

=THE CHRISTIAN LIFE=

Lesson 6

Meekness

AIM: to teach my pupils the true meaning of meekness and the ways and times this trait was found in the life of Christ.

POINT OF CONTACT: Bring a tape measure or ruler to class. Ask the pupils to guess their height. Have them while they are seated guess who is the tallest and who is the shortest in the class. Then lead them to the truth that meekness is looking everybody square in the eye, looking up to none and down to none, thinking of oneself as better than none or worse than none.

INTRODUCTION: The word “meekness” in the Bible comes from a word which means “level.” It does not mean, as some would think, that one looks up to everyone else and thinks of himself as being inferior. Meekness is not fright; neither is it possessing an inferiority complex, but rather, it is looking to everyone from a level position. Meekness looks up to no one and down to no one. Meekness does not look up to the rich or down to the poor; up to the educated or down to the uneducated; up to the one of higher rank or down to the one of lower rank. True meekness is “looking up to none and down to none.” It does not mean weakness or anything of the kind.

I. MEEKNESS IN THE SCRIPTURES.

1. Jesus uses it to describe His own disposition, Matthew 11:29.
2. Jesus lists it as the third of His beatitudes, Matthew 5:5.
3. Jesus mentions it as one of His qualities as the Messiah. See Matthew 21:5 as quoted from Zechariah 9:9.
4. It is an adornment for the Christian to wear. I Peter 3:4, “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

Meekness, as mentioned in the above Scriptures, is closely associated and akin to the word “gentleness.” Meekness is the inner grace of the soul; gentleness is the external exercising of meekness. There are several words in the Greek which are translated “gentleness.” One is a word which comes from two words which mean “into” and “fitting.” Putting these two words together we come up with “fitting into” or better still, “appropriate.” The gentle person is appropriate. This includes manners, dress, social graces, etc. Perhaps real education is “knowing enough to fit into any situation that is moral and not feel uncomfortable or cause others to feel uncomfortable.” If one’s education allows him to behave only with the educated, he is yet lacking. On the other hand, for one to be unwilling because of prejudice to know how to fit in gracefully with the educated also shows a sign of character deficiency.

There is another word translated “gentleness” in the Bible. It could be called “firm care.” Gentleness, like meekness, is not weakness. It is not softness. Gentleness is firmness. Gentleness is strength. It is love wrapped in character. It is as a nurse with a child. She does not yield to the child’s whims, but she loves the child enough to be firm enough to do the things for the healing of the child. Gentleness is the teacher handling the slow student. It is not overlooking the student’s weakness but exercising firm leadership with the student that he may do better. Gentleness is the parent handling the trying child. It is disciplining with a tear for the good of the child.

Still another word used in the New Testament for gentleness could be translated “evenness.” Gentleness could be called “the acting out of meekness.” Meekness is the feeling that we have toward all men; gentleness is the acting out of that feeling.

5. The Christian is charged to show meekness toward all men, Titus 3:2.
6. Meekness is becoming to God’s elect, Colossians 3:12.
7. We are to follow after meekness, I Timothy 6:11.
8. We are to exhibit meekness to the ignorant and the erring, I Corinthians 4:21; Galatians 6:1.

II. MEEKNESS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST. Realizing that meekness is treating all men alike, looking up to none and down to none, including all as the same, let us look at the life of Christ and find examples.

1. The choosing of the apostles. Jesus chose some rich, some poor. Men of all classes were chosen.
2. Jesus showed meekness in the parable of the great supper, Luke 14:16-24. He sent His servant at supper time to tell the guests all things were ready. However, one person bought some oxen and couldn't come; one bought a piece of ground and couldn't come; one had gotten married and couldn't come; but Jesus didn't stop at that. He said, "All right, go to those who can't buy a piece of ground or some oxen and are too ugly to get married." The invitation was to all regardless of standing.
3. Jesus healed a leper and also a centurion's servant, Matthew 8:1-13. The poor leper was the scum of the earth. He had to cry, "Unclean!" when a normal person would walk by so that he would not contaminate him with his disease. He was expelled from society. He had to wipe his sores with public rags and stay away from people in general.

On the other hand, the centurion whose servant Jesus healed was a man who was a military leader over one hundred men. The word "centurion" comes from our word "century" which means one hundred. This man of authority found compassion from Christ. Once again, Jesus looked at all men equally.

4. After the resurrection Jesus appeared both to Mary Magdalene, who had been possessed of seven devils, and also to the apostles. Even the resurrected Christ bore and manifested true meekness.
5. In John 3 Jesus witnessed to a great ruler of the Jews, and in John 4 He witnessed to a fallen woman beside the well. What meekness He showed in dealing with each the same!
6. In Luke 18 Jesus spoke to a rich young ruler and invited him to come to salvation, and in the same chapter He invited the little children to come. The child is as welcome as the ruler, and the ruler is as welcome as the child. Our Saviour, once again, showed meekness.
7. In Luke 19 Jesus saved a rich tax collector who could afford to have Him in his home, and yet at the same time He saved and healed a blind man beside the road. Jesus was just as interested in the blind man as in the rich man, and He was just as interested in the rich man as in the blind man. What a beautiful picture of our Lord's meekness!

CONCLUSION: Ask the class members to discuss the type of people they would be tempted to look down upon and the type of people they would be tempted to look up to. Bear in mind, this is not a matter of looking up to someone in respect of his position and life, but looking up to someone as better than they are because of his class, society or position. Lead the class to look everybody square in the eye, thinking they are better than none and thinking that none is better than they. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek [equal ones]: for they shall inherit the earth."