

I. EMBRACING MEEKNESS - THE PREMIER NEED FOR THE CHURCH

- A. Meekness is power under control. It restrains the use of power except for redemptive purposes. It must not be confused with weakness which is the absence of strength. By nature, men exploit the weak and capitalize on the failures of others. God serves us and refuses to exploit us and values each of us. He covers our sin and rewards extravagantly for the smallest acts of service.

Lk 6:35 Love your enemies, do good...your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.

II. MISTREATMENT IS THE TESTING GROUND FOR MEEKNESS

- A. One of the most important things about our spiritual lives is how we respond to mistreatment. This includes being ridiculed or spoken to in a demeaning or sarcastic way, having things taken or stolen from us, or having others block our goals for honor or comfort. Some hope they mature in God to the point that mistreatment will no longer happen to us.

John 16:33 “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation;(trouble) but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

III. “I COMMIT MY SPIRIT” – BRING GOD INTO THE CONFLICT

- A. We see King David’s response to the Lord in ***Ps 31:5,15*** when he was mistreated. Jesus echoed this same response during His greatest crisis and moment of mistreatment in ***Luke 23:46***.
- B. To commit our spirit into God’s hands is to commit the most important issues of our life to him. By doing this, David brought God into the conflict. This was a part of David’s spiritual warfare when he was in a personal conflict.

Ps 31:4,15 Into Your hand I commit my spirit...15 My times are in Your hand...

Lk 23:46 Father, Into Your hands I commit My spirit.

IV. RESISTING VEGENANCE AND DEFENSIVENS

- A. Jesus teaches us not to retaliate with defensiveness towards those who mistreat, insult, or take advantage of us. He was addressing our attitude toward those who infringe or cause us inconvenience. Jesus was not forbidding the principle of just retribution in a legal court.

Mt 5:38-42 You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” But I tell you not to resist [retaliate against] an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels [forces, NAS] you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

- B. Jesus calls us to live with a liberated heart that is free from the spirit of revenge, defensiveness, entitlement, and the continual petty complaints against others.

V. RESPONDING IN MEEKNESS BY NOT RETALIATING WHEN INSULTED

- A. Jesus was not talking about physical harm but of insult. The right cheek was hit by a backhand to insult someone, not to injure them physically. This speaks of verbal abuse. Jesus applies the principle of non-retaliation beyond merely avoiding taking revenge outside the court system.

Mt 5:39 Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

- B. Jesus was saying to take that insult “slap in the face” and there may be another coming. We endure insults knowing that the one insulting us does not have the power to enforce them. Being insulted without retaliation makes a deep impression on others because it is so unnatural.

Rom 12:14-21 Bless and do not curse...¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil...¹⁹Beloved, do not avenge yourselves ...²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Peter 2:23 When He was reviled, did not revile in return, when He suffered , He did not threaten. But committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.

VI. RESPONDING IN MEEKNESS BY LETTING GO OF PETTY THINGS

Mt 5:40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

- A. The issue is in the smallness of the attack. Our tendency is to insist on our petty legal rights and to stand on the “principle” of the matter. Our defensiveness can manifest quickly in this sort of situation.

VII. RESPONDING IN MEEKNESS TO SMALL INCONVENIENCES ON OUR TIME

Mt 5:41 And whoever compels [forces, NAS] you to go one mile, go with him two.

- A. This has to do with infringement of our time and personal rights by those in authority. We may do the “thing” but with a bad spirit. It’s easy for us to feel insulted when others come to us with inconvenient requests.

VIII. RESPONDING IN MEEKNESS AS WE SHOW GRACE TO THE ONE WHO IRRITATES US

Matt 5:42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

- A. We are to live with a generous spirit. If someone is in need and asks to borrow something, let them use it. This is not only about people asking for our money, but for helping others when we are asked and are able to. Jesus isn’t commanding us to give to anyone who asks for money. He is highlighting the attitude of resisting someone with defensiveness who troubles us.