be meek simply means to be God-controlled.

Being meek also means to be love-controlled. Look at verse 44. Here we once again find the "But I say unto you," and it shouldn't matter how YOU think you ought to react. First of all, Jesus tells you to love your enemies. Somebody says, "But I can't do that. I try to love them and I can't." You don't understand what love means. Love doesn't mean emotion or sentiment. He's not talking about falling in love with a sweetheart. He's talking about AGAPE love. This is the kind of love God has for us.

Do you know what love really means? Jesus always wants to make it clear and simple for us, so in the very next verse He explains what it really means to love your enemies.

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

That's what love is. Now, suppose that you were God or I were God, and it's my sun and my rain. Let's imagine there were two farmers living down here. One was a good farmer and one was an evil farmer. One believed my son and one didn't. You know what I'd do?

I'd let the sun shine and the rain fall on this good guy, but I wouldn't share anything with the other guy. He can just starve to death; he's my enemy. And he is! The Bible says that man is the enemy of God. I'll tell you what love is. Love is treating people the way God treats them. How does God treat people? When you walk down the street, the sun shines on everybody and the rain falls on everybody. Everybody has air to breathe. God treats everybody as though they were his friends.

The best way to love your enemies is to treat them as though they were your friends. And you CAN do that! I don't care how uninvolved or unattached you are to them as far as emotion and sentiment are concerned. That has absolutely nothing to do with it. God says, "Love them." That's a command. Treat them as you would your friends.

Second of all, Jesus says you must bless them that curse you. Again, reaction is what He's talking about. Did you know that it is possible for you to bless a person? By your words or your life, you can actually be a benediction to people. Thirdly, he says, "Do good to them that harm you." Reaction again! And finally, "Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Four

reactions! It can all be summarized by "Be love-controlled."

I can tell you how to test yourself to see if you're meek. If someone has injured you deliberately -- if they have wronged you and they hate you and they are cursing you -- and if you could have it in your power to do anything you wanted to do to them, what would you do? How have you reacted this week to people who have been your enemies -- to people who have used you wrongly and have taken advantage of you?

There's one last thing. We're also to be eternity-controlled. Jesus said, "...for they shall inherit the earth." You may be thinking, "Well, that's the ONLY way they'll get it is to inherit it." Or maybe you're thinking, "I thought I'd inherit heaven." That's right, but I'm going to get the earth too. Did you know it's going to be a new heaven and a new earth?

The person who is self-controlled and ambition-controlled and emotion-controlled will thrash, fight, and struggle to get every ounce of dirt he can get in this life, and he's a fool because the Bible says that the earth is already in the process of passing away. I read the other day that scientists have discovered in the past several years that the Atlantic seacoast is sinking a foot every thirty years. It'll take it a long time to sink. It is interesting, though, how God has given us these little reminders that the only thing eternal is God.

The world is passing away, but "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The will of God is "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Yes, blessed are they who are God-controlled, love-controlled, and eternity-controlled, for everything is eventually going to come to God's people.

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

Matthew 5:5

First the Beatitudes = attitude toward self
3rd " " = action toward others
4th " " = attitude toward D

Verse 4 - We've been on these Sunday mornings taking the beatitudes and finding out what they mean and what Jesus would have us to do about them. This morning we come to the third beatitude Matthew 5:4 -- excuse me, verse 5. "Blessed are the meek: ..."

Now I want us to read again the verse that we read a moment ago because later on in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus amplifies what he means by being meek and so let's read in chapter 5. But let's begin with verse 38 and read through verse 42 and this will give us the whole passage that we have read this morning. Verse 38 through 42 He explains what he means by this verse 38 ... You know, that's the verse that you hear the man on TV quote when somebody has run off with his cattle or murdered his son, or has robbed him in some way, and he's a Bible quoting man and everybody is trying to get him not to seek revenge, and he always quotes this verse from the Old Testament, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Now notice what Jesus says in verse 39. Verse 42 ... "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." You know if this earth of ours ever really becomes a planet of the apes, and the apes decide they would like to know what kind of creatures lived here in the 20th century, I have discovered a great way in which the apes could know what human beings were like in 1970. They could take the beatitudes and reverse them and you would have a good picture of modern man, of a human being. For if you will read carefully the beatitudes with one eye on the word of God and the other eye on yourself and on the people around you, I think you'll come to this conclusion, that probably the opposite of the beatitudes is the outstanding characteristic of humanity. Jesus said "Blessed are the poor in spirit:". The world

does not much care for the poor in spirit, the aggressive in spirit, the haughty, the proud, blessed are those that mourn. The world is saying, forget your troubles, cheer up, laugh, have a good time - and we do it in black and white and we do it in color, and we do it in drive-ins, we do it in downtown theatres, we do it by means of radio and records, anyway that we can devise. Forget about your troubles, don't shed a tear, don't be heavy-hearted, laugh and live it up, and even if you are not having a good time, pretend that you are. We want to be aggressive, watch out for Number One. Don't let anybody get ahead of you, don't let anybody pass you on the highway, don't let anybody get ahead of you in the line at the grocery store. Don't let anybody get ahead of you in business, be aggressive, take care of yourself, no matter what it costs. You've got to look out for Number One. All of the beatitudes are paradoxical - all of them go against the grain of human nature. But I do not think there is any one that is so paradoxical and is so contrary to human nature, as this one. Jesus says, now remember, he is describing what it means to be a follower of His - He is describing what it means when we really let Jesus Christ have full control in our lives, these characteristics will be evident in our lives. And he says, now if you are going to be my disciple, if you are going to follow me, you'll be meek. If you were to pick up a comic book and on the back of that comic book you were to see a man there by the name of Charles Atlas and he were to be running an advertisement saying, are you a bully, do you push other people around - when you go to the beach do you kick sand in other people's eyes? Would you like to be meek? If you'll just fill out the coupon below in 30 days I promise to make you a meek person. I doubt seriously if anybody here would send in for that kind of offer. Because the idea that you and I have of a meek person is some milk toast, spineless guy that is shriveled up and pushed around, and never says anything back to anybody and is just run over all the

Charles
Atlas

time. Most of the time we think that meekness is synonymous with weakness. But I want to show you in a little bit that being meek is about the guttiest thing you can be -- that's the only way I know, really, to put it. That meekness is not weakness, and it takes much more strength to be what Jesus wants you to be than to be what everybody else wants to be.

In Proverbs chapter 16 and verse 32..... Now what God is saying there is that it is a mighty accomplishment and a tremendous feat if you have enough strength to besiege a city and capture it, but he says it is much more difficult and it is a much greater accomplishment to rule your own spirit. The book of Numbers in chapter 12, verse 3 says that Moses was the most meek man on the face of the earth, but I don't think anybody would call Moses a milquetoast character. Jesus Christ said "all ye that labor and are heavy laden come unto me for I am meek and lowly of heart." And if you think meekness means weakness, then I suggest that you try to be crucified and find out how much strength and how much will power and how much discipline it takes to yield yourself to the cross.

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Meekness does not mean weakness. It does not mean spineless, milquetoast type of character, but it is contrary to that. One of the strongest virtues that a man can ever possess and he does not possess it naturally, it is a production of the divine spirit within his heart and you only become truly meek in the New Testament sense of the term when you turn the control of your life over to Jesus Christ. Well now what does it mean to be meek? Well the Greek word that Jesus uses for meek is very interesting in that it was a word that was used for a wild animal that had been domesticated. Here is a horse, a wild stallion, and nobody can throw a blanket over him, nobody can throw a saddle over him,

nobody can put the bit in his mouth, he will not obey the rein. He is wild, uncontrolled, a free spirit. But you break him, you tame him, you domesticate him so that you can throw the saddle over him, so that he will respond to the word of command, so that he will take the bit in his mouth. It is a word for an animal that has been domesticated, and is now controlled by another power. It does not mean that you deprive that animal of his power, or his spirit. I have only owned one horse in my lifetime, I hated to have to give him up and sell him and some day I hope that I can have another one. But there was not anything spineless about that horse. She had so much spirit that when I put one foot in the stirrup I had to put the other one over as we were travelling. And I really was about half scared half of the time I would ride her because she had so much spirit. None of her strength was gone, none of her spirit was gone, none of her drive was gone, it was all there, but it was controlled, it was controlled by the master, by the bit and the bridle, it was controlled by the touch of the rein on her neck. Now Jesus is saying that if you become a follower of mine and you let me have full control in your life, that every impulse, and every drive and every passion, every part of your being is going to be controlled. It doesn't mean that you lose spirit, it doesn't mean that you jettison your strength, it does not mean that you become a weak person, but it means that all of your drive and all of your spirit and all of your ability, and all of your power and your dynamic is controlled.

Now there are three things that control a meek person -- I'm going to give them to you in case I don't finish the message, then we'll back up and take them in order.

First, a meek person is a person who is (1) CONTROLLED BY GOD, (2) A PERSON WHO IS CONTROLLED BY LOVE, (3) A PERSON WHO IS CONTROLLED BY ETERNITY, they shall inherit the earth.

not controlled
by self or
environment

To be meek means to be controlled, but not self-controlled.
Because complete self-control is beyond the ability and capacity of anybody here this morning. You do not have the capacity yourself to absolutely and completely control yourself. To be meek means that we are controlled by an outside power, by something beyond us. It means that God controls us. You notice in those verses that we read a moment ago, Jesus was saying some very familiar words to these people. He said in verse 38 This is what you've always been taught, you've been brought up this way, it is your nature, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. That's just human nature and that's the way you've always been taught, and that's the way you've always acted. Now notice what Jesus says in the next verse ... "But I say unto you ..." He is saying, I don't care how you've always acted, I don't care how you've been taught, I don't care how you've been brought up. Here's what I am saying to you, and you do what I say that you do.

In verse 43 Now that's a very human, natural reaction. That's the way that we've been brought up. That's the way that we naturally react to circumstances around us. Notice in the next verse --- to be meek is first of all to listen to the voice of Christ and allow His word and His will to control us no matter how it goes against the grain of human nature. No matter how much it contradicts what we have been brought up to believe or what we have always been taught, what the world teaches us, what myself teaches me. Jesus says, I say unto you this is the way that you are to live. To be meek in the first place means that GOD CONTROLS ME. He is in absolute control. It means I am not controlled by my emotions. I am not controlled by what people think about me. I am not controlled by the standard of the world. Now these things that I am mentioning are all things that we are controlled

by. The person who does not know anything about the Lordship of Christ in his life is controlled by his emotions. He loves his neighbor and hates his enemy and sometimes even hates his neighbor. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The spirit of revenge, retaliation, nobody going to get ahead of me, you just try passing me on the right, I'll crowd you out. We are controlled by emotions, we are controlled by what people think about us. We won't do a certain thing even if we do believe it to be right, if we are going to have the censure of the crowd on us. A young person sometimes will not do something that he or she knows he ought to do if he thinks it's going to threaten his position with the group. We are controlled by the standards of the world, and the home, and the job. Now to be meek, to be God-controlled, means that you are not the slave to your emotions, you are not the slave to what the crowd thinks, you are not the slave to the world's standards, but you are the slave of God, you are controlled by God, and you come to this place where you no longer care what people think about you, you only care what God thinks about you and that's the only standard by which you live.

Actually, to put it negatively, what it means to be meek is that we are no longer sensitive about self. I want you to stop for just a minute and I want you to think back this past week, just re-trace this past week, and think about all the irritation you have had, and the times you have been upset, and the times you have been angry, and the times you have been unhappy and miserable. And, ladies, you remember all the times you sat down and cried, now, you trace all of that and I promise you that the majority of all the times that you were unhappy this past week is due because you were sensitive to self. One of the greatest curses on life is that we are always watching out for Number One. And keeping an eye on it and always defending ourselves and always on the defensive, and making sure that people think of us like we want them to think of us, and making certain that we get our just deserts, and that we get our rights, and

that we get what's fair to us, and we get what is ours, and nobody scrounges ahead of us, and nobody does us dirt. We are always looking, we are always looking at ourselves, what's in ourselves. We keep a 24-hour vigil looking at ourselves, and making certain nobody offends us, making certain nobody trespasses. And we are so sensitive to self. You know, Jesus said, blessed is the meek. Blessed is the man who is no longer sensitive about himself. Blessed is the man who doesn't care what people think about him, only what God thinks about him. Do you know why He says that? The word blessed means happy. You know why He says that? Because the most miserable person in the world is that person who is over-sensitive about themselves. Every little thing offends them. Every time somebody says something, or does something, they take it as a personal threat against their own lives. We are just so sensitive about self. Self is Number One. You know it would be a good test for you to examine your life and to see to what extent self controls your life. How much it dictates to you. And you know, the greatest emancipation proclamation that could ever be given, you know the greatest liberty you could ever have, is to be set free from being sensitive about yourself. And from always watching yourself to make certain you get what you deserve.

You know the Apostle Paul discovered this great secret in I Corinthians chapter 6, I believe it is. There were some people at Corinth that weren't too happy with Paul and they were criticizing. And you know what Paul says, Paul says "for me to be judged of you is a small thing. What you think about me and what you say about me is a small thing. He said I am judged of one, the Lord, and that's all that counts. That's all that counts. It's a matter of dying to self. Most of us with our emotional problems and our neuroses and all of these hang ups that we have, and being up tight, all these things, they all, nearly 100%, arise from this: over-concern for myself. And yet most of us this morning

*a meek
person is who
has died
to self -*

are controlled, not by God, we are controlled by self. We are controlled by self. And what we say, and what we do and where we go and how happy we are today depends upon how self has been treated. And you know, we ought to kind of talk to ourselves once in a while ... and sometimes we begin to pout. Well now what's wrong? Somebody didn't invite you to the party, or somebody didn't tell you how pretty you look today. Or somebody just passed by and didn't speak to you. Or maybe somebody said something against you, or maybe somebody insulted you and you are all puffed up and pouting now. And you know, we'll go to God in prayer and we'll say, Lord, I'm nothing, Lord, I'm a sinner, Lord, I'm nothing. And then we'll stand up and expect people to treat us as though we are really something. And yet, if we could ever come to this place where we just completely die to self, and let Jesus Christ be the only thing in our lives, and all we care about is His approval and the smile of His face on our life, it would be the greatest liberation that you have ever known, you'd be happy. The most miserable person here this morning is that person who is always worried about how he is going to be treated -- self. The poet said it this way, He said, "Oh, that I might be lost in Thee, Oh, that it might not be I that lives, but Christ that lives in me." If I could just be lost in Christ, and realize that His glory is all that matters in my life, and having His approval of what I say and how I look this morning, and how I talk, and how I behave ---- that's all that counts. That sets me free from what you think and from what people think and I am no longer sensitive about myself. To be meek means not to be sensitive, overly-sensitive about yourself. It means that God is in control of your life, you are not being controlled now by what people think, or by your emotions, or by your passion, you are controlled by God. That's what it means to be meek.

But it also means to be controlled, not only by God, but to be

CONTROLLED BY LOVE

To be controlled by love. We read about that a moment ago -- in verse 43. Now notice the 45th verse --- now verse 48. Do you know what Jesus is talking about here? He is not talking about being perfect sinlessly. He is talking about being perfect in the matter of love. And He says that I am to behave towards other people as God behaves toward them. Now over here is a farmer who is not a Christian, here's a farmer who uses God's name in vain, here's a farmer who doesn't give any regard to God, and leaves God completely out of his life. Over here is a farmer who is a good Christian, and serves the Lord and is obedient to the Lord. Now God doesn't make the sun shine on the good man and dark over here on the unsaved man. God doesn't make the rain just to fall over here on the good man and the rain doesn't fall on the bad man. You know, sometimes the lost man wonders why he is so successful financially. The thing of it is, God doesn't say, all right, farmer, you didn't pray to me this morning and you haven't received my Son, and you used my name in vain, so I'm not going to let any sun shine in your life, and I'm not going to rain on your crops, and I'm not going to bless you. You see, God's actions towards a person are not determined by that person's action toward him. Now to be controlled by love, and to be meek means that I behave towards others as God behaves toward them. How does God behave toward them? He makes no distinction -- if a man is just, he send the rain, and if a man is unjust, he sends the rain. God's treatment of other people is not determined by their treatment of him. And that's the way it is if you are going to be a true disciple of Jesus. Your treatment of other people, what you think of them, and how you treat them is not to be determined by what they are, they may not be worthy, they may be louses, they may treat you horribly, that is to have no

effect on how you treat them.

He says, love your enemies. Love your enemies. You know what that means? That means act towards your enemy as though you liked him. As though he were your friend. Now you know, I'm very nice and very kind and generous to people that I like and that like me, and we are friends. Now God is saying, you treat your enemies the same way, you treat them as though you liked them. Then he says, bless them that curse you. Bless them that curse you. Somebody curses you, somebody eats you out, somebody insults you, what do you do? Do you eat them out back? Do you curse them back: No, he says, you bless them. God bless you, brother. Have you ever watched two dogs at night -- or listen to them? Not watch them, but listen to them. How they'll answer back, bark for bark. Have you ever noticed that? They won't let that other dog get a bark ahead of them. Have you ever noticed that? You listen to them sometime. They answer back, bark for bark. And you know, some of us are just like that. We are just like that. We are just like those dogs, we are going to answer back, bark for bark. Nobody is going to get ahead of us. I'll tell you what, if you want to astound somebody, and shock someone, and almost give them heart failure, the next time they curse you and insult you, you just answer back on blessing. That's what God says. Isn't that what Jesus did on the cross? When he was dying on the cross - and his blood was being spilt for yours sins and mine, and the crown of thorns was pressed deep into his brow, and the people were mocking him and the thief was railing upon him, and they were laughing at him. What did Jesus say? You know, He could have called for legions of angels to come down and destroy them, and they would have done it at His bidding because He created them. He could have commanded that the earth open up and swallow them all. He could have done what that thief wanted him to do, save thyself and us. Jesus said, no man takes my life from me, I lay it down. What did He do?

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He said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you. You know the best way to make a friend out of an enemy? One of the best ways to witness for Christ? This person that hates you, this person that you are at outs with? You do something good for them, and then pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Pray for them, pray for them. And I promise you this morning if you will follow the word of Jesus and let God control you and let love control you, you'll be truly meek as God wants you to be meek. You take this verse 44 and put it into practical service. I promise you that your life will be revolutionized. You begin praying for those that you do not like, you begin praying for those that oppose you. You begin praying for them, and I don't mean praying like John prayed that lightning would fall from heaven and consume them. But I mean, pray that God would bless them. You know, one of the best things to pray first of all, is to say, Lord, is there something in my life that causes this person to act this way? You know we just naturally assume if somebody is against us that they're wrong. It may be that you are wrong, that there is something in your heart, something in your life that is causing them to act this way. And the first thing you ought to pray is, Lord, search my heart and if there is something that I have done that is causing them to act this way towards me, I want you to reveal it to me. And then you pray that God will bless them. Pray that they will be successful and that the blessings of God will rest upon them. Now this isn't according to human nature, but it is according to the divine operation of the Spirit of God in your heart and life. The meek man is not only God-controlled, he is not only love-controlled, but he is also

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He says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

Someone says, well that's the only way they'll get it, if they inherit it. I want to tell you something. Every fiber of this book, every page of this book, says that we are living in a transitional time. And that this age is coming to a close. And that Jesus Christ is going to renovate this earth, and purge it from everything unclean and unrighteous and create a new heaven and a new earth wherein they that are righteous shall dwell. And Jesus said the saints shall judge the world and shall reign with Christ. Now listen. A man who is living only for this life, only for what he can get out of it, is a man who is not going to be meek. He is always going to do anything he can to get a little parcel of this ground. He'll like about a sale, he'll cheat on his income tax, he'll do anything he can to get a little bit more of this earth and of this present life. Because he thinks this is it, this is the whole kit and kaboodle right here. And, yet the man who is controlled by God, knows that God has something better. We were out in Denver a few weeks ago, beautiful country. We were driving along those mountain roads and just as high as you could look, gorgeous mountains. Come back here to old flat Texas. You know one of the most beautiful spots on the face of the earth is that highway 1 drive from San Francisco to L.A. -- you drive down and there, it's just gorgeous. I'd give anything in the world to live out there, but I can't because my work's here. But you know what, when the Lord comes back I'm going to live out there for a while. We were out in Denver and we were driving around in one of those fancy sections up in the mountains, and these beautiful homes, gorgeous homes, that makes ours look like a pup tent. And I began to think about all of this, my Lord made all of this and He's the King of all of this and He says some day I'm going to inherit all of this with Him. I told the group, I said I'd like to go up to the door of one of those houses and knock on it and tell them that I'm going to live here during the millenium, would they

please take care of this house for me. Because you see, this whole thing is going to be ours that know Christ. You can live anywhere you want to, don't have to worry about living in a bad city, raising your children. A lot of people say I'd love to live in San Francisco, but I don't want to raise my children there. Boy, I thank the Lord, when He comes back and He renovates this thing, and comes into His glory and power, you can live in San Francisco and not have to worry about the unrighteous element, raising your children there. Just live anywhere you want.

The earth is the Lord's - the earth is the Lord's. That's the future tense, but it is also the present tense. Paul says right now all things are ours. And I guarantee you, there may be some of you here this morning that could buy and sell me three times over, but I promise you I enjoy more what I have than what you've got.

I was in a barber shop the other day and there was a fellow telling me about a millionaire and all the things he had. And talked about him going to Las Vegas and how much money he lost at the crap tables, and all that sort of thing. And I sat there and I said, thank you, Lord. You know it would be nice some day to be a millionaire, but I said, Lord, I'm enjoying what I have a million times more than what that millionaire is enjoying. Old Bud Robinson, the Nazarene evangelist -- his church sent him to New York City and they escorted him down Broadway and showed him all the lights, and all the glitter, and all the shows. And he went back to his hotel room that night and he got on his knees and he said, Lord, I thank you that tonight I didn't see a thing I wanted. You see, because if you let God control your life, and you come to know that the most precious thing in your life is just knowing that God is in control and just know that every day with Him is a day of glory and a day of richness. You already possess the earth, you already possess all that this earth and more can give you.

I'm glad I'm a Christian. I'm glad I know Christ, because the past is taken care of. He took my sins away. The present is glorious and happy and the future is all mine, and yours, if you know Christ.

But it all comes when you die to self, die to self and allow Jesus Christ to come into your heart and life and let Him be absolute, undisputed Lord. Is He?