

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 25th June 2023 10 am

Gentleness / Meekness

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture and prayer

Hymn MP 237 Holy Holy Holy (Mayhew)

Scripture Isaiah 53 :2-12 (page 740)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk Joshua

Chorus MP 706 Thy loving kindness is better than life

Notices Rigte on Camp, Picnic next week. Extraordinary mtg?

Prayer and share time

Reading Galatians 5:16-26 (page 1172)

Hymn Redeemed (on Bulletin)

Sermon Are you meek? Living a life of *Gentleness*

Hymn MP 465 Meekness and Majesty

Closing Prayer

Prayer and Exordium

I need to display gentleness, - and so do you!

The fruit of the Spirit is... gentleness x2 Ga 5:23

Today's sermon is not based on a whole passage - as with Genesis 19 that we looked at last week - but on one word. x2 Every word is God's word!

■ Stand on a mountain top and you see the wonders of God's creation, so too when you look down a microscope!

That word is the adjective 4236 πραότης praotes prah-ot'-ace

Our NIV has 'Gentleness' ... but could it be better translated as 'meekness' as the AV has it, but then the NKJ is back to gentleness so which is best?

In looking at 43 English translations 17 times it is the word 'gentleness', 19 times it is the word 'meekness'. Occasionally it is translated as 'mildness, good faith, tolerance, or humility' or modesty check remaining....

■ Gentleness suggests more an action, someone with a gentle touch on the controls. To that person removing a splinter from your foot you would say 'please be gentle'. Or if you saw a person roughly handling a trolley full of fragile glass you would shout "be gentle with it"

Prautés describes a condition of mind and heart, not an action - but at an attitude. It consists not in a person's outward behaviour only; - although that is important – but his inner disposition.

What is it?

We can understand the meaning of words better when we see how it is used in the Bible, and in Scripture it has a fuller, deeper significance than in non-scriptural Greek writings. Improve

It can mean either Gentleness or meekness although better described by the noun 'praus' from which it is derived (4235/9) which means 'meek' x2. So let us see: what is meekness? How do I become meek? and how does it show?

Meekness, as with all the fruit of the Spirit are primarily – and completely - seen in the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit being the Spirit of Jesus.

He ascribes this 'gentleness' to Himself: **"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle Praus and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."** Matt. 11:29; 4239 Praus. Yoke up means join with me Jesus says, do that and you will find it easy and good.

He says this in contrast to the loveless Pharisees who burdened people with hard rules and obligations. No I am gentle, I am meek...

Just as Jesus is not like the Pharisees nor is he like the rulers of the land with their harsh punishment and stringent demands. Jesus is a different kind of King “**Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle Praus and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’**” Matt 21 : 5, 4239 Praus Zech. 9:9.

How is it that God could be meek? This is not how people see God.

Jesus - **after that**, (having all authority in the universe) **poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.** Joh 13:5. I often come across those that don’t think God could do that, “how is it that he can wash feet” or don’t like it that he did, they are like Peter, “you’re not washing my feet!”

✚ In Christ infinite majesty and transcendent meekness meet together. These two qualifications are seen together in no other person but Christ. Meekness is a virtue proper only to the creature, it is hardly ever mentioned as a divine attribute in Scripture, at least not in the NT. . . . But Christ, being both God and man, has both infinite majesty and superlative meekness. He is the mighty One full of glory and majesty" Psalm 45:3. He is the One who rides on the heavens and whose eyes are as a flame of fire ... And yet he was the most marvellous instance of meekness, and humble quietness of spirit, that ever was With what meekness He appeared in the ring of soldiers that were condemning and mocking him.

Behold the Servant, suffering and obedient to death. As we read in Isaiah 53: **He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.**” Isa 53:7

✚ Thus is Christ both - a Lion in majesty - and a Lamb in meekness.

Paul says **By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you** 2Co 10:1 4240 prauteros These characteristics taken together present a moral portrait of Christ.

In English, the terms meekness, mildness generally suggest weakness. This word Praütés does nothing of the kind. The meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was ' meek ' because he had the infinite resources of God at His command.

✚ If you come to Jesus expect things to be upside down, - or right side up.

Jesus says to his faithful servants: **he** (speaking of himself) **will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.** Lu 12:37

Meekness is not natural, no-one tends to be meek, weak yes, self-pitying yes, but meek no, it is supernatural. It is a characteristic formed through the presence of Jesus within the person’s life. Meekness is the mark of His people. Which leads us to the next point:

2. "How do I become meek?"

We see it in the third of His Beatitudes, Matt 5:5; 4239 Praeis where Jesus says: **Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.** Blessed really means favoured, favoured are the meek. And by *the meek* he means someone with a different disposition - it is an adornment of the Christian.

The context of this passage in the ‘beatitudes, the ‘blessed attitudes’ in the Sermon on the Mount. The first is the one poor in Spirit, here is a spiritual pauper, one who sees their true poverty before God and grieves and mourns over it. Do you? x2 The result of both seeing your poverty, - and mourning over it - produces meekness, which is a placing of myself in the position to receive, and a hunger for it a hunger for Christ’s righteousness, not having a righteousness of my own.

Therefore this meekness is primarily a state before God. It’s an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. In other words we don’t argue with Him! Are you – am I - now of a gentle or meek disposition?

No-one is naturally like that. No it comes through....

Brokenness x2

Jesus is able to break down strongholds – and none is harder than the human heart, your heart and my heart.

Jesus says: **He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces**, Mt 21:44 & Lu 20:18 Has he done that work in you? has he broken through that wall knocking to the ground the bricks of pride, greed, self, lust, jealousy, hatred, anger, self-pity, selfish ambition, impurity and so on and so on, that high wall of self.

- As bricklayer often say: “that wall cannot be repaired” it needs to be knocked down and rebuilt.
- The demolition ball is at work on Pool farm again. The houses are smashed to pieces, the debris is removed and the ground left clear, flat and smooth. Now the new building work can begin.

So it is in life. Christ is the breaker – and he is the rebuilders. Pride is replaced by meekness. Envy is replaced by love, fickleness replaced by faithfulness etc **When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"** Lu 5:8. Here the expert fisherman is humbled, here the one much pleased with himself cries out **"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"**

Brokenness is the mark, the fruit, one of the evidences that Christ has done a work in you. Sometimes people ask me “what are the evidences of true conversion?” Meekness and humility is a good answer, they must be evident in every true believer.

✚ **Not to have these is to misunderstand Jesus.**

Has He broken you? Has Christ done a work in you? Have there been the tears? **He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces**, but the verse goes on Jesus says **but he on whom it falls will be crushed.** Refuse Him his rightful place in your life – and the day will come when you will be found wanting, your hardness exposed and the Day of Judgment will be upon you. Now is the time to seek him, to hand over, to turn and look up to the one who hung on that cross, the One who took the lowest place to carry and to bear away the dreadful penalty and guilt of sin. Is your guilt dealt with? Can you remember when it was taken away?

3. How does meekness show?

Let me remind you how it fits into the nine fruit - singular, not many fruits like a basket of different ones, but one fruit, a multi-faceted fruit.

However, there are three discernible groups of three in Gal 5:22,23

1. **love, joy, peace** — Here is the essential inward state of someone with the Spirit of Jesus in them. This is what we experience, this is what we enjoy, here are the wonderful blessings of knowing Christ, ... and it is here we like to stay. But the Lord gives us them that they can be displayed to all around and that Christ may have all the Glory.
2. **Patience, kindness, goodness** — Here is character expressed outwardly towards others; Remember we saw that **patience** is not to grin and bear it, no because the resulting action is one of **kindness**. Where does this kindness come from? A good heart, - “Lord give me a good heart!”
3. The last three **faithfulness, gentleness, Self-control** — are who we now are, these are virtues, character from God – and expressed towards God.

It is a spirit in which I accept His dealings and therefore meekness toward evil people means knowing God is permitting the injuries they inflict, trusting in His goodness and control over the situation and that He is using them to purify His elect, and that He will deliver His elect in His time. Is 41:17, Lu 18:1-8

✚ **It a deadness to self**

Gentleness or meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest.. The meek person is not occupied with self at all, they are dead to self. How different it is to the religion of the day - the religion ‘self’, the worship of self, the elevation of self. We could rightly call it ‘selfism’.

We look at self, see all the problems, and it becomes our focus. Of course there are things that need changing, of course, for we are all a mess!

■ **Book by that title instead: ‘Effective biblical counselling’ – Larry Crabb**

Believe the most important thing in life is to fix my problems and off we go. I am not saying we should not desire help and progress with say a fear, or a weakness just as we would seek help with a cut or sore on the skin.

Yet the underlying problem is that it gets me - to focus on me

Paul said: **I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.** Ga 2:20. I died I no longer live but Christ lives in me

✚ **Don't look to yourself, “Look to me” says the Lord “Look to me” for we were made to find out completeness in Him, x2**

I am the problem, that is why there is not light at the end of the psychotherapy tunnel because it does not bring me to Christ, and to His Life and to His power at work in me. I know myself quite well now and I can write a fairly long list of character personality failings. Yet I can also say that in looking to Jesus, and serving Him he had dealt with many of them, especially those that hinder my love and service of Him. Many remain – as I am sure you can see - and they will remain because we are bound up with this fallen world. Isn't Christ's power made perfect in weakness? Isn't it then that He is most glorified. When I am weak I am then I am strong Paul says.

✚ **Yes Meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest ; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.**

I am dead to being provoked, dead to offense, prepared to endure rather than respond in like manner to those who done wrong against me.

Paul says **Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?** 1Co 6:7

Are we not as Christians to take up the blows of others as Christ took on carried bore our burdens and sins. Don't parents do that, doesn't love require it

How at odds it then is to hear professing Christians talk of self and elevate self.

■ Conversation with a Christian self up the other down

Meekness produces peace. Inner Peace. It is proof of true greatness of soul. It comes from a heart too great to be moved by little insults. It looks upon those who offer them with pity. He that is constantly ruffled, that suffers every little insult or injury to throw him off his guard, and to raise a storm of passion within, is at the mercy of every mortal that chooses to disturb him. He is like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

■ Are you prickly? Easily upset? Huff and puff? Go home and grumble?

Meekness is a humility and lowliness of mind, of which Christ is the example and pattern. The Holy Spirit from him transcribes His character into the heart of a regenerate person.

The result: I have mean thoughts of myself and walk humbly with God, acknowledging every favour, being thankful for every blessing, and depending on His grace, and behaving with meekness and humility among all others.

Meekness shows itself in humility

It is closely linked with the word for humility and follows directly from it as in **"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."** Eph. 4:2.

It is only the humble in heart who are meek. **to slander no-one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility towards all men.** Tit 3:2 4240 prautera

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom Jas 3:13 4240 prauteri

1. Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it. ---- *(repeat in your heart each line)*
2. That others may be esteemed more than I,
3. That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease,
4. That others may be chosen and I set aside,
5. That others may be praised and I go unnoticed,
6. That others may be preferred to me in everything,

7. That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should.

Who do know who is meek? Characteristics are best shown in a person, Who do you think of?

■ for when I think of faithfulness I think of Rev Don Wapsom, or Rev Donald Davis

Who are your examples? Both men and women,

And of women there should be **"the unfading beauty of a gentle praeos and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."** 1 Pe 3:4 4239 praeos

✚ The Godly Andrew Murray who often wrote on prayer: The Meek man or woman is content to be and to know nothing except as God gives His light; It is the entire resignation of the will that only wants to be a vessel in which Christ holy Will can move and mold: They come as the soul waits upon God.

There are plenty in the history of the church:

■ Hugh Latimer: Bishop and Martyr - "Ridley and Latimer both about to be burned at the stake, the fire was lit, and we are told they were commanded after this to make ready immediately, and - the account says - they obeyed with all ... meekness - accepting the Lord's will

It is the old choice which still is presented to every soul; the old crisis which reappears in every experience. Caesar, or Christ, that is the question: the vast, attractive, skeptical world, with its pleasures and ambitions and its prodigal promise, or the meek, majestic, and winning figure of Him of Nazareth?

Let us chose meekness

Where our Captain bids us go, 'Tis not ours to murmur no;

Meekness is the beautiful new character of a believer radiating Jesus Christ.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness or meekness (AV) and patience. Col 3:12

END