

Handout 1: The Beatitudes Lesson 5

“BLESSED ARE THE MEEK”

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Matthew 5:5

Including the passage in Matthew 5:5: *Blessed are the meek...* the Greek word *praus*, (pronounced prah-ooce’), meaning “mild, humble or meek,” only appears four times in the New Testament. It is found three times in the Gospel of Matthew (5:5; 11:29; 21:5) and once in 1 Peter 3:4. In Matthew 11:29 Jesus calls Himself “meek,” in Matthew 21:5 St. Matthew quotes Zechariah’s prophecy in which he calls the promised Messiah “meek,” just like the prophet Moses (see Numbers 12:3), and St. Peter writes that a meek nature is precious to God:

Matthew 11:29-30	<i>Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek [praus] and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.</i>
Matthew 21:5	<i>Say to daughter Zion, ‘Behold, your king comes to you, meek [praus] and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.</i>
1 Peter 3:4	<i>...but rather the hidden character of the heart, expressed in the imperishable beauty of a gentle [praus/meek] and calm disposition, which is precious in the sight of God.</i>

This is another Greek word to which Christians gave a uniquely Christian character with “meekness” becoming the symbol of a higher Christian virtue as illustrated in these three verses. The pre-Christian Greek cultural meaning of this word expressed an outward conduct as relating to only men and not necessarily in a positive light (*Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament volume I*, page 37). Christians, however, gave the word a quality expressing an inward virtue that is related primarily to God. Christian “meekness” is based on humility that is expressed in the New Testament as the supernatural quality that is the outgrowth of a renewed nature. This renewal can only come when we surrender to God and seek His divine will in our lives. To the pagan Greeks this word often implied condescension, but to Christians this word implied submission of human will to the will of God. Submission to God is, however, not an indication of weakness. For the Christian, submission to God’s control results in strength—strength that is not our own but the strength that comes from God’s will working through our lives. The Bible is full of stories of God intervening in the lives of men and women who called on God for His help. There are also stories of men and women who were willing to help others, but there are very few examples of God intervening in the lives of those who preferred their own plan and destiny, except in cases where His intervention was judgment to bring about repentance and redemption.

“FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE LAND”

God’s servants shall dwell in the land and possess it; it shall be the heritage of their descendants; those who love God’s name shall dwell there. Psalm 69:36b-37

Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matthew 25:34b

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Handout 2: The Beatitudes Lesson 5:
SUMMARY OF THE BEATITUDES

<p>BLESSING #1 <i>“BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT”</i></p>	<p>We are “poor” in spirit because we acknowledge that we are not self-sufficient and that we need God in our lives. We come to Him in childlike faith, knowing that we cannot make it on our own without Him.</p>
<p>PROMISE #1 <i>“FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”</i></p>	<p>When we acknowledge the sovereignty of God over our lives, we discover that He does not save us because of what we have done but because of what Christ has done for us. If we persevere in faith we are promised the gift of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.</p>
<p>BLESSING #2 <i>“BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN”</i></p>	<p>As we yield to spiritual childhood, admitting poverty of spirit kneeling in His presence, the more clearly we see God. The more clearly we see God, the more we become aware of our imperfections. We become humbled in His presence and we feel the burden of our sins. The result is that we mourn our sins. Repentance and genuine sorrow for our sins purifies us. To mourn sin is a natural outflow of surrender to God through “poverty of spirit”.</p>
<p>PROMISE #2 <i>“FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED”</i></p>	<p>Not only does the Holy Spirit comfort us in our sorrow and repentance but through living the Sacraments of our faith He gives us the strength to resist sin and also the strength to stand against sin in our community and in the world. We bear our suffering with a spirit of atonement, reconciliation and love and the result is comfort and strength.</p>
<p>BLESSING #3 <i>“BLESSED ARE THE MEEK”</i></p>	<p>Christian “meekness” is not weakness. It is based on humility which is expressed in the New Testament as the supernatural quality that is the outgrowth of a renewed nature. This renewal can only come when we surrender to God and seek His divine will in our lives. It is this third step, “blessed are the meek” which renews us and places us as a useful tool in the hands of the Master of the universe.</p>
<p>PROMISE #3 <i>“FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE LAND”</i></p>	<p>No longer does Satan have the power to dominate us because we have been reborn through Christian baptism into the family of God. We belong to the God who created and dominates the earth. As His children and his heirs we inherit the earth and the universal kingdom He has established on earth to lead the nations into the family of God, the Catholic Church.</p>

The Progression of the Beatitudes

Beatitudes contain 7 or 8 (depending on how you count them) successive fundamental spiritual states that every Christian must strive to achieve.

The Beatitudes must be lived fully and completely just as the 10 Commandments have to be lived in their entirety.

continued →

Merciful: when we show our mercy and forgiveness → we will be given mercy and forgiveness through Jesus' perfect Sacrifice on the Cross

TURNING POINT

Hunger & thirst for Righteousness: seek the King of Righteousness → to be filled by Christ in the Eucharist

Meek: yield our will to God's will for our lives = renewal → inherit "the Land", the Church = dominion to bind and loose

Mourn: mourn own sins and world sin = purification → comfort & strength, reconciliation

Poor in spirit: those who acknowledge their need for God → Kingdom of Heaven = eternal life promised through Baptism and faithfully living the Law of love on a lifetime journey of faith

"The only ladder to heaven is the Cross" St. Rose of Lima

**SUMMATION OF LIVING
THE BEATITUDES:**

Blessed are they (blessed are you) who are persecuted: we take up our crosses and follow Jesus, committing ourselves to everything He has taught us— even enduring persecution for His sake→ but joyfully because we know He has promised us eternal life in our Father's Kingdom.

Peacemakers: with Christ living in us we become conformed to His image of peace and love→ in the image of Christ we become divine children of His Father

Clean of heart: our old hearts are replaced with the pure heart of Jesus our Redeemer → we will see God's face in the faces of everyone with whom we share His love.

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Handout 4: The Beatitudes Lesson 5

Questions for group discussion:

As mentioned in the lesson, there is another theological and scriptural way to view the promise of “inheriting the land” made to the “blessed meek” who yield their lives as tools in the hands of the Master. In relating this passage to the Old Testament, “the land” is probably a more accurate translation than “the earth.” The New American Bible translating reflects this interpretation (in Scripture the same Hebrew word is translated as both “land” and “earth”). In the Old Testament references to “the land” refer to the Promised Land of Israel (Numbers 20:12), which became a Biblical “type” of what is made possible in the New Covenant in Christ. The inspired writer of the Letter to the Hebrews uses “the land” in this context when referring to Abraham’s obedient journey from Ur of the Chaldeans (Genesis 11:28; 15:7) to Canaan (Genesis 12:4-5).

Question: Read Hebrews 11:9-10. References to the “Promised Land” are the Biblical type for what promise that was not possible for the saints in the Old Testament?

Answer: The Promised Land was a Biblical type for heaven.

In Biblical interpretation it is always helpful to start with the literal interpretation as understood by the original recipients of the Biblical teaching.

Question: How did the disciples and Apostles understand the promise of “the land” to the “blessed meek”? Has this prophecy been fulfilled? How? See 2 Samuel 7:12-17; 23:5; 1 Chronicles 17:16-27; 2 Chronicles 13:5; Sirach 45:25; 47:16; Psalm 89:29; Acts 1:6; Hebrews 12:28; James 2:5; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 15:3; 17:14; and 19:16.

Question: How has the prophecy of the eternal kingdom in Daniel 2:44-45 and the King whose rule is everlasting in 7:13-14 and whose kingship and rule will be over all the kingdoms under heaven in 7:27 been fulfilled?

Answer: Jesus is the King of kings who in His ascension came on the clouds of heaven to the Father (Acts 1:9) who conferred upon Him “rule, honor and kingship”—a kingship that “will never come to an end.” The everlasting kingdom is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth—the universal Catholic Church—“And kingship and rule and the splendors of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High whose royal power is an eternal power and whom every empire will serve and obey.” This power is imperfectly obeyed now, but when the heavenly and earthly kingdoms are joined in the Second Advent of Christ there will be one Kingdom and one King who rules over all.

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