

Matthew 5:5

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[0 : 00] Do turn to Matthew chapter 5 and I want to preach to you from verse 5 tonight in our series on the Beatitudes. Matthew 5 verse 5.

! This Wednesday is a prayer meeting at 8 o'clock. Do make that a priority if you can and be there. It's on Zoom. So we're following our Lord's teaching about happiness, about blessedness. What you've got at the start of chapter 5, at the start of the Sermon on the Mount, is really the test of what does blessedness look like in life.

How tonight do you know that you're alive spiritually? How do we know that we're in a live church? And the answer to that is not in night. And it's not in numbers. It's in the Beatitudes and it's in these graces that are lined up for us.

And so we come to the third of that statement. I saw that, John Silver. Verse 5. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Now, whether or not you're a Christian tonight, I think you have to recognise with me the greatness of Jesus Christ. The contribution that his teaching has made to the world in which we live.

[1 : 26] Jesus is surely one of, if not the greatest, figure in world history by anyone's standards. Jesus, the seeming failure, has had more effect on the history of humankind than any other.

And that's not just a matter of opinion, that is a matter of fact. And let me remind you of some of the facts. John Blanchard has recently died. And I was glancing through this book.

Let me read to you what he says about the Lord Jesus. Nobody knows the exact date of his birth. But that one event divides the whole of human history into the words, the years labelled BC, before Christ, and AD, from the Latin Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord.

He never wrote a book. But more books have been written about him than anyone else in history. The nearest thing we have to his biography, the part of the Bible called the New Testament, has been translated in whole or in part into 1,500 languages.

He never painted a picture or composed any poetry or music. But nobody's life and teaching has been the subject of a greater output of songs, plays, poetry, pictures, films, videos, or other art forms.

[2 : 37] He never raised an army, but millions of people have laid down their lives in his cause. It's been calculated that every year, the almost unbelievable number of 330,000 of his followers are martyred for their faith.

Except for one brief period during his childhood, his travels were limited to an area about the size of Wales. But today, his influence is literally worldwide. He never spoke to more than a few thousand people at any one time.

But today, Christianity has, well, far more than 1,620,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. I can't even work out the figure it is. Followers. Over 30% of the population.

The largest religious group in the world has ever known. His public teaching lasted only three years and was restricted to one tiny country. but today some of the world's largest radio and television networks are given over exclusively to spreading his words.

Purpose-built communications satellites are positioned in space to carry his message around the globe. He set foot in only two countries, but one Christian missionary organisation claims to fly regularly to more countries now than any commercial airline in the world.

[3 : 48] He had no formal education, but thousands of universities, seminaries, colleges and schools have been founded in his name. He never owned any property. He had to borrow a boat to sail in, a donkey to ride in, and even a coin to use for an illustration.

But all around the world today, thousands of buildings have been erected for the sole purpose of teaching his followers and adding to their number. So, by any standards, Jesus is a world figure,

and you cannot afford to ignore him.

He is, in himself, the greatest proof of his own words, the words that we're going to look at tonight. He fulfills this. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

And I want to turn into three things. I want, first of all, to tell the truth about meekness. There's an awful lot of untruth about it. So, first of all, let's tell the truth about meekness.

And then I want to test for meekness in this church. And then, finally, I want to see the triumph of meekness. So, first of all, the truth about meekness.

[4 : 54] And that is this, that you know, I hope, that meekness is not weakness. Meekness is not weakness. Everybody thinks it is. I don't know what comes into your mind when I say to you, gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

And people sometimes think, well, that doesn't apply to Jesus. But that is because we've got a wrong understanding of what meekness is. I came across this paraphrase of the Beatitudes. Blessed are the dormites. Which is, blessed are the poor in spirit, they say. To be poor in spirit, that poet says it's to be a dormite. Timid, poor-spirited.

That's a misunderstanding. But when it comes to blessed are the meek, the writer said this. Blessed are the doormats. And maybe that's the idea. You've got of somebody who's meek. They're a doormat.

You can wipe your feet all over them. And they'll never get anyone anywhere in this world because the world just walks all over them. And they're never going to get anywhere. People just trample all over them.

[5 : 57] Is that our idea of meekness? Was Jesus like that? Was Jesus a wimp? Do you remember what Jesus said? He said, come to me, learn of me, for I am meek.

And I'm lowly in heart. And you will find rest for yourselves. Is Jesus inviting you to trample all over him? When he invites us to do that, when he invites us to learn of me, for I am meek, what does he mean?

How do we understand the meekness of Jesus? Now let me illustrate it to you like this. In Llanberis. Anybody been to Llanberis? Yeah, look at Ralph Coies.

It's in North Wales. And it's a hydroelectric power station. We used to visit it on camp. So you think Swansea is bad.

You wait until you went on that. And what it is, it's a mountain. And the inside of the mountain has been hollowed out. It's amazing. You can drive right into the mountain.

[7 : 02] And the whole of the mountain has been hollowed out. It's an amazing feat of engineering. How it works, from my very, very simple understanding, is the water is right at the summit.

Right at the top of the mountain. And there's a reservoir they've stuck in there. And what they do is they let the water out of the reservoir at the summit. And it comes right down to ground level.

To sea level. Right down to the lake. There's a lake at the foot of the mountain. And at certain times of the day, the water is let out of the reservoir. Through certain generators in the middle of the mountain.

Down to this lake. And at other times of the day, the water is pumped back right up to the top of the mountain. It's an amazing feat of engineering. And so people in the Midlands and the kind of north of England.

They are able to switch on their kettle. And to have their cup of tea. And to switch on the telly. And because of that. And that really is an illustration of what meekness is.

[8 : 04] It's amazing power that's under control. If that dam burst in Llanberis, it would create havoc in that area.

It would wreck the countryside. It would destroy villages. Because there's great power, isn't it? And it would cause great damage. But it's under control. There's all this power.

It is great reservoir of power. But it is channeled. And it is controlled. And that's a picture of what the Bible means by meekness. Meekness is not weakness.

Meekness is power that is under control. Meekness is power that is channeled and controlled. And so that is how you ought to understand Jesus Christ. When he says, learn of me for I am meek.

Jesus is not saying to you, we'll come and walk all over me. I'm so self-effacing. You can get whatever you want out of me. Just say the word and I'll bend. And you can have whatever you want.

[9 : 04] No, no, he's not saying that. He's saying the opposite of that, isn't he? He's saying, come to me because I've got the power to help you. And I see you in this world. I see you weary and burdened and heavy laden.

And I see you bowed down under all the pressures of this life. And I see you running here, there and everywhere. Trying to get relief. And Jesus says, come to me. Don't go running off into religion to the scribes and the Pharisees because they will not help you.

Don't go trying religion or drugs or any of those things. They won't help you. Jesus says, come to me because I have the power to help you. And I'm the one who holds the universe together.

And there's greater power and authority in me than there is in any nuclear power station. Come to me because all power in heaven on earth has been given to me.

Come to me and you will find rest for your souls. His is the power that holds the universe together. And it is channeled and it is controlled for your good. So come to me and you will find rest for your souls.

[10 : 13] And so nowhere do you see that meekness more powerfully displayed than at the cross. Because at the cross, let's think for a moment. I want to say it was not the nails that bound Jesus to the cross.

But it was his love for sinners that bound him to the cross. That is what meekness is. It wasn't that Jesus was taken, you see, and dragged against his will and strung up on the cross.

Because there was nothing that he could do about it. That's how the world sees it, isn't it? The world looks at Jesus on Calvary and says that that is failure.

But it wasn't the nails that kept him on the cross. Do you remember what he said? And he said, if I wanted to, I could summon a legion of angels from heaven. Right now, I could flick my fingers and a legion of heavenly hosts would come down to help me and assist me.

If I wanted to, Jesus says, I could have an army of angels at my command. But instead he was obedient to death, even death on a cross. All that power.

[11 : 22] And all that authority. But he's determined to die for sinners. That is meekness. It is the power of God that is channeled and controlled for your good.

It's not weakness. It's power under control. And the word meek is often used in the Bible. And the Greek of the day to describe an animal that's been tamed.

So one of the most beautiful sights you can see is sheepdog trials. Have you ever seen them? They're amazing. One of the greatest things you can see.

You see a dog. And the farmer controls him with his whistling. And the dog kind of runs around the sheep and hems the sheep in and manages to control the sheep.

And the dog protects the sheep. Now what would that dog do if it was left to its own nature? What would that dog do if it was left to its natural instinct?

[12 : 29] What would the dog do? It would be liable to pounce on the sheep, wouldn't it? That the dog would scatter the sheep and destroy them. But those dogs have been expertly trained.

And those dogs, all their natural instincts, all their energies and all their drives have been channeled. And they've been controlled by the training and the discipline of that shepherd.

And it's all to the end of rounding up the sheep. It's a beautiful sight. Those dogs have been broken in. Their natural instincts, which would be to attack the sheep, have been channeled and controlled.

So that now they do the weak will of the shepherd to protect the sheep. That's what meekness is. You know Charlton Heston.

Charlton Heston's the actor. Dead now isn't he? But he did loads of the great, great films. He was Moses, wasn't he? The Ten Commandments.

[13 : 29] Wasn't he in Ben-Hur? Yeah, as well. He did all the loads of the great, great kind of characters. Charlton Heston. He was interviewed. He was asked, what's the mark of greatness?

He played many of the great figures of history. He studied them. What made these figures great? He said this. What was it that made these men great? He said they had all this in common.

They were able to concentrate their enormous energies in one clear direction. They all had that in common. These great figures of history, they were able to concentrate their enormous energies in one clear direction.

They all have that in common. They all have that in common. The meek person will concentrate all their energies in one direction. And that would be to know God's will.

And to do it. And such a person will be blessed and there will be a blessing to others. Jesus says, blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. So the Apostle Paul, he was such a man. He describes his life and his ministry for us in 2 Corinthians 6.

[14 : 36] It's very much like these Beatitudes. He says, I was always sorrowful yet always rejoicing. I was poor and yet I was rich. I had nothing yet possessing everything.

And so how did Paul become such a man? Well, you know the story. He was converted. There was a blinding flash of light on the road of Damascus. Here is this man. And there's a blinding flash of light. So people sometimes still talk about, have you seen the light?

He's seen the light. As though that happened suddenly. But it wasn't like that in Paul's time at all. It wasn't a sudden conversion, the Apostle Paul.

When the Apostle Paul saw the light, he was fighting against God. He was like a wild man. We're told that he comes down from Damascus.

Breathing out murder and slaughter against the church of God. And Jesus brings him down. And Jesus breaks him in. Remember what he says? He says, Saul, it's hard for you to kick against the goats.

[15 : 39] It's hard for you to kick against the spikes of your conscience. The thorns. You're grasping the thorns. And it's so painful, isn't it, when you do that? And every time, Paul, your conscience is like thorns digging into your hand.

And Jesus eventually brings him down. He's heard the gospel. He's heard the gospel through Stephen. He was there when Stephen died. He saw Stephen die.

He saw the reality of the Christian God. In the life of Stephen. As he was martyred. And he's convicting. And he's fighting like a mad thing.

Like a wild thing against God. And he wants to obliterate the church. And the Lord Jesus stands in the way. And brings him down to the ground. And breaks him in. And he says, Lord, what will you have to do with me?

What will you have me to do with my life? And that's meekness. It's not weakness, is it? Paul wasn't a wimp. He wasn't a wimp before he was converted. He certainly wasn't a wimp after.

[16 : 48] And all those natural energies. And the power that he had. It was there after he was converted. And it was there before he was converted. He's a very powerful, dynamic, energetic man.

But what happened was when he was converted. His natural energies. And gifts and powers and ability. Those things were channeled. And controlled.

And brought under Christ's yoke. That's meekness. That's what it means to be meek. It's to be brought under the control of King Jesus. That's what happened to Moses in the Old Testament. The Bible tells us Moses was the meekest man who ever lived. But he wasn't always like that. Do you remember he lost his temper? He killed a man. He's got some patriotic feeling for his own people.

And he felt he had to do something. And in a moment of temper he lashes out and he kills a man. He loses his rag. He lost control. That's not weakness. That is weakness.

[17 : 49] Somebody has said, isn't it, temper is such a wonderful thing. It's a shame to lose it. And so when you think of steel. We take steel, don't we? And we temper it. To make it stronger.

And so the person who loses their temper loses control of himself. And that's weakness. And that's what happened to Moses. He lost his temper. And God took him aside for 40 years to deal with him.

And to make him into a meek person. To bring him under the control of God. And that's what meekness is. And Moses became the meekest man who's ever lived. Good steel.

That's who Moses was. And so what I'm saying is really simple. Meekness is not weakness. Now let's test ourselves a little bit on this. Because Jesus says, doesn't he, in verse 5 of Matthew 5. Blessed are the meek. And the emphasis is on the middle of the verse. Blessed are the meek. For they and only they shall inherit the earth. And so we have to ask ourselves in the Beatitudes.

[18 : 54] When we come to the Beatitudes. Am I this sort of person? And it's not a matter of psychology. It's not a matter of, is this my natural temperament? We're not talking in those terms. So we're talking about, aren't we, being brought under the control.

And the rule of King Jesus. Of being broken in by Christ. Of yielding your life to him. Of renouncing your selfish life.

To him. Of saying, Jesus, I'm going to put you in charge. Because if that isn't true of me.

Then I'm not a Christian. And if that isn't true of me. I'm not going to inherit the world. And if that isn't true of me.

I'm not going to enter into the kingdom of God. And so what are the tests for meekness? And it's really our attitude to certain things. They're the Beatitudes.

[19 : 51] They are the attitudes that will be in us. If we're Christians. What is your attitude to God and his word? Somebody asked Karl Barth.

Who's a kind of great 20th century theologian. I don't go along with everything he taught. But he was a great theologian. And Karl Barth was asked. What's the profoundest lesson that you've ever learnt?

He had a great mind. And this great man thought for a few moments. And then he paused. I think the most profoundest thing. And everyone picks up their ears.

And their pen. So write it down. I think the most profound thing I've ever learnt in all my years as a theologian. Is this. Dot, dot, dot, dot, dot. Jesus loves me. This I know.

For the Bible tells me so. Thank you. And that is meekness isn't it? That is meekness towards God and his word. And Jesus says.

[20 : 49] You cannot enter my kingdom. Unless you're prepared to receive it like a little child. It's the only way in. Unless you're prepared to humble yourself. And come as a little child. You can't enter into my kingdom.

Tell them what James tells us. James tells us. About receiving the word of God. The gospel. And he says this. Chapter 1 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.

Therefore put away all filthiness. And rampant wickedness. And receive with meekness. The implanted word which is able to save your soul. So how do you receive the gospel? So that it saves us.

You receive it with meekness. And unless you have a meek attitude. Unless you receive the gospel with meekness. You will not be saved.

[21 : 44] And so what does it mean. To receive it with meekness. It means this. You don't get angry about it. You don't argue with it.

It means that you're swift to hear. And slow to speak. And I think that's what meekness is. So I think you can always tell. When somebody has been genuinely converted.

They stop arguing. They stop fighting it. They stop shooting off their mouths. And expressing their opinion about Christianity. Well I like to think of God like this.

In my view I like to think of God as. No, no, no. Because when you become a real Christian. What does Roman teach us? You shut your mouth. Because you're slow to speak and quick to hear.

And you're ready to hear the gospel. You can't get enough of it. You're quick to hear. You're slow to speak. You're slow to anger. That's what it means. It means you've given up. Standing on your own opinions. You come like Karl Barth did. And you say, well Jesus loves me.

[22 : 49] This I know. Because the Bible tells me so. I'm a great theologian. I've got a great brain. No. Jesus loves me. This I know. For the Bible tells me so. And so is that your attitude.

Towards the gospel tonight. Of meekness. And of submission. And receptiveness. Another test I think of meekness. Is our attitude towards one another. And the New Testament has got a lot to say about that.

Let me pick out a few verses. Brothers. If anyone is caught in any transgression. You who are spiritual.

Should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Same word. A spirit of meekness. Keep watch on yourself. Lest you be tempted.

What is my attitude. Towards. A brother who falls. Or a sister who falls into some sin.

[23 : 53] Am I smug about it. I always knew there was something not right. Do I receive the news gleefully. And start to spread it around. I've got the power to hurt that person. And if I follow my natural instincts.

My natural instincts will be to put the boot in. That's what people are like. Naturally. Selfish. And hateful. The Bible says.

And you might not even believe that about yourself. But it's true. What the Bible says about you. By nature we are selfish. And. Hateful. Hating others. We cover it over really well. And so if there's an

opportunity.

To get one over on the other person. We will take it. It's kind of where we live in. But the word that the Bible uses.

Particularly in that verse. Is the word. A doctor uses. When he resets a bone. That's the picture. You restore them gently.

[24 : 57] When a brother or sister falls. It's like having a bone. Broken. In the body of Christ. And the concern. And the goal is.

That. That. Brother or sister. Be brought back into the fellowship. They be reset. Like a doctor. Or like a surgeon. So. The doctor doesn't come in. Does he. With a crowbar. And a monkey wrench. To set a bone. He comes in. With an instrument. With his skills. And with his strength. But he's gentle. All that power. And all that skill. And all that physical energy. Is controlled.

And channeled. And that's how he resets the bone. And so is that how we deal with one another. Listen to this verse from 2 Timothy. The Lord's servant. Must not be quarrelsome.

But kind to everyone. Able to teach. Patiently endearing. Correcting his opponents. With gentleness. With meekness. That God may perhaps. Grant them repentance. Leading to a knowledge of the truth. So the servant of the Lord.

[25 : 53] Must be gentle. That's how the word is used. It's a nurse. Paul uses it. In 1 Thessalonians. To describe Christian ministers.

And he speaks to himself. He says. We were gentle among you. Like a nurse taking care of our children. There are some nurses. Aren't there? That are not particularly gentle. You know. You have to have an injection.

There's one. Argyle surgery. Just slams the needle into you. When you're not expecting it. But there's also the gentleness. You know the gentleness. Don't you? She knows she's got to hurt you. But she's gentle about it. It's all to do with attitude. If you go into Ealing Hospital. And you hear the nurses talking together.

And they say. You see that strangulated hernia. In Bay 5. Or that slipped disc. In Bed 8. That's going to be different isn't it.

[26 : 51] From seeing the person in. Bay 5. Paul Levy in Bay 5. Or Rachel Little in Bay 8. It could be like that in church life.

Can't it? See that old hyper-Calvinist in the back pew. Not that there is one. Or charismatic in the front row.

Again. Not that there is one. But you see. I mean. We can slap labels on people. Can't we? Easily. We disagree.

There's bound to be disagreements. In the church of Jesus Christ. There's bound to be diversity of opinion. There should be. The Bible tells us. In itself. In the New Testament. There will be differences among you. And there are bound to be people who are right.

And people who are wrong. And there are people who are neither. But the thing is. We must label people. We must see them as people. People who perhaps need to be confronted. With the truth. Yes. People who need to be brought to repentance.

[27 : 45] Maybe. But we see them as people. And so we're gentle. And we're not dealing with cases. We're dealing with people. For whom Christ has shed his blood. So that makes us gentle. The servant of the Lord.

Must not be like that. Picking an argument all the time. We read from Isaiah 11. And I'd misunderstood that for years. Where it says. The wolf shall lie down with the lamb. And the leopard shall lie down with the young goat.

And the calf and the lion. And the fattened calf together. And a little child shall lead them. And we think. Well that must refer to heaven. It's impossible that that's now. But the whole prophecy is about the coming Messiah.

It's about David's son. Greater son. The Lord Jesus. Gathering the nations to himself. It's to do with the coming of the kingdom. And it's the coming of the kingdom. That Jesus is describing.

At the start of Matthew 5. The kingdom we receive. And enter into. When we trust in Jesus. And so this is how we're meant to live. The lion is meant to lie down with the lamb.

[28 : 45] It's not like that in the world is it? Out there. It's. It's red in tooth and claw. And a church can be very orthodox.

But. But it can be. Can't it? Sometimes. Like entering into a lion's den. It's not meant to be like that. We might be really proud. How orthodox we are.

But if the lion and the lamb. Cannot lie down together. We've got no right to say. That we're Christ's church. And the life of God. And the spirit is within us. What about our attitude to the outsider?

Do you remember how Peter puts it? 1 Peter 3.15. He says. Be ready to give an answer. Not heard a cliché. 1 Peter 3.15.

Be ready to give an answer. But in your heart. Honor Christ the Lord is holy. That's where you begin. You recognize yourself. The need of Christ. That he is on the throne.

[29 : 41] And because of that. You're always ready. Always prepared. To make a defense to anyone. Asks you for the reason. For the hope that is in you. And yet you do it with gentleness. And meekness and respect. And so we ask ourselves tonight.

Is there meekness here? In our attitude towards God. And his word. In our attitude to others. And in our attitude to outsiders. Now finally. The triumph of meekness. As I finish. The triumph of meekness.

Can you see it? Blessed are the meek. For they and only they. Shall inherit the earth. And that can't be right. Can you? Everybody knows meekness leads nowhere. Unless you're prepared to blow your own trumpet.

And wave your own flag. And promote your own interest. You'll never get anywhere in this world.

Well Jesus thinks otherwise. And Jesus says otherwise. And he says blessed are the meek.

Blessed are those who renounce themselves. Because that's the way to world domination. Blessed are the meek. For they shall inherit the earth.

[30 : 44] That's true now. Spiritually. Who are the people that own this world tonight? And there's lots of people that think they own it. And on paper you might not own very much at all.

But Jesus says all things are yours. Paul says if you are Christ's. And Christ is God's.

Everything belongs to you. The Christian possesses all things. The sunset. The green. The blue of the earth. Family life. These blessings come to us from God.

And they are for us to enjoy. And we should enjoy them. Because the earth is the Lord's. And the fullness thereof. They are not problems to us.

The family isn't a problem. In kind of getting in the way of work. And career. We thank God for the gifts. That we receive from him. For his blessings. And we enjoy them.

[31 : 46] Even here. That those who are meek. Those who are under the control of Christ. Those who have submitted to his lordship. Possess the earth. It's theirs to enjoy. But of course.

It is going to be true. Literally. They. Shall inherit the earth. The end of the Bible. Is that there will be a new heavens. And there will be a new earth.

Wherein. Righteousness will dwell. And nothing will hurt or harm. In all God's holy kingdom. And when Christ returns. There will be a rejuvenated universe.

And it will be free from every stain of sin. And free from the curse. And if you are a Christian. Jesus says to you tonight. It's yours. The new heavens.

And the new earth. And God has prepared it for you. And you are going to live there. I would love revival to break out in healing.

[32 : 46] I would love it. I think it would be great. And I come from a country. And I come from churches in Wales. That talked endlessly about revival. And there's a group of older ministers. Who love to talk about revival.

And wouldn't it be great if revival came. And what we need is revival. And you lot have never experienced revival. And we experienced a bit of it. And what you need is revival. But the problem with that. Is the New Testament doesn't talk like that.

The New Testament says. That our great desire is what? It is the new heavens and the new earth. It is the place where righteousness dwells.

Revival won't take death away. It would be wonderful. Wouldn't it? It would be absolutely terrific. But it's not the hope of the New Testament church. And it never should be. Because our hope is the new heavens and the new earth.

Where in God will dwell. And so when you look at it like that. You can afford to be meek. I think.

When you're 50 billion years. Or let's say 50 billion trillion years.

[33 : 44] Into eternity. God's people will still be rejoicing. That verse 5 of Matthew 5 is true. And God's people will rejoice.

And they will be glad. That God taught them. During their initial three score years. And 10. To be meek. And so Jesus says. Come to me. And learn of me. Because I am meek. And you will find rest for your souls. You will find rest for your souls. Blessed are the meek. For they shall inherit the earth. Let's pray.