

Text: Gal. 5:23

Title: "The fruit of the Spirit in the life of Christ – meekness"

Time: 10/6/2019 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Since the last Sunday of July, we have been considering together the fruit of the Spirit in the life of Christ.

*Christ* means *Anointed One*, and at His baptism, Jesus Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His ministry as our mediator. Faithful to His work, He demonstrated in His life what it means to walk perfectly in the Spirit so as not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

In our context here in Galatians 5, Paul explains that we can live lives that are Christlike because we are invited to walk in the same power of God's Spirit that Jesus relied on as the perfect man. If we walk in the Spirit, we shall in no way fulfill the lusts of the flesh (v. 16). Walking in the Spirit requires time in God's Word, His powerful sanctifying truth (v. 7). It requires confession of sin under the confidence that our flesh with its lusts and desires have been crucified with Christ on the cross, so God is faithful and just to forgive our confessed sin (v. 24).

And it requires inspecting our lives for evidence of either the works of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit (vv. 19-23). We must find the fruit and not the works. Christ shows us what to look for when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit:

1. His love – Christ loves righteousness; He loves the lost; and He loves His people. He gives His life for those He loves; He disciplines those He loves; and He judges those who harm those He loves.
2. His joy – Christ experienced joy over finding the lost, over obedience to God's Word, and from believing in the hope of the resurrection.
3. His peace – Christ's peace did not depend on positive circumstances or the right brain-chemistry formula. His

peace was different from the world's peace. It is rooted in our relationship and fellowship with God, and it is willing to be at war with the destroyers of spiritual peace.

4. His longsuffering – Christ's longsuffering is His compassionate forgiveness of His servants' sins and His desire that sinners have more time to repent.
5. His gentleness or kindness – Christ's kindness was His willingness to be touched, His willingness to forgive, and His willingness to share His yoke.
6. His goodness – Unique to Himself, Christ's goodness is His deity. But also as Spirit-anointed man His goodness is His righteousness before God's law and His truthfulness about the sin-need of sinners.
7. His faith – Jesus never struggled with "little-faith." He believed God would always meet His needs, that He never needed to fear, that the Word of God is ever true, and that His prayers were necessary and heard. He was faithful as our mediator: our prophet, our priest, and our king.

And now this morning, we come to the fruit of the Spirit called *meekness*. I want us to see three ways in which we can say that our Savior was the meekest of men as He walked in the Spirit to bear this fruit in His life.

I. His meekness is a confidence about the future that is strong enough to be gentle in the present (Matt. 5:5).

Application: In the life of Christ, the product of His spirit of meekness was His gentleness. Paul combines these virtues in his phrase, "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1). The grammar he uses indicates that Paul viewed the meekness of Christ and the gentleness of Christ as essentially the same virtue. So when we think of meekness, we must also think of gentleness.

Illustration: Daniel Webster is an American hero remembered fondly in our part of the country. He is remembered especially

as a great orator. Some historians remember his “Reply to Hayne” delivered in 1830 as the most eloquent speech ever delivered in Congress, which is an enormous accomplishment considering that the topic of the speech was a pretty dry one – protectionist tariffs.

But Webster understood that there was a man who once spoke like no other man ever had before or has since. Webster was a Christian, and on his tombstone is written, “My heart has always assured and re-assured me, that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be a divine reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a merely human production.”

Application: The Beatitudes are perhaps the most eloquent section of the Sermon on the Mount. In the one we have read about meekness, Jesus speaks of a present reality that is explained by a truth about the future. The present reality is “blessed are the meek” and the future truth is “for they shall inherit the earth.”

As Jesus encourages Christlike meekness in His disciples, He wants them to be confident about this future when they shall inherit the earth. His meekness is a confidence in the future that is strong enough to be gentle in the present.

This promise about the future of the meek is a quotation from Ps. 37:11, and that psalm does a wonderful job describing the way in which meekness is gentle in the present circumstance because it is confident about future blessing (see vv. 1-11).

News coverage in our country today is “fretting because of evil doers.” There is very little meekness in American politics. This fretting includes envy (v. 1), anger, and wrath (v. 8). Jesus shows us that we do not have to live caught up in that. We can be meek through the power of God’s Spirit in our lives.

Meek people trust in the Lord (v. 3), delight in the Lord (v. 4), commit their way to the Lord (v. 5), and rest in the Lord (v. 7).

Are you so confident about your glorious future that you have strength enough to be very gentle with the present circumstances you find yourself in? If not, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Your life will then be characterized by a meekness that is confident enough about your future to be gentle in the present.

II. His meekness is a disciple-making concern to teach humility by example (Matt. 11:29).

Illustration: Last Tuesday I traveled to Colchester CT where a pastor friend of mine spoke on making disciples, our Great Commission work. His son Noah is a freshman defensive tackle for the Ohio State Buckeyes. While in high school, Noah dominated at his position. Some of his teammates noticed that Noah would not go with them to their parties and that they never heard him swear or take God's name in vain. Three of them decided that they were going to do everything they could in practice to get Noah to swear just one time, so they would gang up on him, hit him late, hit him in the knees, and do everything they could to hurt him. They were ultimately unsuccessful.

One of those young men who wanted to hurt Noah was himself a college-bound lineman when he injured his knee. He had to have reconstruction surgery, which got infected and then had to be redone. My pastor friend saw his athletic career come to an end in much the same way, so he and Noah visited this friend in the hospital and struck up a close friendship with him. God worked in this young man's heart, and he trusted Christ as his Savior. Now this former adversary goes to my friend's church and senses that God may be calling him into pastoral ministry.

Application: Jesus's meekness included a disciple-making concern to teach humility by example. When he says "learn of me," he uses the verb that is related to the noun *disciple*, which means *learner*. God used Noah's meekness to make his teammate a disciple. Noah was not just a football player concerned about getting to Ohio State. He was a disciple-maker very concerned that his teammates could see the humility of Christ in him.

Do we have that concern? Do we have a Christlike meekness about us that lets people know humbly that their coming to Christ is more important to us than protecting our own pride?

Application: As you study the importance of meekness in disciple-making in the New Testament, you come to the understanding that this fruit of the Spirit is especially indispensable when it comes to correcting a weaker brother who needs help spiritually.

Meekness is important in any personal relationship (Tit. 3:2, "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."). But this is especially true when it comes to helping those overtaken by a fault, help that we all need from time to time from one another (Gal. 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"; 2 Tim. 2:25, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.").

Do we have the meekness we need to help people in this way become disciples of Jesus Christ? If not, walk in the Spirit, and you will in no way fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Walk in the

Spirit, and you will become a more useful disciple-maker in meekness.

Application: But as we think of the importance of meekness in discipleship, one other truth of Scripture must be emphasized. Those who are in need of the help of correction also must respond to that correction in Spirit-empowered meekness (Jam. 1:21, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.").

We need meekness to respond correctly to the truth of God's Word. Do you find it in your response this morning? If not, walk in the Spirit, and you will in no way fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

III. His meekness is the willingness to sacrifice Himself, though He is the divine King (Matt. 21:5).

Application: The day is soon coming when Jesus rides upon a white horse. That will not be a day of His gentle meekness. The first time He came, however, He came on a donkey's colt in meekness. Same King. Different mission.

Here again we hear the echoes of passages of the Old Testament (Zech. 9:9-11; Ps. 45:1-8). Jesus is the divine King whose throne is forever and ever, and yet he rides into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt, and only the little children could see that He was the promised King, for He was meek.

Without His meekness, you and I would have no sufficient sacrifice for our sinfulness. We would have no hope of salvation. His meekness is His willingness to sacrifice Himself for your sins and mine, though He is the divine King. He rode into Jerusalem meek and lowly.

Conclusion: Has God's Spirit really shown you what His meekness has done for you? Unless He does so, you cannot be saved from your sins.

There is only one right response to the meekness of Christ on the cross dying for our sins: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Is this Meek One the Lord of your heart? Or are you still the Lord of your heart? Only when the Meek One is Lord of our hearts will we have that testimony that can give a reason for the hope that is in us with meekness and fear. Walk in the Spirit, bow to the Lordship of Christ over your life, and bear the fruit of Christlike meekness in love for Him.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*