Meekness

Let us open God's Word to Galatians chapter 5, where we still have a few things to learn. A few days ago we read about the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Among the works of the flesh we identified wrath, strife, variance, envyings, and we talked about envy and what it is. In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, of which it is said that *against such there is no law*, and they that are Christ's *have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*. Amen.

I want us to focus on meekness. When we hear this word, let us picture a meek, gentle person. The opposite of meekness brings to mind harshness, a quick temper, clamour and anger, among other things. These are manifestations of the flesh, while meekness is part of the fruit of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit works with us through the Word and through circumstances to grow meekness in us, a trait that marks the Lord Jesus. Before we read about the Lord Jesus, let us remember the Old Testament, where Holy Scripture tells us about Moses, whom God described as the meekest man of his time. We may well ask how Moses came to be so meek.

Now let us read from Matthew chapter 11, verse 28: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

Let us go on through Scripture and see that God requires us to be meek. Moses was an example of meekness, and so was the Lord Jesus, who urges us: *"Come to me and learn meekness."* It is essential to understand that meekness is a fruit of the Spirit, the evidence of God's work in us.

So we must strive to grow meekness in our character. In 2 Timothy we are told to avoid strife, because a quarrelsome spirit brings confusion and every evil work. Instead, we must be gentle unto all men, apt to teach others with patient forbearance, and in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

Next, we will look at a characteristic of people in the last days, as described in 2 Timothy, chapter three, verses 1 to 5: *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."* Amen.

In verse 3, among many other negative qualities, we find the word *"fierce"*, which really means untamed. It reminds us of wild animals that are hard to tame. There are people who manage to tame some of these wild animals, and the horse is an example of an animal that can

be tamed by man. At first the wild horse does not acknowledge its master, but through certain methods, the way people in the world do it, it is brought to a gentle state and broken in.

In our spiritual setting, being meek means to tame someone or to be tamed. When someone is described as *"untamed"*, he is like a wild animal that has never been broken. In this sense, we must be tamed by God. It is God's work to tame us, people who have not yet been tamed. The taming God has to accomplish in His dealings with man is essential. Man must be brought to a gentleness like that of the Lord Jesus. In this regard we read in Titus, chapter 3, which underlines the importance of being tamed. Verse 1 urges us: *"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."* The next verse reminds us that we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

God's Word urges us to be gentle, to avoid quarrelling and to show all meekness unto all men. When we say *"all meekness"*, it means we must leave no room for harshness or disputes, but grow meekness in every area of our lives. It is important to be moderate and balanced.

The cross-references at verse 2 point us to other passages of Scripture that speak of meekness, such as in 2 Timothy, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. Exploring these references, we can better understand how much importance God gives to meekness as a trait of character. In Philippians chapter 4, verse 5, we read: *Let your moderation be known unto all men*.

This verse gives us a chance to examine our meekness, because we are urged to let our gentleness be known unto all men. So we have a clear mirror in which to look and check how we are doing with meekness, with a measuring standard the Lord has given us. If we deal with ten people, we need to ask how many of them should experience our meekness. Should it be all of them, or only eight or seven?

There are cases where a person may be meek in church, but at home behaves differently, getting irritable and shouting at his wife and children. It is essential to ask ourselves whether our meekness should be known only by those in church, or by everyone we deal with. Scripture tells us plainly that all men should know it. This calls for effort on our part and for the work of the Holy Spirit in us to grow meekness.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 4, verses 1, 2 and 3, the Apostle Paul urges us: *"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* Amen.

Here we are reminded that we must walk in a way that reflects the calling we have received from the Lord Jesus, who invited us to learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart. Humility and meekness are qualities we must show, being patient and forbearing toward one another in love, keeping the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

Continuing with Ephesians 4, verses 29 to 32, we are told: *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* Amen.

Although meekness is not named explicitly here, the passage stresses the need to put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking and every kind of malice, urging us to be kind and tenderhearted and to forgive one another, just as God has forgiven us through Christ.

So it is clear that meekness and the other Christian virtues must be shown in all our relationships, not only in church, but also in everyday life, at home and wherever we find ourselves.

Be meek toward one another and forgive one another, just as God has forgiven you in Christ. In Colossians chapter 3, meekness is again emphasised, together with humility, as virtues the Lord Jesus held up. They are closely bound to one another. From verse 12 of chapter 3 we read: *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."*

The spiritual clothing we are called to wear involves a deliberate act: putting off the old man, with anger, wrath, malice, evil speaking and filthy communication. Instead, we put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, and we cultivate a heart full of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness and longsuffering. When these qualities are present together, they create an inner harmony.

Let us return to the example of the Lord Jesus and ask how He lived, because, as Scripture tells us: *"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."* He modelled a life free of envy and a quarrelsome spirit, which bring confusion and every evil work. Heavenly wisdom is described as pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. The wisdom that is from above is described as peaceable, pure, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy, we might even say longsuffering, without partiality and without hypocrisy, in contrast to earthly wisdom. Verse 13 of James chapter 3 asks us: *"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."* It is not just wisdom, but *"meekness of wisdom"*. This is the wisdom that comes from God.

To come to this wisdom, we must work together with the Holy Spirit. But what must we actually do? What raw material do we have to work with? In one place it says that *"a meek and quiet spirit"* is of great price in the sight of God.

We must seek meekness as a pearl or a treasure. Opposite meekness we often meet a quick temper, clamour, envy and a quarrelsome spirit. Humility can almost be thought of as meekness's younger sister. By practising submission and being humble before the Lord Jesus and His Word, we can grow in meekness.

Let us think of Christ's Word as raw material in its earliest stage which, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, develops and grows in us. As the word grows in us, the fruit of the Spirit shows itself, meekness included.

We are not born meek; it is not there naturally. Sinners are described as *"children of wrath"*, not *"children of the meekness of wisdom"*. We must apply the Lord's teachings very carefully and think of the inner man as a workshop where we want to build something valuable, like a piece of furniture.

It is essential that we care about building it and do not forget about it, because otherwise, when the time comes to rest, we may realise we have accomplished nothing. How hard are we working to grow meekness? Just as in a workshop you build, sand and finish, and work with various tools to get a finished product, so we too should work on developing the fruit of the Spirit, which, as we read in Galatians 5, includes meekness. Let us reflect on the Lord Jesus' teachings and put them into practice in concrete ways, not just accept them in theory, so that they produce in us the fruit of the Spirit.

Let us open to Matthew chapter 26 and read from verse 47. Let us remember this event, what happened there and what took place. The Lord Jesus, knowing beforehand everything that was about to happen, including Judas's betrayal and that He would be seized, killed and crucified, prayed to the Heavenly Father and received the answer, understanding that the Father would deliver Him into the hands of sinners. He said: *"Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."*

With these thoughts in our hearts, let us ask what the Lord Jesus was like, what He felt in His heart when He knew what was going to happen, and how we would have reacted in His place. Let us consider whether He showed meekness. In verse 47, while He was speaking, it says: *"And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear." Amen*.

The Lord Jesus' attitude is also reflected in Isaiah's prophecy. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. What is a lamb like? Symbolically, people describe it as gentle. The lamb is meek, and the Lord Jesus embodied that meekness. We need look no further, because the verse says it all: *"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."*

Amen.

The Lord Jesus strictly followed the heavenly teachings, God's law, which is perfect. He never turned aside from the Word of God, which is eternal and holds true for us as well. Everything that held true for Him holds true for us too. What did the Lord Jesus accomplish when He was arrested?

What teachings were essential to Him, from which He would not turn aside? He Himself said: *"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"* But He did not do it. Ordinarily, the human reaction is to resist, to dig in, to be in turmoil, not to remain at peace. Heavenly wisdom is gentle and peaceable. The Lord Jesus was an example of peace. His attitude invites us to take it up as well. It is a noble stance, isn't it?

Let us reflect on what He practised and what He teaches us. We come back to the important teaching in Matthew 11:29: *"learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."* It is from Him that we must learn meekness. The Holy Spirit reminds us of the Lord Jesus' teachings and helps us remember everything He has left us in writing. And so we will find rest for our souls. Meekness is not just a desirable virtue; it brings rest to our hearts. A meek man truly has rest in his heart.

Let us turn back to Matthew 5, where we find teachings that guide us toward meekness. They were not chosen at random; they are meant to guide us, not merely to fill our time or torment our souls in order to please God. God wants His servants to be obedient, but also to understand the depth and purpose of His teachings.

Reading from Matthew 5, verse 38, let us see how the Lord Jesus applied this; we think of Him, and then of course we think of ourselves. What did He teach us here, and how did He live it out? *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."* Amen.

Perhaps we only think of certain events in our lives where this would matter: not resisting in war, not resisting the police, or other major situations. But the Lord Jesus urges us not to resist anyone. There are many events in our lives where the devil tries to get us to resist, and not necessarily in a visible way.

For example, certain things have happened to me these past days, and Satan comes with the thought that I should resist, but he doesn't want you to resist in an obvious way that others would notice, only inwardly.

Last Wednesday I went to the dentist and had a molar pulled that was badly decayed. The dentist talked with me, since I knew almost nothing about dentistry, and suggested putting in an implant there. Next to the decayed molar there was another gap, where I had had a crown that had to be removed and couldn't be replaced, which left me with two empty spaces.

The dentist suggested working on the other gap too, so as to finish the treatment sooner. He explained that an implant doesn't always take, and that if someone tells me it works 100% of the time, that isn't true. So he warned me it might not succeed. And I wondered, what should I do?

I agreed to go ahead and accept whatever God allows.

After he had done all the work, and some of you know the details, once the anaesthetic wore off I found myself with numbness and partial paralysis in my lip, my teeth and my chin, and constant pain. It has been seven days and it still hurts, it hurts badly, and it won't let up. What does the devil want? His aim isn't to get us to sue the dentist or complain that he left us partly paralysed. That kind of nerve damage, which is no small matter, can take six to eight months to heal, or it may never heal.

In a situation like this, how should we react? We should remain meek and quiet, even if the people around us suggest that we push back. How do these people influence us? Do they point us to follow the Lord Jesus' example in our dealings with others, or do they encourage us to rebel and be resentful, asking why no CT scan was done, why this or that didn't happen? Yet we are called not to resist the one who does us harm, but to be *"shewing all meekness unto all men"*. Even toward the dentist, I must show meekness.

What else can I do in this situation? The problem is there; it is done and cannot be undone. God helps us and teaches us, and when moments like this come, we must use the Word and let our meekness be known *unto all men*. We should not speak to the dentist in a resentful tone, asking him, *"So what happened that left me with this paralysis?"* to make him realise he is to blame. Instead, we must ask ourselves: What does the Lord Jesus teach us? What is a bit of nerve damage compared with the suffering of death on the cross? What does this paralysis mean for my growth in patience?

The Lord Jesus said: *"Friend, wherefore art thou come?"*, in other words, do what you came to do. We too must ask: Who is to blame? The dentist, or is there a hidden force behind the paralysis and the toothache that Peter is going through? And what should Peter do? Bear these trials? *"Let patience have her perfect work."* This is an opportunity for Peter to grow in patience, in understanding and in love. Despite the pain and the problems, he hopes to learn from these experiences.

Paul, for his part, finds joy in weakness, not because he takes pleasure in it, but because in those moments God is at work in him. He says: *"My strength is made perfect in weakness."* This doesn't mean that physical pain is pleasant, but that in moments of suffering, when he can no longer take medicine and has to endure, God can work in his life.

When it comes to meekness, the question is whether we can stay meek in the face of opposition. How should we speak to someone who provokes us? We should not blame him, but speak with him in a way that does not twist the truth.

The verse *"And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also"* urges us to stay at peace and meek, even when we are provoked. The dentist I

mentioned did his job according to the knowledge he had, just as a mechanic repairs a car according to what he knows. It is important to understand these things.

The Lord Jesus urges us to go further than simply losing our coat, to let go of the cloak as well, so as to stay at peace and avoid resentment. He encourages us to get past the sense of loss so that we don't stay stuck in resentment, and to keep meekness in our hearts.

When I am put in a position of losing something, I must change my thinking and give more. The Lord steps in and transforms the situation, so that I can remain at peace and meek. Judas came to betray the Lord Jesus, and He answered him: *"Friend, wherefore art thou come?"*, do what you came to do.

This shows His meekness. And we too are urged to follow this example: *"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."* By doing this, we stay meek; or if we don't, meekness is lost and negative feelings creep in, such as bitterness and turmoil, which can lead to quarrels and harshness. The Lord Jesus gives us the materials we need to stay meek and easy to be intreated.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy", but the Lord Jesus urges us: *"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."* This is how we become like our Father in heaven, who is good to the evil and to the good alike, sending sun and rain regardless of how they behave. Amen.

Meekness is found only in this kind of practice, where the Holy Spirit helps us, urges us on and guides us. What must we do? Put these teachings into practice. May the Lord help us work on our meekness every day, take our inspiration from the example of the Lord Jesus and keep growing, so that we become more and more like Him. Amen.

Source: *Meekness* — Unmodified Word
unmodifiedword.com/written-sermons/meekness