

Blessed are The Meek
Matthew 5:5
Small Group Guide

Opening Icebreaker Question:

- Pastor Josh talked about a pristine lake in New Hampshire that seemed like absolute paradise. Whether indoors or outdoors, where is that place where you feel most at ease, where you don't have a care in the world?

OPTIONAL BACKGROUND READING/INTRO: This summer we've been looking at the Beatitudes — eight concise statements that Jesus made about true, lasting happiness. The thing is, each time Jesus describes an attribute that leads to the good life, it's the farthest thing from what we would expect; it totally contradicts what we think would lead to happiness. So far, we've already seen that with what Jesus says about being poor in spirit; about mourning; about being merciful; and continually hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Today we're going to see one quality which, perhaps more than any other so far, takes us to that tranquil, beautiful place where we all long to live, that deep happiness. It's in v. 5 of Matthew 5: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." What on earth does that mean, and why would anyone sign up for it?

First, let's look at how we might define meekness.

1. What's your first reaction to the word "meek"? Why, in our culture, is it one of the least desirable traits of the Beatitudes? How do you personally feel about being meek?
2. React to this explanation of meekness by Pastor Josh: "In the secular Greek of the day, the word *praeis* was sometimes used to describe animals, such as a big, strong stallion, whose naturally wild spirit had to be subdued by a trainer so that their strength could become useful. It was strength under control. So one way to think of meekness is just that: *strength under submission.*" **How would you feel about being described as a strong stallion that is being trained by God?**
3. Josh defines meekness as "the confident humility which characterizes people who submit their whole lives to the care of God." He fleshed out this definition in two ways:
 - a. Meekness involves being quiet and gentle at the right times and showing godly assertion at the right times. **How well do you strike this balance?**
 - b. Meekness involves giving up control, so that God can give us a true sense of security. **How do you do with giving up control and allowing God to make you secure?**

Now that we've defined "meekness," let's explore why it brings the good life.¹ Start by reading Psalm 37:3-7. Then discuss the following.

- a. From Psalm 37:3-7 above, what do the verbs say about the meek life? What do you receive by being meek? (Note the words or phrases, "dwell," "enjoy," and receiving "the desire of your heart.")

¹ We're using Psalm 37 in this section because Jesus quotes Psalm 37:11 when he stated "Blessed are the meek...".

- b. Josh said that the meek life is good because it is characterized by rest. There is no “right answer” here, but on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being very restful, and 1 being frantic, how would you describe your current state of mind? Likewise, how comfortable are you with the validity of resting? Why?

Read Psalm 37:8-9 and vv. 25-26.

- a. These verses obviously talk about freedom from worry, whether physical, financial, or otherwise. If meekness brings the good life because it is freedom from worry – a sense of calm and contentment – how well do you deal with worry?
- b. Worry can be described as a lack of trust in the care of God. It doubts either or both of God’s sovereignty or God’s love for you. Do you struggle with either or both of these realities of God? Why do you think that is?

Read Psalm 37:9, 11, 18, and 29.

- a. The verses above show that meekness brings the good life because the meek are in a position to receive or “inherit” from God. How difficult is it in our U.S. culture, especially on Long Island, New York, to see ourselves as a receiver more than an earner in our relationship with God? Discuss.
- b. Read Isaiah 65:17 and Revelation 21:1-3. How do these promises of a “new earth” factor into what Jesus says about the meek inheriting the earth?

Now that we’ve defined meekness and discussed its benefits, let’s discuss how we get it.

4. Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle (*praeis*, meek), and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:29).
 - a. This verse talks about a vulnerable submission to the loving embrace of Jesus, who is the ultimate example of meekness. What gets in the way of you being totally vulnerable with him, surrendering control of every area of your life?
 - b. How does it help to meditate on the way that Jesus submitted his power and control on the cross in order to pursue relationship with you?
5. Prayer: Among our usual prayer requests, let us pray that God will help us to relinquish every area of life to his care, and find the confident humility that comes as a result.