



CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

EXHORTATION

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SECTION LEADER:

BROTHER RODERICK TITLEY, HOLLIES FARM, ENGLISH FRANKTON, ELLESMERE, SHROPSHIRE. SY12 0JX, U.K.

Readings: Joshua 10 / Isaiah 14 / 1 Timothy 6.

“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth”

The teaching of the Lord Jesus in **Matthew chapter 5** through to **chapter 7** is generally referred to as the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ where the Lord Jesus is giving spiritual instruction specifically to his disciples.

We are told (**Matthew 5:1-2**), that the Lord Jesus on seeing the multitude goes up into the mountain and the disciples then have to walk up the mountain to sit alongside the Master to receive instruction. There are two important points for us to learn from this. Firstly that the disciples had to separate themselves from the multitude (and its ways and thoughts) and they then have to climb to be able to be with their Lord. However, the teaching that Jesus then proceeds to give to the disciples shows that the real climb isn’t the physical one that they have just endured, but a spiritual one they have to undertake throughout their discipleship to develop the mind of Christ.

As the title indicates, the particular verse we want to focus on is **Matthew 5:5** (AV) where the Lord states: *“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”*

What picture do we have in our mind when we describe a brother or sister as being ‘meek’? Someone, perhaps, who is naturally self-effacing, quiet, not prepared to put themselves forward to take on tasks within the ecclesia to the point of coming across as lacking in confidence? But this can’t be the meekness that the Lord is referring to. In **Colossians 3:12-13**, Paul states that *“meekness”* is a characteristic of the new man in Christ that has to be *“put on”*; so this is a characteristic that every brother and sister has to develop as part of their spiritual development.

So what is the *“meekness”* that the Lord is looking for in us? In Greek, the word we have translated as meekness is ‘PRAUS’. In his book on New Testament Words, William Barclay states: ‘...*praus* is used in one special sense. It is used for a beast that has been tamed, for example, a horse which was once wild but which has become obedient to the bit and to the bridle. Therefore the man who is *praus* is the man who is under perfect control. It is strength under control. But it would be wrong to say that the man who is *praus* is perfectly self-controlled; he is perfectly God controlled. In the ‘Dictionary of Bible Words’, Vine states that: ‘...the exercise of it (*praus*) is first and foremost towards God. In other words, it is that temper of spirit in which we accept God’s dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist them.’

So if we bring those two definitions together, we could state that to demonstrate meekness is to demonstrate that our behaviour is controlled by God (Barclay) through the influence of His word and the example of the Lord Jesus, and that we accept the will of God in our lives ‘without disputing or resisting’ (Vine).

In **Psalm 37:11** we read a similar phrase: *“The meek shall inherit the earth”* and if we refer back to that Psalm we are given guidance on what meekness is and what it is not.

What the saints must do if they are meek, is:

v1 *“Fret not because of evil doers: neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.”*

v7 *“...fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.”*

v8 *“Cease from anger and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.”*

In English we use the word fretful or fretting when we can see that there is something upsetting us; we are ill at ease or agitated. But that is not what scripture is referring to. In Hebrew the word translated “fret” in **Psalm 37** is CHARAH and simply means HEAT; ‘to glow, grow warm, to blaze up with anger, zeal, jealousy, be angry, burn, displeased, very wrath, to kindle’. The Psalmist is describing something that is going on inside us, he is describing the natural man who is angry. It is a reaction that we must learn to control when we face the circumstances outlined in each of the verses quoted.

In **Numbers 12:3** we are told that: *“Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.”* I would suggest that the comment is put there because when Moses is challenged in either his personal life or his ecclesial role he makes no response; there is no ‘heat’ from Moses. I wonder how we would react if we had been in Moses’ position?

Now we mustn’t think that this characteristic came naturally to Moses. The first time the word CHARAH is used in scripture is **Genesis 4:5**, where we are told that in his jealousy and envy: *“...Cain was very wrath”*, and killed Abel.

In **Exodus 2:12** we are told that Moses killed the Egyptian who was persecuting his fellow Hebrews and, while the motive was very different, presumably that same ‘heat’ must have been in his heart. So the Father takes Moses out of Pharaoh’s court and into Midian, there to learn the skills and character of the shepherd of Israel. And in **Numbers 12** Moses demonstrates that he had indeed learnt the lesson and developed the character God was looking for in the one who would lead Israel out of Egypt.

Now we come to remember the Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of Israel who has led us out of the spiritual darkness of Egypt and who truly demonstrated the spirit of meekness.

In **Matthew 21:1-5** we read of our king riding into Jerusalem. Matthew says that our Lord being the son of God and the son of David, is defined by one characteristic: he is (v5) simply *“meek”*, and over the coming hours he will demonstrate this in a very powerful way. For instance in **Matthew 26:61-68** when he is brought to the Council they challenge him with the accusation about destroying the Temple and we are told in v63 he: *“...held his peace.”* In v67 they spat on him, they buffeted and smote Him but there is no response from the Lord.

The Lord is taken to Pilate and in **Matthew 27:11-14** we are told twice that the Lord didn’t respond to Pilate’s questions to the extent that Pilate (v14): *“... marvelled greatly”*, yet he would still have our Lord scourged.

From Pilate the Lord is sent to Herod who had many questions to ask him but in **Luke 23:9**: *“...he answered him nothing”* and he is then passed across to Herod’s soldiers who debased and mocked him.

In his demeanour and response the Lord demonstrates the ultimate example of what meekness truly is. He had the authority to call upon twelve legions of angels, but accepts his Father’s will and ensures: *“...that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”* (**Matthew 26:56**). He may be the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world who would provide the covering for our sins.

In **Psalm 37** we are exhorted to: *“Trust in the Lord and do good.”* (v3); *“Delight thyself also in the Lord.”* (v4); *“Commit thy way unto the Lord.”* (v5); *“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.”* (v7). So let us strive to develop meekness so that we may, by God’s grace and mercy (v11): *“inherit the earth and delight (ourselves) in the abundance of peace.”*