



# theridgechurch

## LIFEgroup Discussion Questions

August 29, 2010

**Matthew's Gospel - The King and His Kingdom: Meek and Merciful**

### **Read Matthew 5.5, 7**

1. What is the kingdom of heaven (God)?
2. What does Jesus mean by *blessed* according to Sunday's sermon (Enjoy His Grace and Extend His Glory – Matthew 5.16)?
3. What does it mean to be *meek*?

We looked at [Psalm 37.1-11](#) during the sermon. For another feature of the portrait of meekness turn to [James 1.19-21](#):

*This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility (meekness) receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.*

Two people are portrayed here:

1. One who does not listen to what other people have to say, especially if they speak with authority. They are quick to speak and they are quick to become angry if the words of others cross his opinion or call his behavior into question. He is not receptive to the word of God. He filters it through his own desires and receives it selectively, if at all.
2. Another kind of person who is slow to speak, and quick to listen. This person recognizes the limitations of his knowledge and the fallibility of his thinking, and so is eager to listen and learn anything valuable that he can. If he hears something new or contrary to his own view his first reaction is to not be fretful or filled with anger. He is slow to anger. He listens and considers. And when it comes to the Word of God, he receives it with meekness.

Teachability also belongs in the portrait of meekness. This means we don't have a resistant, hostile spirit when we are being taught. It doesn't mean we are gullible. It doesn't even mean that we will never get angry about what some people say. That is why we are to *be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves* in discerning what is meekness and what is pride.

This becomes even clearer in [James 3.13, 17](#), which says:

*Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness (meekness) of wisdom (13).*

*But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy (17).*

Wisdom in the Bible is never a merely intellectual affair. It is a disposition of the heart as well as ideas in the head. Therefore in a sense meekness and wisdom are one thing.

Now, don't be confused about meekness.

It is not this soft characteristic that is defined by two who have a very soft-spoken conversation, sharing opinions that are very different and they never turn to truth. They have this idea that *no one has to accept my opinion, nor do I, anyone else's - live and let live!* This is NOT the spirit of meekness. An attitude like this is very self-protecting and truth effacing. What could be more serviceable to the spirit of pride than the view that neither you nor I have to give an account of our opinions before any standard but our own private selves?

This is a dislocation of humility.

GK Chesterton says this about it:

*What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition. Modesty has settled upon the organ of conviction; where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert – himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt – the Divine Reason. We are on the road to producing a race of men too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table. (Orthodoxy, 31).*

Let's be meek, but not mild (soft)!

#### **4. What does it mean to be merciful?**

We heard from Joda Crow Sunday about her trip to Panama and what mercy looks like. We also heard in the sermon what the opposite of mercy is (Matthew 9.10-13; 23.23-24). Take a look at the following text in Luke 10.25-37. How do you see the following elements of mercy portrayed in this text?

- a. Mercy sees distress.
  - b. Mercy responds internally with a heart of compassion toward a person in distress.
  - c. Mercy responds externally with a practical effort to relieve the distress.
  - d. Mercy happens no matter who the person in distress is (religion, race, enemy, status).
- 5. What action do you need to take in response to this challenge to be meek and merciful by Jesus?**
- a. Are you fretting over something instead of waiting? Choose meekness. Trust God, wait and pray.
  - b. Are you angry at another and wanting them to pay for an offense they made or maybe you are making them pay? Confess that, ask forgiveness and choose meekness giving it over to the One who says, *vengeance is Mine!*
  - c. Is there someone in your sphere of vision right now who is in distress? How can you reach out to them to help relieve their stress? What is holding you back?

**Pray**