

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Taught by Bruce Bickel

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Indeed, Heavenly Father, great is your faithfulness. It's fresh every morning. We revel and we rejoice in the fact that we stand in your grace—we don't move in and out of it—we stand in it, and therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Father open our eyes again that we might behold you more clearly for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Continuing our study of the Sermon on the Mount, we are in Matthew 5:5, looking at the third Beatitude, “²And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” May God open our eyes that we might behold wonderful things from his Word.

Meekness is not weakness, as our culture begins to think. Many people imagine, when you say meekness, you're talking about somebody who's wishy-washy, somebody who is a doormat, somebody who gets stepped on, or somebody who is spineless and has no lack of courage. Actually the word in the Greek and the Hebrew concept is really quite the opposite of that as well see, as we study this.

There have been several considerable differences of opinion in the real meaning of this word meekness. Some suggest it as meaning patience. Some would suggest it means a spirit of resignation. Others might say its unselfishness, a spirit of self-abnegation. Others say that the best description of the word is the word gentleness or a spirit of non-retaliation, of bearing afflictions greatly or quietly. Those are some of the various definitions of the word meek.

It must not be confused with being wishy-washy. We're not talking about being wishy-washy at all. A meek person is not necessarily indecisive or limited in their decision making. A meek person is not a person who is pushed around, as many people suppose because of our cultural understanding of this meekness is weakness.

All I would say is this, brothers, as you hear the understanding of the biblical understanding of meekness, if you think it's weakness, try to be meek the next time and see how weak you are, and you realize it is not weakness; it's probably the most courageous, bold thing that I can do is to be meek. That's contrary...you know, you get this idea in the church—little Jesus, meek and mild, come and embrace my little child. You know that little poem like that. You get the idea that Jesus is meek and mild and therefore he's wishy-washy.

But really the word literally means this—power under control. It means you've got all the power of the universe in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ at your disposal. You have all of God's grace, all the resources of an omnipotent, omniscient, a holy, righteous, compassionate, merciful God at your disposal, at this moment in time, and you're living a life according to that power base. You're controlling that power.

A word picture of it that I read years ago was about breaking a horse. You have this magnificent animal that is uncontrollable because he's got all this power that is uncontrollable. The way you control a horse is to put a bit into his mouth. When you put that bit into the horse's mouth, you now can control all that power. When you pull on the reins, it goes to the left. You pull on the reins, it goes to the right. You can actually control all of that power. That's what meekness is. It is power under control. It is not wishy-washiness, or anything of that nature, that you are culture as deemed it to be.

We must keep in mind that this Beatitude that our Lord is teaching us really is an orderly development of God's work of grace in the heart of the believer. In other words, it just doesn't happen overnight. It just doesn't happen. It really becomes, it's realized in the soul. So meekness is something that really happens in the soul of the person, just as well as their outward conduct.

Our culture describes meekness as strictly outward conduct. But really, there's no outward conduct unless something transforms in the soul. That's what meekness does. It really transforms the soul of the believer because it follows the first two Beatitudes, as we take a look.

First, there's this poverty of spirit. As a quick review of that—it's a sense of my inefficiency and my nothingness, my emptiness. You see, meekness starts with that realization. There's nothing I can do to offer God, there's no merit in anything that I do. I'm absolutely empty. That's when I begin to follow Christ and become submitted to his Lordship, because I realize that he has done for me the one thing that I cannot do for myself, and that is create peace with God.

By the way, because some of you asked me if I'm ever teaching a series somewhere to let you know...in September, October, November and December, in the Fall, I'm going to be teaching on Romans 5, 6, 7 and 8 at Mt. Lebanon Presbyterian Church on Wednesday nights. It will be at 7:00. I'll get you more information. It's going to be on Romans 5, 6, 7 and 8.

One of the things I've just been studying is Romans 5:1 says this, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." There's a difference between peace with God and the peace of God. There's no peace of God unless you have peace with God. You see, that's where we have such weak evangelism in our culture today because what do we say, "Are you lonely? Come to Jesus. Do you need a friend? Come to Jesus. Are you discouraged? Come to Jesus." Now yes, Jesus can fulfill all those felt needs, but that's not the point of evangelism. The point of evangelism is this—come and be reconciled to a holy God who right now is at war with you because of your sinfulness. You see, that's poor in spirit. Meekness really starts with this understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit.

Then we go to the next Beatitude, which we looked at. There is mourning over my loss condition—that's mourning over my sin—and sorrow over the awfulness of my sins against God. You see, first of all it starts with...meekness just doesn't happen by itself. Meekness is something that happens that transforms the soul of the person inwardly because you first go through these stages of recognizing my spiritual bankruptcy. I'm a spiritual pauper. I'm a spiritual beggar. That leads me to the mourning over my sin, which has caused the unreconciled relationship. And then all of a sudden, as you submit yourself to the justification that we get through the Lord Jesus Christ, all of a sudden, now we have the power of all the universe behind us, and that's where meekness is the product of the first two Beatitudes. It just doesn't happen in a vacuum. You see, there's a sequence to these. Following in order of the spiritual experience, there's a humbleness of the soul.

Meekness, living according to the power of God, really is an expression of the humbleness of the soul that comes through the process of being poor in spirit, mourning over my sin, and the end result of that is the humbleness of my soul, realizing that I do not have the power to do anything to cause God to be pleased; therefore, I live a life of power under control through the Holy Spirit. Meekness is, really, something happens inside of us to cause us to be meek. The expression of that meekness is the outward response in our conduct as we see.

How does meekness differ from being poor in spirit? Poverty of spirit has to do with one's assessment of yourself with respect to God. That's poor in spirit. We always want to take hand in our salvation. It's our natural, human tendency to think that I want to have a hand in my salvation. I want to have something to

do. Give me something to do so I can earn it, so I can feel good about myself and realize that I am the captain of my own soul and I can control my own ship. That's the human tendency. So we want to have a hand in our salvation.

But when the Scripture teaches us that God will receive nothing from us because of our poor in spirit, that salvation is solely a matter of divine mercy and divine grace, that eternal life is only for those who come empty handed to receive it solely as a matter of charity and a matter of grace, is offensive to the self-righteous mind. The self-righteous mind says, "I want to have something to do with this." And grace, poor in spirit, comes along and says, "You can have nothing to do with it." It's all of grace. It's all of God. It's by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, revealed in the Scripture alone, for the glory of God alone. That's offensive to the self-righteous mind who says, "I'm okay." It's offensive to the person who says, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" You see, the book should be turned around. It's why do good things happen to bad people? You see, we have the idea that, "I'm a good person. Why do bad things happen to me?" The person who is meek understands through this consequence of going through being poor in spirit in my emptiness and mourning over my sin, now I have this humbleness in my soul of realizing that my salvation has nothing to do with me; it's all of God's grace and his...it's a charity that God gives us. We have to deal with that because our human tendency says, "Give me something to do in my salvation."

***Coop:** To your point about a horse, and then your last point, in some cultures, Bruce, when you break a horse, you bite the horse's ear, and through mercy, you [UNCLEAR] bit a chunk of meat out of their ear. Basically, you're turning the power, it's just like when the Lord knocks you down a little bit, it takes a little nip out of your ear or he might give you a little pain, but in some cultures you've got to get peoples' attention before they come to peace and pray.*

I guess that's with the horse you say, "Ear we go." {LAUGHTER}

***Audience Member:** Excellent, Bruce. Excellent.*

***Audience Members:** [UNCLEAR]...[OVERLAPPING]...*

It's called jet lag.

***Audience Member:** Bruce, raw horse ear does not taste very good.*

I'm sure it doesn't. The very mercy that we just went through in understanding our salvation is music to the ears of the person who is poor in spirit. To the person who is self-righteous, it's offensive. But the person who has embraced the poor in spirit understanding of these Beatitudes, mercy is music to our ears. That's why we have in our phrase, "We are M8's" here on Friday morning—mission minded members of a movement motivated by mercy for ministry in the marketplace. Not motivated by merit. Purposely, I don't have the word merit in there anywhere because it doesn't exist. It's mercy is our motivation.

So eternal life is God's free gift. Suits this poverty-stricken condition of understanding my poor in spirit. And grace, which is the sovereign favor of God, is really offensive to the hell deserving because they think they need to have something to do with it.

So such a one, as poor in spirit begins to realize that that condition causes me to mourn over my sin. As I mourn over my sin, I develop this humbleness of spirit in my heart that leads me to become a person of meekness who is living according to power under control.

Meekness has to do with one's relationship with God and with others. One has to do with our position and the other one has to do with our relationship to God and to others.

It's interesting, I did some work in the original Greek understanding of some non-biblical literature. Aristotle said that meekness is the balance between bad temper and spineless incompetence. Now that's the great wisdom of the world. Bad temper and spineless incompetence. Between extreme anger and indifference. That doesn't give us much hope, does it? But you see, in the use of Scripture, it really says it consists not in a person's outward behavior only, but rather it's in the inward grace of the soul and the exercises of its first and, or extremely chiefly toward God in viewing ourself to God and realizing who is the source of power in our life.

While humility of soul is knowing, is bowing to God's way of salvation, it's the primary application of this very first Beatitude. It can't be limited to that because meekness is also an intrinsic aspect of the fruit of the Spirit that is wrought and produced by the Holy Spirit in the Christian's soul (Galatians 5). You'll see that that's one of the fruits of the Spirit is meekness, or gentleness.

It's this quality of the spirit that's found in those who've been schooled to admit to the mildness of by discipline and suffering and brought to the point of realizing this. That in all things God works for good for me. That's part of being meekness.

You know, there's a real difference between finding out God's will and being found in it. We should spend more time wondering if I'm in his will rather than trying to find it out. When a situation occurs, some circumstance that we can't figure out, we don't understand why it's going on, our tendency is, "I want to find out God's will." I think the better question is, "In the midst of this circumstance, am I in his will?" You see, we are found in his will; we don't find it out. As we've talked over recent months, Deuteronomy 28:29 says the secret things belong to God. There's an awful lot of things that you and I will never discover that we waste a lot of time trying to figure out because we're trying to figure out God's will. My point is this. Spend more time trying to figure am I in his will.

Just let me give you one illustration in this whole area of meekness. Meekness is this disposition of the soul that says I'm living a life of power under control, and I realize that in all things, God works in my life; therefore, if I'm in a bad situation, I want to be found in his will. What should my response be? I've given you the six things that reveal God's will. One of them is this. In all things give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Now take that same set of circumstances. You can't figure it out. It's very, very difficult. It's painful. It's harmful. It's hurtful. All the things that you want to conjecture about it. All of a sudden, we start saying, "Why? I need to find out what is God teaching me," rather than asking that say, "What is my response to this? Is it a meek response in understanding that God is going to use this for his glory and my good; therefore, my response to be found in his will is to say thanks." Now you know you're in his will. See, that's meekness. It's living according to the power of God. It's realizing that I don't need to know the why-for's of all this circumstances. I want to be found in his will, and I know this—the Scripture makes it very clear that his will for me, and for you, is this: in all things give thanks for that's God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

We need to spend more time finding out am I in his will in a difficult situation, and that's power under control. Because try to do that. Is that weakness? Absolutely not. You've got to be strong to do that. You've got to be bold. You have to have courage to do that. You see, that's the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. That's the difference of trying to find out his will and being found in his will.

We spent some time talking about this in one of my sessions in Turkey. It was like a light went on with

some of these itinerant apologists, who said, “I’ve never looked at that way. I’ve always tried to find out what his will is.” Quit looking to find it out; make sure you’re found in it. When you’re found in it, you’re going to find it out.

So let’s spend more time, brothers, just asking ourselves am I really in his will in the midst of this circumstance, in this situation that I don’t control. That’s power under control. That’s meekness. I’ll give you some examples of that in the Scripture in a few moments.

On the other hand, true meekness is not weakness at all. I’m not suggesting that. A good example of this...turn to Acts 16:35-37. Here’s an illustration. The apostles had been wrongfully beaten, and they were sent into prison. One day, the magistrate came in and gave the orders for their release. But Paul said to their agents, “Let them come themselves and fetch us out.” Now God-given meekness can stand up for God-given rights. They were Roman citizens.

Take a look at Acts 16:35-37, “³⁵But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, ‘Let those men go.’ ³⁶And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, ‘The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.’ ³⁷But Paul said to them, ‘They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.’ ³⁸The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. ³⁹So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.”

You see, there’s a spirit of meekness there. It’s the understanding of this. Essentially, it’s this. God-given meekness can stand up for God-given rights. They had rights as citizens that had been violated, but they didn’t expose themselves by being angry about that. They had this power under control that said, “Look, if they’re going to do that secretly, have them come down and let us go out ourselves.” Who were they trusting? They understood that God was behind them even though they could not figure it out. The issue was not figuring it out. The issue was, “Are we in his will?” That’s meekness. Meekness is always this. It’s the idea that I want to be found in his will because that’s where the power is. It’s not trying to find it out. It’s finding out am I in it because that’s where the power is. Meekness is a controlled desire to see someone else’s interests advance ahead of one’s own.

Let me give you a couple of Scriptures.

Ted: Bruce, in following what you just said, I’m very struck by verse 40, where it says after they had come out of prison and visited Lydia, and when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

Amen.

Ted: So you would be thinking well, you know, the brothers ought to encourage Paul. I mean, he’d just been in prison, but instead, that’s not part of...

It’s the other way around.

Ted: It’s the other way around.

You see, meekness is the controlled desire—which you just saw here, as Ted is pointing out—to see someone else’s interests advance ahead of their own. That’s exactly what they did. They had been violated in prison. They came out and they were more concerned about the interests of the brothers than

their own rights being violated. That's meekness. Try to do that next time. Try to do that and see how weak you are. See what strength you need to have to do that. Meekness is not weakness. It's not being a doormat.

Let me give you a couple of illustrations. Let's go to Matthew 26, down around, let's start at verse 47, I think. This is the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. I want you to see his meekness. One of the best illustrations of meekness you can find. And this is not Jesus being meek and mild. This is Jesus being meek and strong. ⁴⁷“While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.’ ⁴⁹And he came up to Jesus at once and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ And he kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, do what you came to do.’ Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.”

Now we know from John 18 that was Peter. Now can you imagine this? Here's Peter's response, “I need to defend God,” and he draws his sword, “It's my role. I'm going to defend God.”

Now let's see what Jesus does, ⁵²“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” That's meekness.

Now let me explain that. You have the same situation. You find one guy is trying to figure it out—Peter. One guy wants to be found in it—Jesus. What were they doing prior to this event? Peter was asleep. Jesus was praying. You know what prayer is? Preparation for meekness. That's what prayer does. Preparation for meekness. Jesus responded out of preparation and Peter responded out of trepidation. What is fear? Fear is when you've lost control of the situation and you want to take control over it yourself. So what does he do? “I'm going to defend God by drawing my sword and cut the guy's ear off.” He responded out of the fact that he had lost control of the environment because of fear. Trepidation. That's because he was asleep. You see, to understand the value of this, you understand the situation before it. Jesus had responded by prayer. He responded by preparation, which is what prayer does. Prayer is preparation for meekness.

Now notice, the key phrase in my mind in that whole situation is down in verse 54—the word “but.” “But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled?” Now Jesus certainly understood the environment he was in, or he would not have said to Judas, “Friend, do what you came to do.” He understood that. But he also understood this—this is what the Scripture had foretold what would happen. Meekness is this—is always choosing the alternative to let the Scriptures be fulfilled. That's meekness. Try to do that the next time you're in a situation where somebody comes up to you and wants to take you captive. This is not wishy-washiness guys. This is not being mamby-pamby. You're not being a doormat. You're power under control. But meekness always does this—I choose the alternative that glorifies God more than the interest of myself. That's meekness. That's what Jesus did. That's how the Scriptures are fulfilled.

Now notice, he says, “Don't you know, guys? Look, I can call upon my Father and he will call down 12 legions of angels?” Now as I understand, a Roman legion was made up of 12,000 troops—6,000 infantry men and 6,000 support troops. For every person who went into battle, they had an attendant. It's one of the great ratios of military history. A 1 to 1 somebody taking care of all the combatants. Jesus says, “Don't you guys understand this? I have the power, the power of the universe at my disposal, and I can call down 144,000 angels. Odds are going to be in my favor then. Don't you know I can do that? But I'm not going to do that because how would the Scriptures be fulfilled. How would God be glorified if I

did that? If I exercised the available power that I have, how would he be glorified if I choose to do that in my humanity? I'm not going to do that because God's interests are better than my interests. I want his glory to be premier and predominant; therefore, I'm not going to exercise that power, because I want the Scriptures to be fulfilled." That's meekness.

Guys, that is not weakness. Do you understand that? That is not weakness. Try to do that the next time somebody offends you. Try to do that the next time somebody affronts you, somebody discourages you, treats you like a twit, whatever they do. Try to do that sometimes and say, "I'm going to defend my rights." No, it's not a matter about rights. It's about responsibilities. Prayer is the preparation for meekness, so that we can have a response that's going to let the Scriptures be fulfilled and God be glorified.

So we read on, "⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. ⁵⁶But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.'" That's the understanding of meekness that says this, "I don't know what's going on, but I do know this—it is for God's glory and my good. Lord, give me the right response so that I will be found in your will in the situation that I can't control." That's power under control. Who has the power in this situation? It is not the circumstance; it's the one in it who has the grace of God. That's why you have to understand blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn, and blessed are those who are meek, because meekness is the disposition of the soul that's been changed by the understanding of the grace and power of God that now is resident in your life, that is your source of power, and you exercise that in a way that calls attention to God's glory. This is not weakness, guys.

Let me give you another illustration. Let's go to Genesis 50. I'll give you an Old Testament illustration. Genesis 50:15, "When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead..." The situation is that Joseph has now become the number two man in Egypt. He's responsible for the disposition of all the grain and all the food through this drought. His brothers, who had attempted to kill him when he was a young man, are now coming at his feet and trying to get their food allotment so they can survive with their family. That's what's going on. We pick it up at verse 15, "'When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'It may be that Joseph will hate us,' well no kidding; duh, 'and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.' You see, they understood rather well that they deserved something. They understood that, because we premeditatedly tried to kill him. 'What if he gets mad? What if he hates us? What if he desires to pay us back?'"

"¹⁶So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this command before he died.'" Here you see great human manipulation. "'Say to Joseph 'Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you. And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him.'" You see, they tried to appeal to his sense of the death of his father.

Verse 18, "His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, 'Behold, we are your servants.'"
¹⁹But Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear,' now notice this question, "for am I in the place of God?" He's basically saying, "I don't control this situation. It's not my role. I'm not God. My history is God's story of my life is not my own. God has been orchestrating my life even to the event of years ago when I was a child and you tried to kill me. You see, that's God's role as running my life. I'm not positioning myself to be God."
²⁰As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." Notice whose primary interest was he concerned about? Same as we saw with the apostles. Theirs and not his own.

Now guys, look, his brothers had attempted premeditated murder, and he says, “What you meant for evil, God meant for good.” That’s being found in his will. That’s meekness. That’s understanding this—that whatever happens to me externally is for God’s glory and my good; therefore, I’m going to resist my human temptation to defend myself and my rights and realizing that the one who will defend my rights will be God himself. That’s the power of meekness.

Brothers, if we would just respond like this to the normal situations of life...you know, the world’s going to say, “Let’s send you to Andrew Carnegie and get a positive power of thinking course to help you understand how to become more self-assertive.” You see, in the Christian life, it’s exactly the opposite. We need to become more God assertive, not self-assertive. That’s meekness. Meekness is not weakness. It’s living according to the power of God.

When you read Philippians 2, we see that Jesus is the power of meekness. Let’s go to Philippians 2:1-11. Am I teaching this to the point of understanding? I’m really kind of worn out and exhausted, so I hope that the energy is there because I sure don’t feel much like it, but praise the Lord anyway. Philippians 2, Jesus is the picture of meekness. Here’s the life controlled by the power of God through meekness. “¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” Meekness. You see, meekness says I’m always looking out for the well-being of the others against my own interests.

“⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Meekness—looking out for the interests of others. “⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.” Think correctly. Act correctly. Feel correctly. “⁶Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.” Meekness. “⁷But emptied himself (poor in spirit), by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Living according to the power of God. “⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Meekness. God exalted him because of his meekness.

What was one of Jesus’ greatest human qualities? It was the spiritual ingredient of being meek. He demonstrated that in his human incarnation. What a marvelous example for us that’s contrary to everything that we learn about being self-assertive. You and I can be self-assertive, but we’re self-assertive in our meekness, not self-assertive in defense of ourselves.

Again, I’m not saying that we don’t defend ourselves. That’s not what I’m saying. All I’m saying is understand this—that God will defend you far better than you can defend yourself. Remember that little word, “but”? How would the Scripture be fulfilled? It means this. In summary, meekness means you always have an alternative; another choice to exercise A or B, and to be found in God’s will, not finding it out, to be found in his will, you choose exercise B because you understand this—that is the one that’s going to allow the Scripture to be fulfilled and God to be glorified. You have an alternative in meekness. “Don’t you think that I can call down 144,000 angels? Don’t you know that...” That’s my alternative. That’s one option I have. “But I’m not going to do it. I’m going to do it because I want the Scripture to be fulfilled.”

May God give us the grace in our prayer life—come up and get one of these books if you’d like one. Prayer prepares us to be meek because it allows us to live according to the power of God. And may it be so that in our lives, the Scriptures may be evidenced and put on display by our meekness.

Coop: *Bruce, did you find the immersion in another culture illuminating and inspiring to your own faith life [UNCLEAR]?*

I'll tell you about that next week. I went through the city of Ephesus, which is being uncovered. I'll tell you about that, and I'll bring in some pictures. I had some tremendous spiritual awareness as I was walking the streets of Ephesus, and verses of Scripture from Ephesians came to my mind. I read the whole book of Ephesians before I went on site because I wanted my mind to be fresh as I came across the temple of Nike. What was Paul up against and what were the elders up against? I came into synagogue building that was there and the temples. What were they up against? I wanted to be fresh in my mind. I did have some wonderful experiences, which I'll tell you about next week, when we went through city of Ephesus.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for these powerful illustrations in the life of Joseph and the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, help us realize that meekness always means we have a choice, but may we live according to the power of your grace, the power of your charity in saving us, the power of your mercy. May we always have a choice to choose that which will glorify you by having the Scriptures be fulfilled. We know this, Lord that the sufficiency of Scripture and the sufficiency of Christ are synonyms. One is supportive of the other, and the other makes the other a reality. May we commit ourselves to the sufficiency of Scripture because we are trusting ourselves to the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have peace with God. Amen!