

Happy Are the Meek

Sitting at the Feet of Yeshua

In my last post, we began looking at how happy are the mournful. In this post, we will look at how happy are the meek.

"How blessed are the meek! for they will inherit the land." ~ Matthew 5:5

The way the Beatitudes are organized is significant. They don't tell us to apply and practice all eight concise sayings and then we will be "blessed"; they describe eight key factors that characterize a "blessed" person. In summing up the first two beatitudes, we learned **"How Blessed Are Those Who Wait Upon the Lord!"**

Verse 5 teaches us about the bliss of a God-controlled life and directs us to refuse to seek revenge when wronged. It says, "I'm going to remain cool, calm and collected." In this teaching, Yeshua quotes directly from King David in Psalm 37:11, ***"but the meek will inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace."***

In the Greek, the word for "meek" means "a happy medium between two extremes." Meekness is moderation. A meek person can have anger when others are treated unjustly, but not be angry when he is unjustly treated (see Mark 3:1-5 and John 2:13-16). Another meaning for "meek" is "to domesticate a wild animal." A God-controlled life is a life of meekness.

For those of us raised on the ethos of the Wild West and pioneer-spirit, this is a hard lesson for us to accept. Does God really expect us to be doormats letting people trample all over us?

In modern English, the word 'meek' is hardly one of the honorable words of life. Nowadays, it carries with it an idea of spinelessness and subservience. It paints the picture of a submissive and ineffective creature. But it so happens that the word 'meek' in Greek was one of the great ethical words.

Meekness is the happy medium between too much and too little anger. So, the first possible translation of this beatitude is: ***"Blessed is the man who is always angry at the right time, and never angry at the wrong time."***

As I indicated earlier, the Greek word for meek has a second standard usage. It is the regular word for an animal, which has been domesticated, which has been trained to obey commands, which has learned to answer to the reins. It is the word for an animal, which has learned to accept control. So the second possible translation of this beatitude is: ***"Blessed is the man who has every instinct, every impulse, every passion under control. Blessed is the man who is entirely self-controlled."***

Now, the moment we have said that, we need to clarify. It is not so much the blessing of the man who is self-controlled, for such complete self-control is beyond human capacity; rather, it is the blessing of the man who is completely God-controlled for only in His service do we find our perfect freedom, and in doing His will our peace. After all, self-control is a fruit of the Spirit produced by the Ruach HaKodesh.

Meekness also describes humility, the acceptance of the necessity to learn and of the necessity to be forgiven. It describes man's only proper attitude toward God. So then, the third possible translation of this beatitude is: ***"Blessed is the man who has the humility to know his own ignorance, his own weakness, and his own need."***

It is this meekness, Yeshua says, which will inherit the earth. It is the fact of history that it has always been the men with this gift of self-control, the men with their passions, instincts, and impulses under discipline, who have been great. B'midbar (Numbers) says of Moshe, the greatest leader and the greatest law-giver the world

has ever seen: *"Now the man Moshe was very humble, more than all men that were on the face of the earth"* (B'midbar 12:3). Moshe was no "Martin milk toast" character; he was no spineless creature; he could be blazingly angry; but he was a man whose anger was generally on a leash, only to be released when the time was right. And, because he did release it once when the time was not right, he was barred from entering into the Promised Land.

Robert Schuller translates this verse in terms we are more familiar with and understand. *"Blessed are the mighty, the emotionally stable, the teachable, and the kind hearted, for they shall inherit the land."*

Blessed are the mighty? What is real strength? What is real might? Who is stronger – the person who gives into his rage and becomes physically or verbally abusive? Or the person who remains calm, assured of his inner strength?

The powerful are mighty when they have learned to restrain their power. The weak are mighty when they turn their problems into projects, their sorrows into servants, their difficulties into dividends, their obstacles into opportunities, their tragedies into triumphs, their stumbling blocks into stepping-stones. Yes, blessed are those who are strong enough to turn their tragedies into triumphs!

Blessed are the emotionally stable? Who are they? They are those who through discipline have developed a divine poise. Sure, they have their ups and downs like all of us, but they don't allow their down times to distract from their goals. They don't quit when they hit their first snag, their first setback. They hang in there for the entire count, rather than throw in the towel after a low blow.

Blessed are the teachable? The teachable don't suffer from a "know it all" attitude. If their way isn't the best, they'll switch. Blessed are those who know what it is that they do not know, and who are eager to listen to others who are older, wiser and more experienced.

The teachable are humble. Real humility is the awareness that there are others who can help you. Real humility is also the capacity to say, "I was wrong; you were right." Humility isn't thinking less of yourself; it is thing more of God and of His dream for you. To be meek is to do God's work in His way, wherever you are.

Blessed are the kind hearted? Without kindness the mighty are ruthless. Without kindness the emotionally stable are emotionally cold and hard. Without kindness the teachable become arrogant. Happy indeed are the people who are willing to put Yeshua first, others second, and themselves third in line.

It is clear that the Greek word for meek means far more than our English word now means; it is, in fact, clear that there is no one English word which will translate it best, although perhaps the phrase *'gentle and humble'* comes nearest to it. The full translation of this third beatitude must read:

O how blessed is the man who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time, who has every instinct, impulse, and passion under control because he himself is God-controlled, who has the humility to realize his own ignorance and his own weakness, for such a man is a king among men!

Consider the contrast to this teaching: cursed are the cocky, the arrogant, the haughty and boastful for they will have few friends!

In my next post, we will look at how happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.