

Sept. 3, 2006 – Patchogue Church of the Nazarene
Based on message by: Dr. Stanley W. Reeder,
Westminster Church of the Nazarene, Westminster, Colorado

Extreme Makeover: Spirit Edition
GENTLENESS/MEEKNESS
Galatians 5.22

[Click here for notes in bulletin](#)

INTRODUCTION:

Knowing your scripture pays off: An elderly woman had just returned home from church when she was startled by an intruder. As she caught the man in the act robbing her home of its valuables, she became flustered and blurted out the first thing that came to mind: “Stop! Acts 2:38!” (the passage that calls a person to “repent and be baptized”)

The burglar stopped dead in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar, "Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a scripture at you."

"Scripture??" replied the burglar, "She said she had an ax and two 38's!!!"

Knowing your scripture pays off: Here is something from Scripture that I think you will be interested in.

If you want complete satisfaction, joy, and peace (Psalm 22:26; 37:11; Isaiah 29:19).

If you want your life to be lifted up, protected, a masterpiece of beauty, and of great worth (Psalm 76:9; 147:6; 149:4; Isaiah 11:4; Zephaniah 2:3; 1 Peter 3:4).

If you want to be personally guided and taught by the Lord (Psalm 25:9).

If you want to be just like Jesus to this world (Matthew 11:29; 21:5)

If you want to have it all . . . if you want a windfall inheritance . . .
even inherit the world (Matthew 5:5). . .

Then you want to BE MEEK! I want to talk about Meekness and gentleness today:

The business man leaving the church after the sermon that was taken from Jesus' words: *The meek shall inherit the earth*. Said to his wife out in the car: “All I can say is that if the meek are going to inherit the earth, they are going to have to get a lot more aggressive.”

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” Matt. 5:5

This text is revolutionary – Jesus was announcing a take-over – “inherit the earth”

The Meek? Meekness suggests lowliness of mind, humility, lack of self-assertion
How are these going to take over the world?

Once again, God's ways are not our ways. Jesus, Messiah, didn't come as a military hero or a mighty King. He came in gentleness and meekness, but with the authority of Almighty God.

The definition of the Greek *πραυτης* (**prautes**):

1. Kind and Forgiving POWER.
2. Under God's CONTROL.

MEEK, MEEKNESS

1. prautes, denotes "meekness." In its use in Scripture, in which it has a fuller, deeper significance than in nonscriptural Greek writings, it consists not in a person's "outward behavior only"; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men. **Rather it is 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; it is closely linked with the word humility... it is only the humble heart which is also the meek. This meekness, however, being first of all a meekness before God, is also such in the face of men, even of evil men. In Gal 5:23 it is associated with "self-control," *which we will hear more about next week when we conclude this series.* (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

There are only two people in all of Scripture described as meek:

1. MOSES (Numbers 12:3).
2. JESUS (Matthew 21:5; 11:29).

Consider Moses:

*Now the man Moses was very MEEK,
above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.
-Numbers 12:3*

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, he gave us a perfect picture of a meek man:

*See, your king comes to you, GENTLE and riding on a donkey...
-Matthew 21:5*

Think about this picture of meekness: Jesus riding into Jerusalem...

- a) Riding a donkey symbolized PEACE (vs. 5-7).
- b) His PRESENCE caused such a stir; everyone asked "Who is this" (vs.8-11).
- c) PURITY and PRAYER dominated his desire for the temple's cleansing (vs.12-13).
- d) POWER flowed from him as he miraculously healed the blind and lame (vs. 14-15).

Meekness has nothing to do with lacking power... it is simply power under God's control. Jesus, the meek one, calls us to be as he is:

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me;
for I am MEEK and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
-Matthew 11:29*

Reportedly, one St. Patrick's day a young Irish lad gave his girlfriend a large diamond ring as he proposed to her. She discovered at the jeweler's that it was a fake diamond. When she confronted him on it he responded: "That's no fake diamond darlin', that's a SHAM ROCK"

Jesus calls us to be the real thing: Meek, just like our Lord!

FIVE ELEMENTS OF MEEK PEOPLE:

PERSONALITY . . . under God's control (Luke 9:46, 54; Matthew 20:21).

A guy had troubles getting along with others. Finally, he turned for advice to a counselor friend. He asked, "Why doesn't anybody get along with me?" "You have heard of the gift of hospitality?" "Yes" "Well, you have the antidote!" God doesn't change our personality... he just brings it under his control. **Don't ask God to change who you are!**

James and John (known as the sons of thunder) were far from meek before they received God's Spirit: James and John wanted to call down fire on the Samaritans to destroy them because they did not receive Jesus (**Luke 9:54**). On another occasion they wanted to insure that they would be properly enthroned in Jesus' Kingdom . . . one on his right and the other at his left (**Matt. 20:21**). There were arguments amongst them as to who would be the greatest (**Luke 9:46**). These two had powerful personalities.

Once they received the Spirit, God did not change the power of their personalities; **he brought their personality under his kind, forgiving, and powerful control.**

Look briefly at Revelation chapter 1. John now describes himself in Revelation 1:1 as a *servant*. In verse 9 he calls himself *your brother and companion*. He is no longer thinking of himself as the top dog, there is a gentleness and humility that has come over his personality.

Look at Revelation 1:17: ***And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.*** He isn't thinking of himself as the one who should be enthroned alongside Jesus. The Holy Spirit has brought John's powerful personality under God's control.

OUTLOOK . . . under God's control (Philippians 2:4-5).

The meek person sees not just from his/her own view.

***Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.
Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: [Meek and gentle in heart].
-Philippians 2:4-5***

Jesus' outlook was not to be served but to serve. His outlook was our need for a savior. He resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem, knowing – that for our sake – he was going to the cross.

WORDS . . . under God's control (Ephesians 4:29).

*It isn't the things that go in one ear and out the other that hurt,
as much as the things that go in one ear, get all mixed up, then slip out the mouth.*

***Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for
building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.***

-Ephesians 4:29

As you put your words under God's control, his fruit of meekness will begin to grow out of your life. Your tongue can still be powerful, but now it's a power under God's control. Jesus responded with the Word of God when He was tempted in the dessert. One of the hardest things for us to control is what we say! Our words must come under God's control and tempered.

EXPECTATIONS . . . under God's control (Ephesians 4:2).

***I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.
Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.***

-Ephesians 4:2

When our expectations are under God's control the focus comes off our expectations of others - they should do this, or have said that, or have been this way or that way - and it places the focus of our expectations upon us. What am I doing to contribute to this relationship? How can God use me in this situation?

You show me a relationship in trouble, and I'll show you someone who's expectations are all centered upon the other person. "Why don't they start doing this?" "What is wrong with them?"

You show me a person who has a cool relationship with God and I'll show you someone who's expectations sound like: "Why are you letting this happen to me?" "When are you going to save me from this?"

When the Spirit of God works the fruit of meekness, our expectations shift onto one's self: "What can I do to improve this situation?" "What can I learn in the midst of this problem?"

RESPONSES . . . under God's control (Proverbs 16:32; 15:4).

Prov 16:32 - Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.

The meek and gentle person has their responses under God's control.

Meek $\pi\rho\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ people are PROACTIVE, not REACTIVE.

A proactive person is SPIRIT controlled.

A reactive person is OTHERS controlled.

To be proactive means to be prepared ahead of time. It means the Holy Spirit has filled you so that you can respond with kind, forgiving power under God's control no matter what nonsense people throw at you. How are you responding to those that are driving you crazy?

If you are reacting with the kind of treatment that they are giving you--then you are allowing that other person's actions to control you. You are not controlled by God . . . you are controlled by somebody – everybody - else. You are not bearing the Fruit of the Spirit . . . you are loaded down with everybody else's rotten stinking fruit.

Whose fruit are you bearing?

Put together... **P**ersonality,
Outlook,
Words,
Expectations,
Responses

All under God's kind, forgiving control and you get *πραυτης* power!
“*proautes*,” meek power! - Gentle Power!

Whose fruit are you bearing? The same rotten fruit that people are giving you, or the kind, forgiving powerful fruit of the Spirit? The kind of fruit you are bearing tells what kind of tree you are.

The tongue that brings healing is a TREE of life.
-Proverbs 15:4

Shel Silverstein's 1963 modern day classic, “The Giving Tree” provokes thoughts of meekness.

They played hide ‘n’ seek in his younger years. He swung from her branches, climbed all over her, ate her apples, slept in her shade. Such happy, carefree days. The tree loved those years of the boy’s childhood.

But the boy grew and spent less time with the tree. On one occasion the young man returned. “Come on, let’s play,” invited the tree . . . but the lad was only interested in money. “Take my apples and sell them,” said the tree. He did . . . and the tree was happy.

He didn’t return for a long time, but the tree smiled when he passed by one day. “Come, play my friend. Come, play!” But the boy - now full grown - wanted to build a house for himself. “Cut off my branches and build your house,” she offered. He did, and once again the tree was happy.

Years dragged by. The tree missed the boy. Suddenly, she saw him in the distance. “Come on, let’s play!” but the man was older and tired of his world. He wanted to get away from it all. “Cut me down. Take my large trunk and make yourself a boat. Then you can sail away,” said the tree. And that’s exactly what he did . . . and the tree was happy.

Many seasons passed--summers and winters, windy days and lonely nights--the tree waited. Finally, the old man returned . . . too old, too tired to play, to pursue riches, to build houses, or to sail the seas. “I have a pretty good stump left, my friend. Why don’t you just sit down here and rest?” He did . . . and the tree was happy.

How many giving trees have there been in your life? How many have released part of themselves so you might grow, accomplish your goals, become who you are today? Meek, *prautes* - *πραυτης*, people extending kindness, forgiveness and power into your life ...that's what Jesus did for you and what the Holy Spirit is growing in your life as fruit of His presence.

APPLICATION:

Who has been a "Giving Tree" in your life? _____ .
Today, will you put your life totally under God's control so that you yield His fruit, not someone else's? Ask him to place your Personality, Outlook, Words, Expectations, and Responses under his control. Think of how Jesus gave of himself for your sake.
Who will you be a "Giving Tree" to this week? _____ .

WHEN SIS LEVIN'S HUSBAND was kidnapped by Lebanese terrorists, she remained in Lebanon to seek his release. Instead of hostility, demands, and accusations against the people who held Jerry's life in their hands, she responded in gentleness. She cared for the children of that country and brought music to a cultural center established for them. She loved the people. At the time she was not aware of the strength of her tenderness.

While she was caring for these children, Jerry's normal crusts of bread and small pieces of cheese were suddenly replaced with warm food, fruit, and chocolate. His captors brought him extra socks and blankets. They even asked him what he wanted for a Christmas present. He requested and received a Bible.

Finally, he was allowed to escape. It wasn't until Sis and Jerry were together that Jerry knew why these sudden changes had taken place.

Gentleness is a vital necessity in many of our life-relationships with people in whom change comes very slowly, if at all. Often, instead of being gentle with them, we are harsh, abrupt, or defensive. (guilty, guilty, guilty)

Yet we cannot grit our teeth and make ourselves into gentle people. It is truly a *fruit*. Gentleness can only be produced in us by the Spirit of God. Therefore, we simply and humbly admit our need and search the Scriptures for God's perspective on gentleness.

(Fruit of the Spirit Study – Strength of Tenderness – Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mi.)