



# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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## Gospel Meekness

When you read through the beatitudes, it doesn't take long to realize that Christ's teachings are the opposite of what the world admires and encourages. They are downright contradictory to the thinking and feeling of the world. They show us that God's grace transforms us – makes us completely different from everyone else.

Consider the first two beatitudes. Jesus tells us that we are to acknowledge our bankruptcy (**Matthew 5:3**). The gospel teaches us that we have nothing that we can offer God to make us acceptable to Him. We are to acknowledge that we will never be good enough for Him. We cannot keep His law. We are in absolute dependence on Him as God and Savior. The world detests this idea. The world exalts self-sufficiency. The world extols the “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” mentality.

Yet, Jesus also says that we are to mourn over our sin (**Matthew 5:4**). We are to see our sin as offensive and abominable to a holy God. We are to acknowledge that we have rebelled against the true and living God who made us and sustained us. We are to grieve over our sin and the sin of those around us. How opposite this is of the world! The world believes that it's an abomination to call anything sinful. The world believes that it is foolish to call anything sinful, much less confess and grieve over it.

This shows us what a difference the grace of God makes in our lives. This kind of character, this kind of life, only comes through the gospel. The beatitudes are not a list of character traits that we are to develop. They are a description of a person who believes the

gospel. The gospel is the good news that God sent Jesus Christ to die for our sins and then raised Him the third day for our forgiveness and acceptance.

Through the gospel, we come to realize how bankrupt we are when we see that God had to send a Savior to save us. If salvation were in our ability, our strength, why did God send Jesus as the Savior? The fact that God sent Jesus as the Savior reveals that we have nothing to make ourselves acceptable to God. The gospel shows us that we are spiritually bankrupt and that we must look outside of ourselves for salvation.

At the same time, when you believe the gospel, you mourn over your sin. Christ had to die to pay for our sin. He had to shed His blood to deal with our sin. This ought to break us and humble us. It cost the Son of God such agony and misery and then His death to take care of our sin. As we believe this and meditate on it, we mourn. We grieve that our sin cost Christ so much.

Now we come to the third beatitude, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (**Matthew 5:5**). In this issue of *The Prayer Closet*, we will look at this beatitude and how it affects us in our relationship with God and with others. We will examine how it relates to the gospel and how we can use it in prayer.

### What Is Meekness?

What exactly does it mean to be meek? This may be the most misunderstood of the beatitudes. For some, meekness implies

weakness. The meek person is a pushover, a person who simply lets others do whatever they want to him. The word “meekness” is often equated with being a spineless coward.

At the same time, some believe that meekness is a disposition. They picture someone as quiet, gentle, and submissive. They picture a mild-mannered person who speaks softly, never gets upset, and simply goes along with others. This person is this way because it’s their disposition – it’s part of their makeup as a person. They were born this way or their upbringing made them this way.

However, both of these viewpoints are wrong. First, meekness is not weakness. For Jesus meekness did not mean spineless compliance. Jesus could be bold, forceful, and confrontational and yet meek. Remember when Jesus got upset in the temple (**Matthew 21:12-13**). He entered the temple and wreaked havoc with the moneychangers. He drove people out of the temple, turned tables over, and made coins fly in every direction. In **Matthew 23**, Jesus confronted the Pharisees, calling them sons of hell, hypocrites, and serpents (**23:29-33**). In **Matthew 16:23**, Jesus called his closest friend the devil, when he allowed the devil to use his words. That doesn’t sound like a spineless coward to me.

At the same time, it’s not about a person’s disposition. God isn’t interested in sanctifying a person’s manners or disposition. God’s not looking to reform people and create manners and morals in people. His desire and goal is to transform us – to make us different. He desires to change us from the inside, shaping us into a holy people.

So, what then is meekness? Meekness is not a lack of assertiveness; **it is a lack of self-assertiveness**. Meekness simply means never asserting itself for its own sake. The mark of meekness is not the absence of assertiveness. It is the absence of self-assertion.

Jesus is the perfect example of meekness. He never exalted himself. He never demanded His rights. He never got personally offended. He never was jealous or envious. He was never threatened by others. He never did

anything for the purpose of self-defense. He never asserted Himself for Himself.

## Meekness And The Gospel

How does the gospel create meekness in us? The gospel is the good news that God sent Jesus Christ as our Savior. He came to die on the cross for our sins and be raised the third day. When you believe the gospel and meditate on it, you see yourself as bankrupt and you mourn over your sin. When you do these things, you admit that you are disqualified from asserting your rights and your privileges. When you confess, “I am bankrupt and I am a sinner,” you realize that you no longer have the right to assert yourself or demand your way.

The gospel shows us our unworthiness. It should shatter our pride. We are bankrupt before God; God had to send a Savior to save us. We are sinners before God; our sin nailed Christ to the cross. Who are we to assert ourselves? Who are we to demand our way? Who are we to be offended by what others say or do? Who are we to insist on our rights and our privileges?

Believing and meditating on the gospel leads us to the meekness that Jesus speaks of in this text. The gospel is a reminder to us of our bankruptcy, our sinfulness, and our utter need to depend on God. This should have a profound impact on our lives. The gospel calls for meekness and produces meekness in us. Meekness calls us to forget about ourselves and submit to God and to others.

## The Portrait Of A Meek Person

The foundation of the beatitudes is poverty of spirit (**5:3**). We are spiritually bankrupt before God. We have nothing to present to God to make us acceptable to Him. We cannot do anything that will make up for our sin and rebellion before Him. We must yield ourselves to Jesus Christ, trusting in Him and His work to make us right with God.

The **emotional** counterpart to poverty of spirit is mourning over sin (**5:4**). We grieve over our sinfulness. We have sorrow over the sin of others. We do this because of our spiritual

bankruptcy. How can we, who are utterly dependent on God, sin against Him, rebel against Him? This breaks out heart.

Meekness is the **relational** counterpart to poverty of spirit and mourning over sin. Meekness flows out of grasping these truths from the gospel. When you see yourself as a bankrupt sinner before God, utterly in need of His grace, it will have an affect on your relationships – your relationship to God and your relationship to others.

### ***Your Relationship To God***

The gospel of Jesus Christ will lead you to meekness before God. What does it mean to be meek before God? **Matthew 5:5** is a quotation or an allusion from **Psalm 37:11**, “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in an abundance of peace.” In this psalm, we see what meekness before God looks like.

*The meek person waits the on the Lord.*

Notice the parallel between **37:11** and **37:9**. These texts reveal that the meek and those who wait on the Lord inherit the earth. Therefore, I assume from this that the meek are those who wait on the Lord. Waiting on the Lord means resting in Him in all situations, “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him” (**Psalm 37:7**). The meek person patiently waits for God to work. He knows that God can be trusted. He has a steady calm that God is His Father through faith in Christ and that God is working for His good. The meek person knows that God has his affairs in hand and is working out the details of his life according to His wisdom.

*The meek person trusts in the Lord.*

**Psalm 37:3** says, “Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, verily shalt thou be fed.” The meek person has come to understand that God is for him. Through the gospel, he knows that God is His God and Father. The meek person has a deep-rooted confidence that God is for him and not against him, which leads him to trust God.

*The meek person commits his way to the Lord.*

**Psalm 37:5** says, “Commit thy way unto the Lord.” The word “commit” in this text means to roll. The meek person has discovered that God is trustworthy. He has learned to roll his “way” on to the Lord – his life, his choices, his relationships, his business, his problems, his health, his fears, and his frustrations. The meek person accepts the fact that he doesn’t have the wisdom or strength to cope with the pressures and struggles of life. Therefore, he believes that God is able to sustain, bless, and guide him in these things.

*The meek don’t fret over the wicked.*

**Psalm 37:7** says, “Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way.” **Psalm 37:8** goes on to say that they, “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath.” These verses point to the fact that the meek person doesn’t get angry when the wicked prosper. He refrains from getting upset and complaining when evil people have a better situation in life or receive more blessing than he does. He doesn’t get angry and bitter about the prosperity of wicked people. The reason that he does this is because of the gospel. Through the gospel, he knows that God loves him and is granting him exactly what he needs when he needs it. He knows that God is accomplishing all His good, holy, and perfect will for him. He also knows the end of the wicked. He knows that God has appointed a day of judgment. He realizes that the end of the wicked will be misery, pain, and suffering, even though they may escape it in this life.

*The meek person receives the Word with a readiness to obey.*

The Word of God says, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity (*overflow*) of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (**James 1:21**). The meek person accepts Bible as the Word of God. He hears and receives the truth and strives to put it into practice. He removes anything that might hinder him from hearing and practicing the Word of

God. The meek person is pliable and flexible, conforming his whole life to the teachings of the Word of God. The meek person is teachable. He does not find fault with the Word of God or quarrel and fight against it. He believes it, receives it, and strives to live according to it.

### ***Your Relationship To Others***

Meekness makes a difference in how we relate to others. How does meekness affect our relationships?

*The meek person is not easily offended.*

The meek person is like wet wood – it will not take easily to fire. It's almost impossible to get wet wood to burn. That's how the meek person is. When others perceive and call out our weaknesses and flaws, meekness will call us to humbly accept the accusations. We know that we really are as bad as (if not worse) than what they say we are. When you see yourself as bankrupt and sinful before God, then whatever accusations come your way will seem reasonable to you. When someone says that you are sinful, ignorant, or foolish, it makes sense to you because you see the spiritual bankruptcy of your life. If someone accused me of being Kevin Meador, what could I say? I couldn't deny it or make excuses to the contrary. Why? It's because I'm Kevin Meador. I couldn't defend myself; I would just have to accept the truth. Meekness accepts the truth about itself; it's not easily offended.

*The meek person does not defend himself.*

**Numbers 12:1-4** reveals a time when Moses faced criticism. It came from those closest to him, Aaron and Miriam. What's interesting in these verses is that Moses is called the meekest man on earth. Why is he called this? It's because He didn't defend himself. He committed his cause to God and yielded to God's vindication of him. The meek person doesn't try to vindicate himself. He commits his cause to God, resting in His ability to defend him and to vindicate him. Just as Moses did, the meek person doesn't fret over

the accusations and gossip of others. He patiently waits on the Lord to defend him.

You may say, "How can I do this? This sounds impossible for me." Yet, our motivation for meekness is the gospel. In the gospel, we have come to see that we belong to God. He is our God and Father. He is for us. He will protect us and defend us in His time. Even though God knows that we are bankrupt and sinful people, He has accepted us and loves us through Jesus Christ. Our God and our Father has now become our defender! Because of this, we are liberated from the need to defend ourselves. Our Father has now become our defender and vindicator!

*The meek person does not seek revenge.*

We often strike out at others when they accuse us and wound us. Unfortunately, our response is often to gossip against others, to put others down, and to strike back at those who hurt us. Yet, the meek person doesn't have to do this. He knows that God will settle the score. The meek person obeys **Romans 12:19**, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord, 'I will repay.'"

When the Word says to "give place to wrath," it means to make room for God's judgment. We are to step aside and make room for God's work. We are not to seek revenge but to commit this in to God's hand. We are to wait on His timing for dealing with those who hurt us. Again, this seems exceedingly difficult. Yet, we have to come back to the gospel. The gospel reminds us that God is for us! He is our Defender! We don't have to seek revenge; He will take care of all things in His time and His way.

*The meek person is able to love others.*

When you turn to Jesus Christ, God forgives you and accepts you. He pours out His love on you. This sets you free to love others.

You know that you are spiritually bankrupt and sinful and yet, God loves you in spite of all this. This gives us freedom to love and serve others rather than comparing ourselves to others

and justifying ourselves before them. This sets us free from competing with others and gives us opportunity to rejoice in God's blessing on their lives. God's love for you as an unworthy, bankrupt sinner should stir your heart to love others and to have mercy on them. The good news of the gospel is that you don't have to defend yourself, tear others down, or justify yourself to others. You are to share with them the love that God has shown you.

*The meek person forgives the sins of others.*

A meek spirit is a forgiving spirit. The Puritan Thomas Watson once wrote, "Men forget kindnesses, but remember injuries." Nothing is more characteristic of sinful human nature than to remember offenses and hold grudges. It goes against the grain of our fallen nature to forgive others.

Yet, the gospel makes the difference! When we believe the good news about Jesus, God pardons us. He forgives us of all our sin. We rejoice in that forgiveness through Jesus Christ. In addition, we see that what others have done to us cannot compare with what we have done to God. Since God has forgiven us of so much more, we are willing to forgive others. The gospel creates a meekness in us that is willing to forgive others.

How does God forgive? First, God *really* forgives. God blots our sins out (**Isaiah 43:25**). Second, God forgives *fully*. He forgives all our sins (**Psalms 103:3**). He pardons every single sin. Finally, God forgives *daily*. It is said that our Father multiplies pardon (**Isaiah 55:7**). No matter how often we come to Him, no matter how many times we ask, He forgives.

This is how God forgives us. This is what we have experienced through faith in Jesus Christ. Because we have experienced this, we are now to extend it to others. We are to really forgive the sins of others. We are not to make a show, but truly forgive them from the heart. We are to forgive fully. Lost people can forgive some offenses while denying it to others. Yet, the meek person forgives fully – all offenses are forgiven. Moreover, we are to forgive daily. No matter how many times people offend, we are to forgive (**Matthew 18:21-22**).

*The meek person returns good for evil.*

It is worldly and demonic to return evil for good. Yet, it is the mark of grace to return good for evil, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which spitefully use you" (**Matthew 5:4**). The meek person doesn't answer evil with evil; he answers evil with good.

Once again, the gospel makes the difference. God sent His Son to die for sinners – for those who turned from Him and rebelled against Him. The Word of God puts it this way, "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (**Romans 5:8**). Did you catch that phrase in the middle? You know the one, "while we were yet sinners"? Isn't that amazing?

We rebelled against God. We chose to go our own way. We decided we would be God instead of submitting to the true God. We broke His commandments. We have defied and dishonored Him. And, yet, He sent Christ to die for us! What did God do? He returned good for evil. We sinned against Him and He showed us His goodness. Our Father returned good for all the evil that we did toward Him.

Now we are called to that same practice. Because God has done this for us, we are to do the same for others. Because of our experience with Him, we are to return good for the evil of others. The gospel works into a meekness that seeks to do good for evil. This is what our Father did for us; we are now to do this for others.

## Meekness And God's Promise

This beatitude comes with a gracious, beautiful promise. God promises that the meek will inherit the earth. We get a taste of this now. We receive God's salvation. We have the down payment of the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of future blessing. However, this blessing looks primarily to Christ's return. There will come a day when His people will reign with Him. There will come a day when God's people will inherit a new heaven and a new earth. This is God's

promise to His people; it is as certain as God's existence. He will keep this promise.

As believers, we live in the in-between times. We have the promise, but we wait for the fulfillment. Yet, God will be faithful to His Word. If we walk in meekness before Him and others, we will reign one day. If we submit to Him and treat others with meekness, we will be vindicated and we will inherit the earth.

Christ gives us this promise to encourage us and sustain us in this world. It's hard to walk in meekness. We struggle to be meek in an aggressive, self-assertive world. It's agonizing to forgive, to return good for evil, to refuse justifying ourselves, or freely to love others. Yet, our motivation is this promise! There will come a day of vindication. There will come a day when you will receive a new heaven and a new earth. When you struggle to walk in meekness, remember Christ's promise! When you are hard pressed to manifest meekness, remember that one day you will reign and you will inherit the earth! Christ's Word will come true one day!

## Meekness And Prayer

How can we practice meekness in our prayers? I believe one of the best ways is by praying the one another statements of the New Testament for other believers. These statements can enable you to walk in meekness toward others. Praying them can release God's power to walk in meekness.

Father, enable the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to realize that we are members one of another and are totally dependent on each other (**Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:14-26**);

Father, cause the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to be lovingly devoted to one another just as a close knit family is (**Romans 12:10**);

God, I plead that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church would honor each other above themselves (**Romans 12:10**);

Father, I ask You to make the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to be like-minded in Christ Jesus our Lord (**Romans 15:5**);

Lord, I ask that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church would accept one another in love. Deliver the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church from making hypocritical judgments about each other and/or showing partiality among members (**Romans 15:7**);

Father, I plead that You will fill the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church with the truth of Your Word, love, and humility so that we can admonish one another (**Romans 15:14**);

God enable the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to greet one another with concern and love and not with superficial, vain talk that means nothing (**Romans 16:3-6, 16**);

Lord, I plead that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church would bear one another's burdens in humility and love (**Galatians 6:2**);

Father, I plead that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church will serve one another with a sacrificial, selfless love (**Galatians 5:13**);

God, enable the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to bear with one another in patience. Deliver the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church from an easily offended spirit (**Ephesians 4:2**);

Lord, cause the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to submit to one another in love (**Ephesians 5:21**);

God, I plead that You would cause the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to encourage one another and build up one another with the Word of God (**1 Thessalonians 5:11**);

Father, I plead that You would guard the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church from being conceited toward one another. Keep the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church from provoking one another and envying one another (**Galatians 5:26**);

Lord God, cause the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to always be kind and tenderhearted toward one another (**Ephesians 4:32**);

Father, enable the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to always be forgiving toward each other as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us (**Ephesians 4:32**);

God, cause the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to speak the truth in love and not to lie to one another (**Colossians 3:9**);

Father, I pray that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church would abound and overflow with love toward one another (**1 Thessalonians 3:12**);

Lord, enable the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to have mutual concern and love without preferring one before another (**1 Timothy 5:21**);

I ask that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church would exhort one another to faithfulness and good works (**Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25**);

God, cause the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to not speak evil of each other (**James 4:11**);

Father, I plead that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church would not hold grudges toward one another (**James 5:9**);

Father, cause the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to have a burden to pray for one another (**James 5:16**);

Lord, enable the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church to have

genuine compassion for one another (**1 Peter 3:8**);

God, I plead that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church would exercise hospitality toward one another (**1 Peter 4:9**).

Another way to practice meekness in prayer is by praying for your enemies. How can you pray for those who mistreat you? I believe one of the best ways is by using the B.L.E.S.S. acrostic.

**B-Body:** Ask God to heal and strengthen their bodies.

**L-Labor:** Plead with God to bless them in their work and for blessing on their work.

**E-Emotions:** Call on God to grant healing in their emotions. Plead with Him to deal with anything that is causing him to treat you the way that he does.

**S-Social:** Pray that God will grant friends who can minister to and help this person.

**S-Spiritual:** Plead with God to meet the spiritual need of this person. Ask Him to create within the person a hunger for Him and for His Word.

## The Prayer Closet Ministry Center

As I write this newsletter, the concrete is being poured on The Prayer Closet ministry center in Hickory, MS. We are excited about entering into this new phase of our ministry. I deeply appreciate your prayers and financial support. This ministry has grown and touched churches and people across the world through your prayers and support. Through these things, you are advancing God's kingdom and making a difference in the lives of people.

Please continue to pray for us. I covet your prayers. We know and confess that God alone can enable us to do what He has called us to do. It is only by the power and blessing of God that we can do any spiritual good. Your prayers are integral to this.

I would also ask you to prayerfully consider giving to this ministry. We need financial support to do what God has called us to

do. We have the burden of not only carrying out our ministry but now also building this ministry center. Since The Prayer Closet Ministries began, we have always focused on ministry. Our goal is to glorify God and to transform lives with God's Word. We have never pushed for donations or made fundraising our top priority. Yet, I would ask you to prayerfully consider helping this ministry with financial support. Your financial gifts go directly to ministry. Every dime that comes into this ministry goes to carrying out our ministry. We have no salaried staff. The money goes directly to making a difference in the lives of people.

Thank you for your prayers, for your support, and for your interest in this ministry. We exist to be a blessing. Thank you for being a blessing to us! God richly bless you!

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