

Meek Does Not Mean Weak

There are three groups in the world: There are those who are trying to conquer the world, those who are trying to indulge in the world, and those are trying to save the world. All three groups hate us because, as redeemed children of God, we don't share their world views.

We see no reason to conquer the world when Jesus has already conquered the world by his perfect life, sacrificial death, and triumphant resurrection (and not only conquered the world, but conquered sin, death, and the devil as well). We see no reason to indulge in the world when the Holy Spirit, by God's grace and power, through the good news of Jesus, has set us apart from the world. And we see no reason to save the world when we know that it's destined for destruction and our citizenship is in heaven. So we humbly but boldly declare:

**What is the world to me! My Jesus is my treasure,
My life, my health, my wealth, my friend, my love, my pleasure,
My joy, my crown, my all, my bliss eternally.
Once more then I declare: What is the world to me!**

But the world doesn't care what we declare. To those who are trying to conquer the world, we are weak and in the way. To those who are trying to indulge in the world, we are pious party poopers. To those who are trying to save the world, we are naïve and stupid. But the hate is nothing new. They hated Jesus, his disciples, and the early Christians for the same reasons. The pertinent question is: How are we supposed to handle this hate?

Jesus says in Matthew 5:5, **"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."**

Do you know the big problem the world has with these words of Jesus? They see "meek" as "weak." They see "meek" as passive, spiritless, and unimpressive. They see "meek," well, as wimpy. And I wonder if we see "meek" the same way, especially according to our sinful nature.

- I wonder if, especially in today's divided, hate-filled society, we disagree with **"love your enemy"** (Matthew 5:44), disagree with **"turn the other cheek"** (Matthew 5:39), disagree with, **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"** (Luke 23:34). *(By the way, if you do disagree with any of these things, you are disagreeing with Jesus, the holy Son of God, who said these things.)*
- I wonder how quick and ready we are to take vengeance into our own hands, rather than leaving vengeance in the Lord's hands. I wonder how many of us view revenge as a right, rather than a sin.
- I wonder if we have gotten so caught up in today's charged-up society that we'd be right there, like Peter was in the Garden of Gethsemane, pulling out our sword, and cutting off our enemy's ear. *(By the way, how did that work out for Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane? Jesus rebuked Peter.)*

But above all, I wonder if there is a stubborn, self-righteous spirit in us that hears what I have just said, and responds, “Well, does that mean that Jesus just expects me to take the hate from the world?” In a word, yes. “Meekness” does mean to show restraint.

But consider this very carefully: Show me the meekest person in the whole world, and I will show you the strongest person in the whole world. How meek is Jesus, the holy Son of God, looking on the cross when we read in Matthew 27:38-44: ³⁸**Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.** ³⁹**Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads** ⁴⁰**and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”** ⁴¹**In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.** ⁴²**“He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.** ⁴³**He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”** ⁴⁴**In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.** Do you know anyone meeker than this?

Now let me ask you a series of questions:

- Did Jesus just take the mockery and insults? Yes. And don’t forget everything else he took prior to this scene at the cross – the beating, the scourging, the crown of thorns. Yet, **“as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth”** (Isaiah 53:7b). **“When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly”** (1 Peter 2:23). Did you catch that last part? Even on the cross, Jesus let his Father in heaven do the judging. But how divinely ironic, when we know the Father condemned his Son on the cross for the sins of the world.
- Did Jesus have the power and the right to come down from the cross and put all his haters in their place? Yes. All authority in heaven and on earth belonged to him. Jesus even said, prior to his suffering and death, **“No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father”** (John 10:18).
- But did Jesus come down from the cross? No. He just hung there to die. Do you know anyone more powerful looking meeker than Jesus on the cross? You do not. But do you know anyone meeker, acting more powerful than Jesus on the cross? You do not.

Why did Jesus show such powerful restraint? Because that’s how much he loved you and what he had to do to save you from your sins. He took it ALL for you, and because he did, you are forgiven of ALL sin. Do you know anything more powerful than that? Do you know a more powerful love? Do you know a more powerful message?

So this is what you want to see and understand: MEEK DOES NOT MEAN WEAK. The cross of Jesus Christ is a stumbling block and foolishness to the world because they only see the cross as weak. But WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED! Because what do we see? OUR SALVATION!

When you are taking it from the world, always remember what Jesus took for you. **“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds we have been healed”** (1 Peter 2:24). This is why we do not retaliate. This is why we don’t seek vengeance. This is why we show restraint.

What is the hate of the world when you know what Jesus has done for you? What is the hate of the world when you know you are forgiven? What is the hate of the world when you know you are free from all guilt and shame? What is the hate of the world when you know the kingdom of God is yours forever? What is the hate of the world when you know that you look forward to a new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness? The rhetorical answer to those questions is the reason you take the hate from the world. Are you weak for doing so? Not even close! Remember what we, in faith, sing:

**No guilt in life, no fear in death – this is the pow’r of Christ in me;
From life’s first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow’r of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home – here in the pow’r of Christ I’ll stand.**

Meek does not mean weak. Meek means the power of your salvation. Blessed is everyone who remembers this, especially in today’s world. Amen.