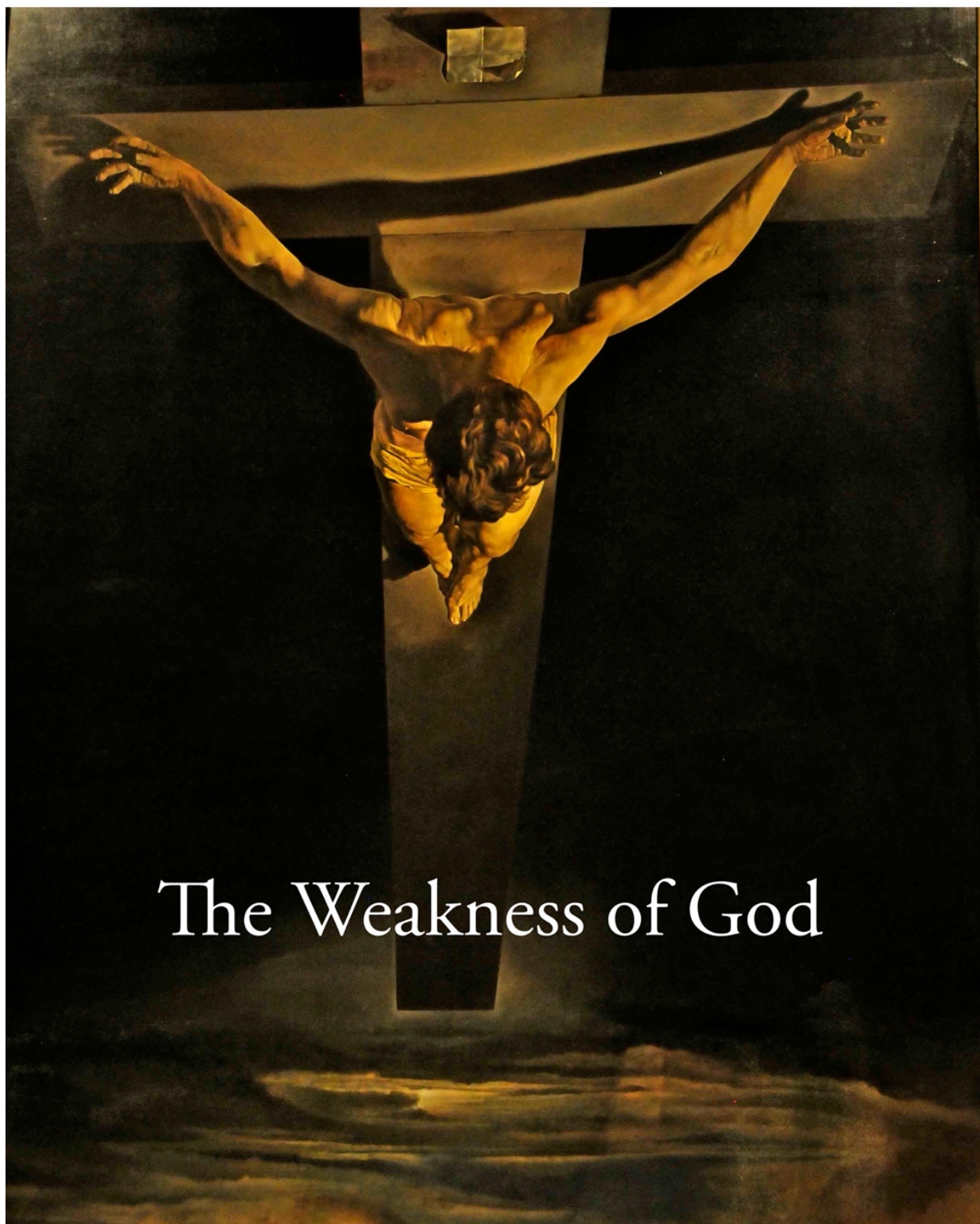




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"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

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A Quote from Samuel A. Meier ...

There are two essential components for this quality (meekness) to come into play in the Bible: a conflict in which an individual is unable to control or influence circumstances. Typical human responses in such circumstances include frustration, bitterness, or anger, but the one who is guided by God's spirit accepts God's ability to direct events (Gal 5:23; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 1 Tim 6:11; Titus 3:2; James 1:21; 3:13). Meekness is therefore an active and deliberate acceptance of undesirable circumstances that are wisely seen by the individual as only part of a larger picture. Meekness is not a resignation to fate, a passive and reluctant submission to events, for there is little virtue in such a response. Nevertheless, since the two responses resignation and meekness are externally often indistinguishable, it is easy to see how what was once perceived as a virtue has become a defect in contemporary society. The patient and hopeful endurance of undesirable circumstances identifies the person as externally vulnerable and weak but inwardly resilient and strong. Meekness does not identify the weak but more precisely the strong who have been placed in a position of weakness where they persevere without giving up.”

(Samuel A. Meier is associate professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Ohio State University.)

A Captivating Phrase

“... **the weakness of God** is stronger than mankind”.

1 Corinthians 1:25b

This is, indeed, a captivating phrase penned by Paul - “**the weakness of God**”. The Greek word translated “weakness” is : *asthenes*¹, meaning "without strength". There is a wonderful mystery in the many passages in which Paul speaks of "weakness": It is OUR weakness which we give to God, He takes it and fills it (perfects, completes, finishes it) with His strength.

This is *God's methodology* "from before the foundation of the world" - in “the Lamb that was slain”², in His choice of Israel³ and Gideon's company⁴, in the Cross of Christ - "the wisdom and power of God"⁵, and now in the calling of the Church to make known (demonstrate) this wisdom to the powers and principalities⁶.

¹ Strong's # 772

² Revelation 13:8; 1 Peter 1:20

³ Deuteronomy 7:7

⁴ Judges 7

⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:18, 24, 30

⁶ Ephesians 3:9-10

God – and His Power – Dwells in Our Weakness

⁹“And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for **power is perfected in weakness.**” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about **my weaknesses**, so that **the power of Christ may dwell in me.** ¹⁰Therefore I delight **in weaknesses, in insults, in distresses, in persecutions, in difficulties, on behalf of Christ;** for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

The Church is Supposed to Be “Weak” (Meek) - the Opposite of the Powers and Principalities

²³“But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** ²⁵For the foolishness of God is wiser than mankind, and **the weakness of God is stronger than mankind.** ²⁶For consider **your calling, brothers and sisters**, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and **God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,** ²⁸and the insignificant things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no human may boast before God. ³⁰But it is due to Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us **wisdom**

from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹ so that, just as it is written: “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 1:23-31

The “Great-er Commission” of the Church

⁹“And to enlighten all people as to what the plan of the mystery is which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things;¹⁰ so that the multifaceted wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 3:9-10

“The people whom I have formed for Myself will make known My attributes”

The word I have to share is this:

In both the Old and New Testaments, scripture speaks of **God forming a people to make known His attributes.**⁷ I particularly like the added detail provided in the Septuagint translation of Isaiah 43:21⁸: “My people whom I have formed⁹ to show forth¹⁰ My attributes.”¹¹ And similarly in 1 Peter 2:9¹²: “ ... a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession¹³, to show forth the attributes of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”. This is one way in which the Holy Spirit has communicated to us “the whole counsel of God”. Acts 20:27

⁷ Isaiah 43:21 *AMP*. See also: Psalm 102:18, Luke 1:17, and 1 Peter 2:9.

⁸ “My people [G2992](#) [G1473](#) whom [G3739](#) I procured; [G4046](#) the ones [G3588](#) [²my virtues [G703](#) [G1473](#) ¹to describe]. [G1334](#) (*Apostolic Bible Polyglot*)

⁹ Greek: *peripoieomai*, Strong’s # 4046: purchased, procured, formed.

¹⁰ Greek: *diegeomai*, Strong’s # 1334: describe, declare, make known, show forth.

¹¹ Greek: *arete*, Strong’s # 703: virtues, excellencies, praise.

¹² But you [G1473](#) [G1161](#) [²race [G1085](#) ¹are a chosen], [G1588](#) a royal [G934](#) priesthood, [G2406](#) [²nation [G1484](#) ¹a holy], [G39](#) a people [G2992](#) for [G1519](#) procurement; [G4047](#) so that [G3704](#) [²the [G3588](#) ³virtues [G703](#) ¹you should publish] [G1804](#) of the one [G3588](#) [²from out of [G1537](#) ³darkness [G4655](#) ¹calling you] [G1473](#) [G2564](#) into [G1519](#) [G3588](#) his wonderful [G2298](#) [G1473](#) light. [G5457](#) (*Apostolic Bible Polyglot*)

¹³ *NASB*

A specific aspect identifying this people is that they are a people who **individually and collectively embrace their weaknesses**. In the apostle Paul's words, they "boast in their weaknesses", for they know that "**when they are weak, the power of Christ indwells their weaknesses, wherein His strength is made complete**". 2 Corinthians 12:9 In this 2nd epistle to the Corinthians, as well as in his other epistles¹⁴, Paul mentions some examples of what he meant by "weaknesses": "in infirmities¹⁵, in insults, in distresses, in persecutions, in difficulties". (2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 6:3-10; 11:23-27 & 12:10)

The "peculiar people"¹⁶ God is forming for Himself are a people who embrace "weakness" as a quintessential aspect of *their calling*. (1 Peter 2:21). It is, in fact, *a calling* which God intends for the Church – an even "great-er commission", if you will – and that is to make known (show forth, demonstrate) to the powers and principalities the wisdom and power of God residing in the **Cross of Christ**. (Ephesians 3:10-11)

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:30-32; Galatians 4:13-15; 5:11; 6:7; 2 Timothy 3:10-11. Also see: <http://www.biblecharts.org/apostlepaulcharts/15%20-%20The%20Sufferings%20of%20Paul.pdf>

¹⁵ Physical illness. Galatians 4:13-15. https://www.thenarrowpath.com/audio/verse-by-verse/2nd-corinthians/09_0000_2nd_Corinthians_12-13.mp3

¹⁶ 1 Peter 2:9 KJV

There is much to say about this people and their *calling* which I have discussed in another article.¹⁷ However, this present article will deal with a pre-requisite of being one of their number – and that is a quality called “**Meekness**”.

¹⁷ “*The Cross & The Powers of Darkness*”: [Read](#). [Listen](#).



The Pre-requisite: “Meekness”

“Blessed are the **meek**, for they will inherit the earth.”

Matthew 5:5¹⁸

The prerequisite to this inheritance is “**meekness**”. Jesus referred to Himself as “meek” (Matthew 11: 29); and as “the Church which is His Body”¹⁹, we are to be like the Head of the Body²⁰ – specifically, meek.

Meekness is an essential aspect of the divine nature of which we are partakers.²¹ Thus, through imparting to us the divine nature, God’s purpose is to conform us to the image of His Son²², who is “**gentle and lowly²³ in heart**”. (Matthew 11:29) The Greek text is translated: “gentle”, or, alternatively, “meek”. I prefer to use the word “meek”, because “gentle” carries certain misrepresentative connotations²⁴; and because “meek” begs of us a definition.²⁵

¹⁸ Cf. Proverbs 22:4

¹⁹ Ephesians 1:23

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:12

²¹ 2 Peter 1:4

²² Romans 8:29

²³ Greek: *tapeinos* - humiliated, cast down, lowly

²⁴ Jesus’ treatment of the temple moneychangers (John 2) and the Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23) do not fit the word “gentle”.

²⁵ Please see “Addendum” regarding my use of the English word, “meekness” rather than “gentle” in these passages.

What is “Meekness”?

The Greek word translated “gentle” or “meek” is *praos*²⁶. According the Greek scholar, W.E. Vine, it represents a virtue of heart and mind, **expressed chiefly towards God**. However, scripture does exhort us to put on a “spirit” (attitude) of meekness *towards other people as well*. (1 Corinthians 4: 21; Galatians 6: 1; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3: 12; 2 Timothy 2: 25; Titus 3: 2; 1 Peter 3:15) I’d like to suggest this useful, but not all-inclusive, distinction between the use of the words “gentle” and “meek”: The *attitude towards other people* is usually expressed as “**gentleness**” - *a virtue of outward behavior and actions*. And when it is formed inwardly by the Holy Spirit, “**meekness**” is outwardly expressed as the lack of self-assertiveness, pride and arrogance expressed toward others.

Meekness is closely linked with “**humility**” (Ephesians 4: 2, Colossians 3:12), as well as “**self-control**”. (Galatians 5: 23)

Meekness is acceptance of God’s will and ways in one’s life without resistance. This “*acceptance without resistance*” includes

²⁶ Strong’s # 4235

accepting God's use of other people, circumstances, and situations in one's life for His purposes. His ultimate purpose, and therefore what is behind His working in every circumstance, and situation, is that we be "conformed to the image of His Son". (Romans 8:28-29) So meekness is accepting anything God allows in our life, recognizing it as an opportunity to be conformed to the image of Christ, and surrendering to and co-operating with the work of then Holy Spirit to that end in the given circumstance or situation. Meekness is *not* relating to God in a *self-assertive* way. Meekness is being **receptive** rather than assertive. James exhorted us: "... *in humility* **receive** the word implanted, which is able to save your souls." (James 1: 21)

Meekness is *not testing* God's ways, *nor complaining, nor murmuring* about God's ways. There are many passages in the scriptures admonishing us **not** to *resist* God's ways. (e.g. Exodus 17: 2 & 7; Numbers 21: 4-7; Deuteronomy 6:16; Luke 4:12; 1 Corinthians 10: 9-10)

Images of Meekness

I think, meekness itself we cannot see. What we can see is outward behavior – even a lifestyle – under the influence of meekness – meekness personified, if you will - through images we find in nature and Scripture:

“Humble yourself ... change and become like a child ...”

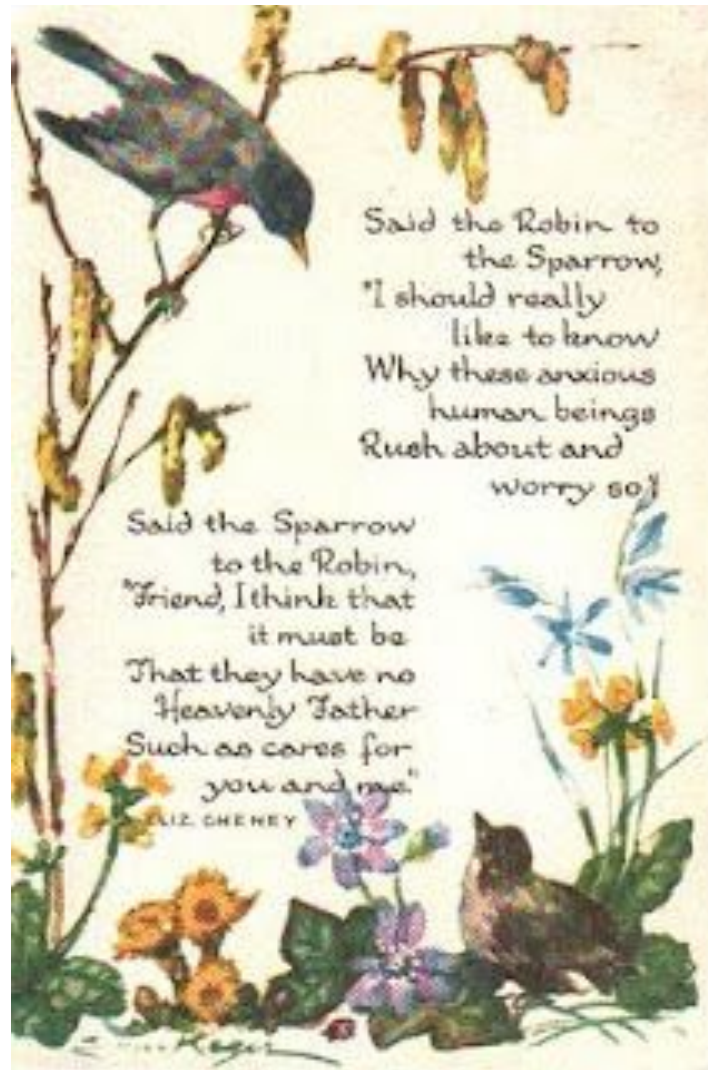
Matthew 18:2-4

Meekness is relating to God in a **simple, childlike** way (rather than in a *proud, arrogant, difficult* way). Psalm 131 presents a perfect picture of simple, childlike meekness:

“LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes arrogant; nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me.

²I have certainly soothed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child resting upon his mother, my soul within me is like a weaned child.”

I believe this poem written in 1859 by Elizabeth Cheney entitled, “*Overheard in An Orchard*” also presents an image of meekness.



Ms. Cheney was obviously inspired by the lifestyle Jesus advocated in His Sermon on the Mount – a lifestyle anchored in the meekness of childlike trust in our heavenly Father:

“ ... Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”
Matthew 6:32b

The apostle Peter presented a similar image of meekness:

“Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God [set aside self-righteous pride], so that He may exalt you [to a place of honor in His service] at the appropriate time, casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, **for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully].”**

1 Peter 5:6-7 AMP

Resting in the Power of God

“The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.” Matthew 11:12²⁷

“The meek will inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5

Violent Men “Posses” by Force - Children “Inherit”

“Meekness” is **not** weakness; but it *embraces* “weakness”.

Meekness embraces weakness **in the context of having faith in God**. *In that context*, human weakness finds the strength and power of God. Weakness is having no resources in oneself upon which to draw. But meekness draws upon limitless resources in God.²⁸ Therefore, meekness is ultimately power. But the “power” then, is **NOT** to “*possess* the earth” in one’s own strength - as do

²⁷ For my explanation of this verse... [Seeing the Kingdom Through the Cross](#), pp.12-15.

²⁸ This faith includes the works of faithfulness and obedience on our part. James 2:14-26 (also Hebrews 11). Therefore, one could never attribute compromise or failure to obey, to ‘meekness’. King Saul was an example of this type of compromise. 1 Samuel 15: 3 and 18-24. Under pressure of people, circumstances and situations, unfaithfulness and disobedience are moral *weakness*. Whereas *meekness* is the inner strength to be obedient and remain faithful to God even in the face of pressure from people, circumstances and situations.

“violent men” - but instead, to “**inherit** the land” through “childlike” faith in God’s strength to fulfill His promise.²⁹

²⁵ “At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to infants.... ²⁸ “Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and **I will give you rest.** ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **you will find rest** for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light.”

Matthew 11:25, 28-30

Meekness is the intentionality to *find* and *enter into* “**His rest**” in every circumstance and situation. **Rest** is the reward of faith and obedience. (Hebrews 3:18-19; 4:3-8) It is choosing to look to God and trust God in a given circumstance or situation, and intentionally *rest* from employing one’s own works in response to that circumstance or situation. (Hebrews 4:9-11) It is choosing to **let God work** rather than you work in a given circumstance or situation. In this sense, “**rest**” can be understood as *a place* – a **place in the Spirit** – rather than an actual ceasing of all activity.

²⁹ In Matthew 5:5, Jesus is quoting Psalm 37:11, where it says, “The Meek will inherit the LAND.” “The land” speaks of the victories of inheriting God’s promises in this life. (Hebrews 13: 7; 6:12). “The earth” refers to the “new heaven and new earth”. (2 Peter 3: 7, 10-13)

We can choose the “easy yoke” and “light burden” Jesus offers. Or we can choose to carry our own “hard-yoke” and “heavy burden” by being *self-assertive, testing, questioning, complaining, murmuring about God’s ways, being proud, arrogant, difficult and stipulative* (in other words, specifying certain conditions and demands as prerequisites). Meekness is always being open to “**learn from Jesus**”. His “easy yoke” and “light burden” are the fruit of *simplicity, childlike faith and hope, receptivity, and rest*.

“Learn from Me”

“**Come to Me**, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and **learn from Me**, for **I am gentle and humble in heart**, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light.”

Matthew 11:25, 28-30

Of course, Jesus Himself remains the Perfect Pattern for us regarding meekness. Thus, as the Pattern Son, He invites us to “**Learn from Me.**” How do we *learn* from Jesus? I believe the apostle has given us a wonderful key to spiritual change and transformation:

“... beholding the glory of the Lord (‘in the face of Jesus Christ’³⁰), (we) are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:18-19 *ESV*

It should always be our desire and goal to “see Jesus”³¹ in every circumstance or situation, because receiving a revelation of Jesus has the spiritual power to transform us into His image - “from one

³⁰ 2 Corinthians 4:6

³¹ John 12:21

degree of glory to another”. It’s a process; and it’s the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit.

I’ve chosen just three aspects of “the image of His Son”³² from which we can “behold” and “learn” the meekness and “the weakness of God”: *A Suffering Servant*, *A Disciplined Son*, and *A Man of Sorrows*.

A Suffering Servant

The Weakness of Meekness and Suffering

“Looking away from all that will distract us and **focusing our eyes on Jesus**, who is **the Author and Perfecter of faith** [the first incentive for our belief and the One who brings our faith to maturity], who for the joy [of accomplishing the goal] set before Him **endured the cross**.” Hebrews 12:2-3 AMP

When “looking to Jesus the Author and Perfecter of faith”, it is essential to understand that the Christ of God, who is our Pattern, is a **Crucified Christ**.³³ He modeled **suffering** for us. It may seem

³² Romans 8:29

³³ This is not to say that we worship a Christ who is still on the cross, for He conquered death, was resurrected and ascended, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

a bit strange to list **suffering** right at the top of the many aspects of Christ's Pattern; but, if our model is not the **Crucified Christ**, we are involved with something other than biblical Christianity. The apostle Paul warned that there is "another Jesus", a "different spirit", and a "different gospel".³⁴ A "different gospel" introduces a different kind of "christianity". A "different spirit" births a different kind of "christian". "Another Jesus" presents a different image to be conformed to. The Christ of God, who was prophesied³⁵, but stumbled over³⁶, was a **Crucified Christ**.

The scope of this article cannot include a full treatment of **The Way of the Cross** or **A Theology of Suffering**, but I have written of these things in detail in other articles.³⁷ **A Theology of Suffering** and **The Way of the Cross** are matters which are sorely absent in contemporary Christianity, and need to be restored in order to rectify our partial image of Christ and inaccurate concepts of Christianity.

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 11:4

³⁵ Isaiah 53:1-12

³⁶ Isaiah 8:14; Cf. Romans 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:8.

³⁷ [*The Way of the Cross*](#), [*Seeing the Kingdom Through the Cross*](#), [*The God-Centered Life*](#), and [*The Cross & the Powers of Darkness*](#).

“To be my disciple, you must **deny yourself** and take up your **cross** daily and **follow Me**.”³⁸

Here, Jesus gives us His definition of “His cross” and “your cross”: namely, **self-denial - for the glory of God**³⁹. He also specifies that a primary aspect of His image is *self-denying love*. In past generations, much was written on *self-denial* and *the surrendered life*. Self-denial and surrender to the will of God are aspects of meekness. But, again, these topics are conspicuously absent in contemporary Christianity.⁴⁰ In any case, Jesus made it clear that this is what it means to “follow Him” – that is, to be His disciple and follow His Pattern in meekness.

³⁸ Luke 9:23; Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Cf. Luke 14:27; Matthew 10:38; Hebrews 13:13.

³⁹ Cf. John 17:1-5. It must be made clear that Christ’s self-denial was ONLY for the glory of God. There were times when Jesus did not allow Himself to be subjected to suffering because it was not in the will of God. Certainly, Satan is not to receive glory in our suffering. And, most importantly, we are not to fall into the insidious trap of glorifying self through self-denial. Viz. “I am super-spiritual because I’ve suffered so much for Jesus, et. al.”

⁴⁰ Recommended Reading: My articles – [Brokenness](#); [Transformation of Self](#); [The Way of the Cross](#).

I can fully recommend J. Sidlow Baxter’s treatment of these things in his books: “*A New Call to Holiness*”, “*His Deeper Work in Us*”, and “*Our High Calling*”. (These three titles have been combined in one volume entitled “*Christian Holiness Restudied and Restated*”.) But I also can recommend: “*The Surrendered Life*” by James H. McConkey; “*Born Crucified*” by L.E. Maxwell; “*Life Out of Death*” by Jesse Penn Lewis; “*The Crucified Life*” by A.W. Tozer, and daily devotionals: “*My Utmost for His Highest*” by Oswald Chambers and “*Streams in the Desert*” by L.B. Cowman.

²¹ “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.**” 1 Peter 2:21

This is the “**example**” Jesus Christ left for us: **The Way of the Cross** – that is, *self-denying love for the glory of God*. Because of the fallen nature of the self, self “suffers” when it is denied. Yet, as we are conformed more and more to the image of Christ, *the transformed self*⁴¹ experiences the blessing of the love of God flowing through the soul.

“In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. **Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.**” Hebrews 5:7-8

In a manner of speaking, Jesus was the very first Christian – He is *the Author and Perfector of faith* – our **Example** – our **Pattern**, therefore, **suffering** is to be considered an integral component of the normal Christian life. The Father saw fit for the Son to *learn*

⁴¹ In my article, [Transformation of Self](#), I endeavor to make the case for *transformation of self*, rather than “crucifixion of self” or “death of self” type language and perspectives. J. Sidlow Baxter also makes this distinction in his “*Christian Holiness Restudied and Restated*”.

and grow through suffering. Can we expect to *learn and grow spiritually* without **suffering**? The spiritual truth that Jesus suffered *for us* in no way precludes **suffering** from the lives of the redeemed. Quite the opposite: Peter said, “You have been **called for this purpose...**” (1 Peter 1:21) But what specific aspects of **suffering** are these verses referring to? Let’s look at what the writer to the Hebrews had to say about this:

“He endured the cross disregarding the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God [revealing His deity, His authority, and the completion of His work]. Just consider and meditate on Him who **endured from sinners such bitter hostility against Himself [consider it all in comparison with your trials], so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”**

Hebrews 12:2b-3 *AMP*

So, we see that just one aspect of the suffering Jesus modeled for us in His *self-denying love for the glory of God* included being **sinned against by sinners** in various ways. Who are the “sinners” being referring to? All the unredeemed – but, also all the redeemed sinners as well, for we Christians abuse Christ’s grace towards us and also sin against one another, even as did the first century disciples of Christ.

Now, let's return to the passage in Peter's epistle:

“He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, **He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.**” 1 Peter 1:22-23

Again, this is a picture of meekness: namely, **the spiritual discipline of silence when being reviled.** The inability to keep silent when being reviled often reveals the fact that we feel we must retaliate verbally, because we don't have faith that God can speak on our behalf. However, **Jesus kept silent –**

“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

Isaiah 53:7⁴²

- **and entrusted Himself to the Father.**

*Lord, we come to You to learn from You
The weakness of meekness,
as we behold the glory of the Lord
in Your Cross of Self-denial.*

⁴² Also: Matthew 26:63; 27:12; Mark 14:51; 15:5; Luke 23:9.

A Disciplined Son

The Weakness of Meekness and “the discipline of the Lord”

⁴“You have not yet struggled to the point of shedding blood in your **striving against sin**; ⁵ and you have forgotten the divine word of encouragement which is addressed to you as sons, “My son, do not make light of **the discipline of the Lord**, and do not lose heart and give up when you are **corrected by Him**.”

Hebrews 12:4-11 *AMP*

Here, the writer to the Hebrews is discussing “**the discipline of the Lord**”. We need to understand what that is and why that is. “**Discipline**” is *not* condemnation, nor is it even punishment. If we feel condemned or punished, then the one at work is Satan, our Adversary, and not the Lord, our Father. We need to know the difference.

But what then is “**discipline**”? The Greek word⁴³ used here has to do with “*the training of a child, including instruction ... correction that regulates character*”⁴⁴. “The discipline of the Lord” includes these means: “training”, “instruction”, and “correction”. These take place

⁴³ Greek: *paideia*, Strong’s # 3809

⁴⁴ W.E. Vine. Cf. Ephesians 6:4.

in the context of “striving against sin”. That is the nature and the purpose of the discipline - “training”, “instruction”, and “correction” for the purpose of growing in Christ-likeness.⁴⁵ This is the path of discipleship which Jesus modeled for us.

⁶For the Lord **disciplines and corrects** those whom He loves, and He punishes⁴⁶ every son whom He receives and welcomes [to His heart]. ⁷You must **submit to [correction for the purpose of] discipline; God is dealing with you as with sons;** for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸Now if you are exempt from correction and without discipline, in which all [of God’s children] share, then you are illegitimate children and not sons [at all]. ⁹Moreover, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us, and we **submitted and respected them [for training us];** shall we not much more **willingly submit to the Father of spirits, and live [by learning from His discipline]**? ¹⁰For our earthly fathers disciplined us for only a short time as seemed best to them; but He disciplines us for our good, **so that we may share His holiness.** ¹¹For the time being, no discipline brings joy, but seems sad and painful; yet to those who

⁴⁵ It must be noted that the “striving against sin” going “to the point of shedding blood” is a reference to Jesus going to the cross; yet the same writer also said that Jesus was “without sin”. (Hebrews 4:5; Cf. 1 Peter 2:22) So, the cross (self-denying love) is God’s method for dealing with sin – our sin (not Jesus’).

⁴⁶ Greek: *mastigoo*, Strong’s # 3148, means to whip - literally or figuratively – admittedly the figurative sense is less problematic. But I believe that even physical “whippings” in our lives (e.g. negative medical, or financial, or relational developments in our lives) are not literally from the hand of God (Cf. Proverbs 3:12), but rather are the result of our choices and their consequences and/or the activity of our Adversary, Satan, which God allows and utilizes for our discipline. (Job 1:11-12; 2:5-6)

have been **trained by it**, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness [right standing with God and **a lifestyle and attitude that seeks conformity to God's will and purpose**]."

Hebrews 12:6-11 *AMP*

This passage, which is self-explanatory, paints a picture of Jesus as *a Son walking under the discipline of His Father*. Discipline for the purpose of training, instruction and correction is something which typified Jesus relationship with His Father – the Pattern provided by Jesus as the Son of God. But in much of contemporary Christianity the Christian's relationship with God is too often typified by all the physical and emotional "blessings" the child can receive from the Father. It is no wonder that we have so few Christians whom we would refer to as being truly "Christ-like". Also contained in this passage from Hebrews are two other traits typifying disciples who would truly reflect Christ-likeness – namely, Jesus' "**respect**" for and "**submission**" to the Father. Jesus Himself alluded to these traits as exemplifying *the necessary attitude and posture for walking with the Father*.

"So, Jesus answered them by saying, "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself [of His own accord], unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for

whatever things the Father does, the Son[in His turn] also does in the same way.... I can do nothing on my own initiative or authority. Just as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just (fair, righteous, unbiased), because I do not seek My own will, but only the will of Him who sent Me.” John 5:19 & 30 AMP

Jesus walked with the utmost **respect** for and **submission** to the Father. He learned⁴⁷ to only speak what the Father is speaking and only do what the Father is doing. This is a spiritual discipline and skill which must be *learned* – in order to **hear and see what God is saying and doing**, and to **speak and act in accord with His Spirit**. To walk in this way shows **respect** for and **submission** to God, because it demonstrates a belief that *what God has to say and do is much more important than what we think we should say and do*.

Actually, the correct term for such a demeanor is, again, the word “**meekness**”. And, as I stated earlier, “**meekness**” includes two other character traits: “*humility*” (residing inwardly) and “*gentleness*” (expressed outwardly). **Meekness** is “the gentle, quiet spirit of selfless devotion to God that is also (sometimes) translated ‘gentleness’. ‘Meekness’ is the very antithesis of

⁴⁷ Hebrews 5:8 says He learned it through suffering.

arrogant pride.”⁴⁸ But key to understanding the whole concept of the “**meekness**” of Jesus is that *“it consists not in his outward behavior only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men, as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather, it is an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercise 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 ‘**humility**’ and follows directly upon it.... It is only the humble heart which is also the meek, and which, as such, does not fight against God or struggle and contend with Him.”*⁴⁹

Inward “**meekness**” and “**humility**” towards God will naturally manifest outwardly in “**gentleness**” towards others. It is the same as, truly loving God results in loving others also. Now, while on a number of occasions, Jesus may not have been “gentle” in dealing with the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus was always “**meek**” toward His Father.

*Lord, we come to You to learn from You
The weakness of meekness,
as we behold the glory of the Lord
in “the discipline of the Lord”.*

⁴⁸ *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Stephen D. Renn

⁴⁹ *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, W.E. Vine.

A Man of Sorrows

The Weakness of Meekness – Being Acquainted with Grief

¹“Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ²For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. ³He was despised and forsaken of men, **a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief**; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him⁵⁰.” Isaiah 53:1-3

I will end with this particular picture of Jesus as our Pattern for “the weakness of God”. Isaiah 53 in its entirety is a prophecy of what the coming Messiah would look like. I’ve intentionally referenced just the first three verses. Verses 4 through 12 speak

⁵⁰ A thought on the phrase, “we did not esteem him”: The Father, through the working of the Holy Spirit, reveals Christ, thus drawing those who are lost to come to Himself through Jesus. (John 5:37-38; 6:37, 44, 65) The process is indeed both a mystery and unique in each individual’s life. Having said that, with regards to the idea of the Lord using our life and testimony in this process of drawing others to Christ: 1) We need to be Christ-like. 2) But, at the same time, authentic Christlikeness never has and never will be “attractive” to the world. I believe it would be accurate to say that throughout church history, whenever it has been “popular” to be a Christian, it is because Christians had become “worldly”. Jesus – and therefore, His authentic disciples – will be generally **despised, forsaken, and not esteemed by the world** simply because “the love of the Father is not in them (those in the world), and they do not know Him”. (1 John 2:15; 3:1; 5:1) Never-the-less, the Father *does* draw people to Himself through His word and His Spirit in a sovereign process involving conviction, repentance, and faith. And, He DOES utilize in this most intriguing process the life and testimony of those who are authentically Christlike. (See my article, [*The Drawing of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Conversion-Regeneration Process*](#).)

of His messianic role, which happened to play out in a way that was diametrically the opposite of the Rome-conquering Redeemer the Jews expected. These verses describe His work of redemption, which only He, the God-Man could accomplish on our behalf. But verses 1 through 3 speak of **Jesus in His humanity** - a description we can identify with and is an Example for us to follow.

¹“Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ²For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has **no stately form or majesty** that we should look upon Him, **nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him**. Isaiah 53:1-2

Most of the Jews waiting for the Messiah, even those who “searched the scriptures”, failed to see that they testified of Jesus of Nazareth⁵¹. Why did they not recognize Him when He came? He just didn’t look like their concept of the Son of God – “He (had) **no stately form or majesty that (they) we should look upon Him, nor appearance that (they) should be attracted to Him**”. They didn’t accept Him as the Messiah - instead He was to them “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”⁵².

⁵¹ John 5:39-47

⁵² Isaiah 8:14, 1 Peter 2:8

I believe Jesus addressed this a number of times, but maybe this was the first time – when He spoke to the crowds about John the Baptist:

⁷ “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ palaces! ⁹ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written, ‘Behold, **I send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You.**’ Matthew 11:7-10

Jesus was speaking specifically about John the Baptist, but I believe what He said applies to all of us who would be **“His messenger”** to **“prepare the way of the Lord”**. Would we be surprised to find out what God thinks His representative messengers should look like? What do we think a “model Christian” should look like? It’s grievous, indeed, when we see “pastors” and other “ministers” who are proud, arrogant and self-absorbed, for they reflect the opposite of Christ-likeness. They falsely represent the Lord. But we can say the same about all Christians who haven’t learned from Jesus His **gentleness** and

humbleness of heart.⁵³ Their “jealousy, selfish ambition and arrogance also lie against the truth”⁵⁴.

So, what does Christ “look like”? The triumphant, risen Lord Jesus is an awesome sight “with eyes like a flame of fire, feet like burnished bronze, a voice like the sound of many waters, a mouth with a sharp two-edged sword, and a face like the sun shining in its strength”⁵⁵. But it is **the gentle, humble Jesus in His earthly humanity** which will be uniquely “attractive” in the vainglorious world in which we live. Indeed, those who do not know Him as the Lord of lords and the King of kings *are looking for a Jesus they can relate to in their humanity*. That is exactly why He was incarnated in the way He is described by Isaiah.⁵⁶

⁵³ Matthew 11:29

⁵⁴ James 3:14

⁵⁵ Revelation 1:12-16. Some say that our identity with Christ is with the Risen Christ, because, they say, “Christ is no longer on the cross”. While that is true, I think for a more comprehensive Christology we need to identify with **both** Jesus of Nazareth in His humanity, as well as the Spirit of the Risen Christ. Certainly, in his various epistles, the apostle Paul delineates the “IN CHRIST Truths” - “who you are in Christ” - “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). While we **do** possess these “spiritual blessings” now, in fact, these apply to our spirit man – our “inner man” (Romans 7:22, Ephesians 3:16, and 1 Peter 3:4). But we have BOTH an “inner man” and an “outer man” (2 Corinthians 4:16). And while we are still in the flesh, we do well to ALSO identify with Christ “in the days of His flesh” – “in the days of His humanity (Hebrews 5:7 NASB) – namely with Jesus of Nazareth of the Gospels. This is a more comprehensive Christology – one which affords an effective witness to those who do not yet know the Risen Christ. Could this be the meaning of Hosea's phrase “I have drawn you with cords of a man” (Hosea 11:4)? God’s purpose in the Incarnation was that Christ identified with Humanity so that Humanity could identify with Christ. And it is in Jesus of Nazareth of the Gospels that we see “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”. (Isaiah 53:1-3)

⁵⁶ Viz. Isaiah 53:1-3

“Let Christ himself be your example as to what your attitude should be. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God’s equal, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man. And, having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying, and the death he died was the death of a common criminal.”

Philippians 2:5-8⁵⁷

So, again, what does Christ “look like”?

³“He was **despised and forsaken of men,**
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was **despised, and we did not esteem Him.**” Isaiah 53:3

Isaiah described Jesus, our Example and Pattern, as **“A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief”**. This was one of the marks by which Israel was to know her Messiah – **“A Man of Sorrows”**. **Sorrow and grief** characterized Jesus’ life on earth. He was

⁵⁷ J.B. Phillips *New Testament in Modern English*

familiar with – intimate with – **sorrow and grief**. He knew it personally⁵⁸, and He knew it in others⁵⁹.

This characteristic of being “**acquainted with grief and sorrow**” speaks first and foremost of *Christ’s fellowship⁶⁰ with Fallen Humanity*. Jesus was intimately acquainted with **the sorrow and grief of the human condition**. Kings and lords, and the rich and powerful of the earth insulate themselves from humanity’s woes. In fact, we all attempt to do the same. But Jesus *shared in* and *partnered with* and *participated in* **the fallen human condition**. He was without sin, yet He ultimately became the Sin-bearer and Scapegoat of humanity on the Cross. This **identification with the human condition** when he was lifted up upon the cross is actually **the power of attraction by which He “draws all men to Himself”**.⁶¹

⁵⁸ He suffered rejection and unrequited love (John 1:10-11). He endured the “hostility of sinners against Himself” (Hebrews 12:3). He was betrayed and abandoned by His own disciples (Matthew 26:47-75), and experienced the sense of being forsaken by His Father (Matthew 27:46).

⁵⁹ John 11:35; Luke 19:41

⁶⁰ The Greek word, *koinonia*, Strong’s # 2842, generally translated “fellowship” in the verb form, *kononeo*, Strong’s # 2841, means to “share in”, “partner with”, and “participate in”.

⁶¹ John 12:32-33

In this also, He is our *Example*, the **Pattern** for our relationship with God and humanity, and for living life in the New Covenant, “for as He is, so also are we in this world”⁶² – “for we realize that our life in this world is actually his life lived in us”. 1 John 4:17⁶³

*Lord, we come to You to learn from You
The weakness of meekness,
as we behold the glory of the Lord
in Grief and Sorrow.*

⁶² 1 John 4:17

⁶³ J.B. Phillips *New Testament in Modern English*

Glorifying God in Weakness

As I write, I pray. And as I prayed, I found myself asking the Lord: *“Once I have embraced my weakness, what do I need to do in an effort to glorify You more?”* I took note of my words – “What do I need to do?” And I thought, “What did the Son of God do? He is my Pattern.” Well, to begin with, He became a Son of Man – *a human being*.

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.” Philippians 2:5-8

Becoming human was something the Lord did with profound intentionality. But, there was nothing I needed to do to be born a human being. Likewise, there is nothing I need to do to be “weak”. In the grand scheme of things, to be human is to be weak. Unlike Jesus, I’m not God. I’m not even one of the elohim. I’m born a human being - spiritually and morally fallen, physically frail

and mentally fallible. Even after being *re-born*, we are still “**earthen vessels**”⁶⁴ in every sense of the phrase. Seeing our sinful state is humbling. Sicknesses and infirmities are also humbling. Aging is still another humiliator: With age, we become physically and mentally “weaker”. As someone said: “*Age conspires with God to take away our temporal hope.*”⁶⁵ It may be difficult to convince unregenerate humans of the reality of spiritual death; but physical death will convince each and every one of us humans just how fragile we truly are. In spite of all we do to convince ourselves and others to the contrary, to be human is to be weak. So, *it’s not a matter of “becoming weaker in order to glorify God”*; it is a matter of recognizing our innate weakness.

I believe that is some of what Jesus meant when He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”⁶⁶ Can we aspire to become *more* poor in spirit? Something a friend⁶⁷ of mine said has had a lasting impact on me: He said, “*I always wondered how I could become ‘poor in spirit’; and then one day I realized I was!*” Likewise, to be human is to be weak - life may bring on “more weakness”, but there is no

⁶⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:7

⁶⁵ Original source unknown.

⁶⁶ Matthew 5:3

⁶⁷ Larry McNeil, former-missionary to South Africa, resides in Carrollton, Texas.

need to aspire to be “more weak”. Something which Oswald Chambers wrote augments the thought, and encourages us not to *strive to be* “more weak” in an effort to glorify God”:

*“The true character of the loveliness that tells for God
is always unconscious.”*

That is a line from one of his selections in his *“My Utmost for His Highest”*.

August 21

The Ministry Of The Unnoticed

Blessed are the poor in spirit. — Matthew 5:3

*“The New Testament notices things which from our standards do not seem to count. “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” literally – Blessed are the paupers – an exceedingly commonplace thing! The preaching of to-day is apt to emphasize strength of will, beauty of character – the things that are easily noticed. The phrase we hear so often, ‘Decide for Christ’, is an emphasis on something Our Lord never trusted. He never asks us to decide for Him, but to yield to Him – a very different thing. At the basis of Jesus Christ’s Kingdom is the unaffected loveliness of the commonplace. **The thing I am blessed in is my poverty. If I know I have no strength of will, no nobility of disposition, then Jesus says – ‘Blessed are you’, because it is through this poverty that I enter His Kingdom. I cannot enter His Kingdom as a good man or woman, I can only enter it as a complete pauper.***

The true character of the loveliness that tells for God is always unconscious. Conscious influence is priggish and un-Christian. If I say – ‘I wonder if I am of any use?’ – I instantly lose the bloom of the touch of the Lord. ‘He that believeth in me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water.’ If I examine the outflow, I lose the touch of the Lord.

Which are the people who have influenced us most? Not the ones who thought they did, but those who had not the remotest notion that they were influencing us. In the Christian life the implicit is never conscious, if it is conscious it ceases to have this unaffected loveliness which is the characteristic of the touch of Jesus. We always know when Jesus is at work because He produces in the commonplace something that is inspiring.”

*Lord, may we come to
see, acknowledge, embrace,
and then surrender for your purposes
our inherent weakness.*

Addendum

Defining “Meekness”

In contrast to “gentleness”

The purpose of this addendum is to present further explanation for the choice of using the English word “meekness” in this article - rather than “gentleness” – for a translation of the Greek word *prätotes*.

²² “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, *kindness*, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ **gentleness**, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23 NASB

In the *NASB* (and in other translations), we see “gentleness”, but not “meekness”, listed as a fruit of the Spirit. Whereas, in the *ASV* and *KJV*, *both* “gentleness” and “meekness” appear in Paul’s list:

²² “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, **gentleness**, goodness, faith, ²³ **meekness**, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23 *ASV, KJV*

Paul uses two different Greek words, which tells us that “gentleness” and “meekness” are not quite the same in meaning.

We see an indication of this in the Amplified Bible translation of the passage, where “kindness” is used in the place of “gentleness”, and “meekness” is associated with “humility” and “gentleness”.

²² But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), **kindness**, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, ²³ **gentleness (meekness, humility)**, self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [^[a]that can bring a charge]. Galatians 5:22-23 AMP (Classic Edition)

But, the fact is, the Greek text contains two different Greek words - *chrestotes* (Strong's # 5544), for “gentleness”⁶⁸ and *praotes* (Strong's # 4236), for “meekness”⁶⁹. Two different words – two different meanings:

Chrestotes: The *Apostolic Bible Polyglot* (Septuagint) translates this as “graciousness”. “Moral goodness” and “kindness” are also used to define *chrestotes*.⁷⁰ And, this is what the *Helps Ministries Word Studies* has to offer regarding *chrestotes*: “*xrēstótēs* (“useful

⁶⁸ <https://biblehub.com/greek/5544.htm>

⁶⁹ <https://biblehub.com/greek/4236.htm>

⁷⁰ *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*

kindness”) refers to meeting real needs, in God’s way, in His timing (fashion).”

Praotes: This is what appears in the *Helps Ministries Word*

Studies for this Greek word translated as “meekness”: “*praótēs—properly, temperate, displaying the right blend of force and reserve (gentleness). praótēs (“strength in gentleness”) avoids unnecessary harshness, yet without compromising or being too slow to use necessary force.*”

Some notes by A.T. Robinson offer additional nuances of the Greek word *praotes* / *prautetos* translated as “meekness”:

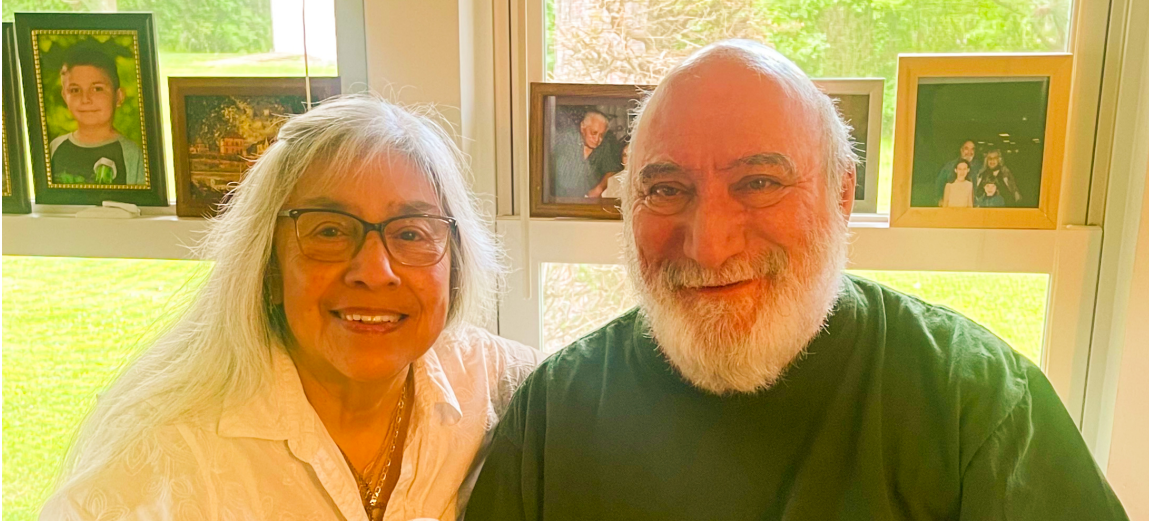
Note on Matthew 5:5

“The English word “meek” has largely lost the fine blend of spiritual poise and strength meant by the Master. He calls himself “meek and lowly in heart” ([Mat 11:29](#)) and Moses is also called meek. It is the gentleness of strength, not mere effeminacy.”

Note on 2 Corinthians 10:1

“‘By the meekness and gentleness of Christ’ (*dia tes prautetos kai epieikias tou Christou*). This appeal shows (Plummer) that Paul had spoken to the Corinthians about the character of Christ. Jesus claimed meekness for himself (Mat 11:29) and felicitated the meek (Mat 5:5) and he exemplified it abundantly (Luk 23:34).”

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

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