

So we're doing a series on the Beatitudes. We're calling it the blessed life. You could call it the good life. You could call it the life you've always wanted. But it was Jesus teaching, and it's a primary one of the greatest sermons and poetics of all time.

But I want to take a back view and look at the big picture of the Beatitudes. So, the Beatitudes, there's a number of them, and you'll see on here, there's blessed are the poor, mourn me, all those. And then if you're that way, then you have this promise. And leave that up there for a second, because let me tell you a story. I'm one of five boys.

I'm the middle of five boys. Growing up, we didn't have a ton of money, so if we ever went to McDonald's, it was always with coupons, right? Coupons. And for some reason, my mom wasn't with us. We went from McDonald's.

One time, my dad had coupons for Big Macs. I do not like the sauce on Big Macs. I do not like the onions on Big Macs. All right, so we tell our dad, I want this. I want that.

I want this, but not that. This, but not that. This, but not that. And he'd be like, no, I'm getting them all the same. All big Macs.

And we're like, I would scrape the sauce off. Incidentally, special sauces and mayonnaises didn't come about until after the fall. Before the fall of Adam and Eve, it was something else. But those, along with lima beans, happened after the fall. All right?

But I'm saying that because when we look at this, I mean, I love apps. Now you can say exactly what you want. No onions, extra pickle. We look at this, and I kind of look at it like a little screen in my app, okay? I want all the promises.

I want the kingdom. I want to be comforted. I want to inherit the earth. And we'll explain what that means later today, I'm going to be full, satisfied. I'm going to receive mercy.

I'm going to see God. I want all those things. But can we leave the left column out? Or maybe I'll be a peacemaker and be merciful. That won't cost me too much energy.

I'll take some of that. But I don't want the others. I don't want to have to be broken and poor in spirit. I don't want to have to mourn. I don't want to have to hunger for righteousness.

That sounds really uncomfortable. But the reality is, like my dad, God says, this is it. It's all or nothing. We cannot pick and choose. So when you think about your spiritual life, whether when you read about the persecution of the book of acts or see these things, everything in

the left column is necessary to receive what's in the right column.

The promises cannot be received unless we find ourselves in those situations, which we all will all will. We find ourselves in those situations and we let the spirit of God lead us through those. Through those distressing emotions, to the promises that he gives us. So I'm just going to say again, it's all or nothing. Jesus doesn't give us options to pick and choose.

So that's kind of the big picture with the beatitudes. But I want to. The beatitude of the week is, blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are the meekest, for they will inherit the earth. Now, I want to say this particular beatitude, but all of them would have been shocking to the original hearers.

Shocking because. So they were part of roman culture, because the Romans over. Well, in roman culture, if you were blessed, and one of the way to say blessed is congratulations to you, and the ancient Greeks would say it that way, congratulations to you, you're going to be happy. And in roman culture, it was congratulations to you because you have fame and fortune and kids and family and good reputation, congratulations to you. But even in the Pharisee culture, the rigid religion of the Pharisees, it was congratulations to you.

You are well respected, you have a great reputation, and people think you're special. But Jesus is saying, congratulations to you who are meek. And the congratulations isn't because you're meek, but you will be comforted, you will be happy in a way you've never understood. So it would have been shocking to the original hearers for Jesus to say these things, because the culture of the Romans or even the ancient Greeks, and as well as the religious culture of the day, there was nothing to be congratulated about, those kind of distressing emotions. So now when Jesus says, blessed are the meekest, they will inherit the earth, their ears have perked up because meekness wasn't valued in their culture.

So let's just define meekness. What is it? And then we'll talk about what it's not. But we'll start off by what it's not. So the opposite of meekness is self promotional.

I'll say it that way. It's proud, self promotional, overly assertive, pushy, see me, put the spotlight on me. So think about the Pharisees. They were not meek. They wanted to be seen.

They wanted to be heard. They wanted their rights and desires to be noticed and approved of. Arrogance in their that posture, if you're that way, when you're that way, when I'm that way, it's all rooted in pride. All right, so that's the. But on the other end, though, meekness is not timid and soft.

Let people walk all over you like a doormat, just give in all the time because you don't want conflict. That's not meekness. Sometimes with what we think, if you're reading Merriam Webster's dictionary, that's what they kind of define it as, somebody who's passive, timid and soft. That's not the meekness Jesus talks about. And that kind of attitude, that kind of false meekness, I'll call that, is rooted in fear.

I'm afraid of what people will think of me. I'm afraid to put myself out there because I might get rejected. So I'm just going to give in all the time and have this humble posture, which means, really, I'm just afraid to put myself out there. I'm afraid to be me. So what is it then?

If meekness isn't that, of course we understand that it's not self promotion, but it's also not this timidity, passivity. It's not that. So what is it? Meekness is primarily posture toward God. First and foremost, it's my posture toward God.

It's your posture toward God. It's not something you're born with. It's not something. It's your personality type. It's a posture you have toward God.

And the way I'll define it, too, is it's bending your will to the will of God. Because when you think about meekness, it's rooted in trust. It's trust in God. And we didn't coordinate this. But the passage read just earlier from Matthew eleven, where Jesus says, come unto me, all you who labor, and heavy laden.

And then he says, for I am meek. It was translated gentle. Some is translated humble. It's the same word in Matthew eleven that Matthew uses in Matthew five when he's translating beatitudes of Jesus. Jesus says, I am meek.

And then also later in the book of Matthew, in Matthew 21, on the Palm Sunday donkey ride into town, what Matthew refers to is a passage from the Old Testament book of Zechariah. And he says, see, your king comes to you on a donkey, meek, same word. So Jesus was not timid. He was not soft. He was not self promotional and arrogant.

But he had this quality that was referred to as meek. It was powerful. He was gentle. He was humble.

It might have also, with the hearers, sparked memories from psalm 37, which all the hearers would have known. Psalm 37 says, the meek will inherit the land. Jesus kind of took us straight from psalm 37, the meek will inherit the land. They may have also thought about Moses, who the Old Testament calls the most humble, meek man in all the earth. Somebody reminded me recently that Moses wrote the book that said that about himself.

So maybe that's not meek. I don't know. So they knew what Jesus was talking about. So that's meek. It's bending your will toward God.

It's a posture toward God. It's not a posture, first and foremost, toward people. It's your posture toward godness. And we'll talk about that. So what does that look like?

If meekness is my posture toward God, where I'm willing to bend my will to him, what does that mean? What does it look like? A few examples here. We'll start with some examples of Jesus, just from Philippians two, where it talks about the incarnation. And it says, Jesus did not consider equality with God somebody to be grasped.

It was his right. He was godness. He is God. But he didn't hold onto it. He let it go.

Cause he trusted God, because the father wanted him to do this. So Jesus, one of the most meek acts of his entire existence, was becoming human. But also, you think about Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. When he's telling God, he's expressing his desire to God. Take this cup from me.

I mean, literally. I could say it this way, God. If there's a plan B, I'm up for that. But he also said, but I want your will, not mine. So he fully expressed his desire, but then said to God, I'm willing to bend my desire to your will.

That's meek. So now you might say, which I often ask, too, is, well, that's Jesus. What about me? How does it look like in my life? And your life?

Let me give you. I've asked you a handful of examples, but this might help you. And I'm guessing you'll connect to at least one of these examples. First one is this. I used to live in a house, and between our house and our neighbor's house was a dead tree.

Big dead tree. One time, the neighbor came over to our house, and he said, hey, would you want to go together and pay to get this tree cut down.

No. I mean, we didn't have a lot of expendable income. Four kids, young kids. No, I'm okay with the dead tree being there between our property. So then about a month or so later, we had to get our property surveyed for a fence.

And lo and behold, the property line says the tree was completely on his property. Yes. All right. I don't feel bad about saying no about the tree. My rights are, I don't have to pay for any of that.

But one day when I was praying, God's like, I want you to give him. I won't say the amount was a sizable amount of money to cut down the tree. I was like, God, wait a minute, God, you saw the survey line. Didn't you see that? You know what my rights are?

I don't have to give him one dime. But God continued to say to me, in essence, will you bend your will to mine? Will you not be rigid about your rights? Would you bend your will to mine? So I gave the guy a check.

He had this odd look on his face like, what's this for? And I just told him he wasn't a follower of Jesus. God told me to. Then he really had a weird look on his face, like, really? But maybe in the situation like that where you have a right to something, but God's asking you, not your neighbors, not your husband, wife, son, daughter, employer, not them.

But God's telling you, bend your will to mind. Don't be rigid about your rights. Let me lead you. So that's example number one. Example number two is a professor I know.

His name is Doctor Dallas Willard. He taught philosophy at USC. And one day at the end of class, one of his students raised his hand and just ripped into Doctor Willard about some things he had said, just totally ripped into him in class. And he got done with his rant. And Doctor Willard ended class by saying his response to this student was, that's a good place to end class right now.

After class, another student came up to doctor Willard and said, doctor Willard, why didn't you say anything to him? You could have torn his arguments to shred. You had a right to. It's your classroom. And doctor Willard said to this other student, I was practicing the discipline of not having the last word.

I have the right to, but I'm choosing to bend my will to God and not, I'm practicing discipline of not having to do that. All right, so that's about rights. My rigidity about my rights. They need to bend them toward God. But also, we also have the desires we have that are legitimate.

We have good desires. Right? So I have a step sister. She's passed away, but she knew she was called. Her name's Tammy.

She knew she was called to be a missionary nurse in Kenya. But she told God. I mean, she was my age when we were younger, so I remember she said, I told God, I will go. Once you give me a husband, I will go, God, I will do what you want me to do, but my desire is to have a husband. Well, that's not a bad desire, right?

It's not wrong, it's not immoral, it's not unbiblical. It's a good

desire. And doesn't the Bible say God gives us the desires of our hearts? But she just said, I'm not going to go. So she worked at Riley hospital for a number of years.

I'm not going to go until God gives me hospitals. There was a point in time, though, where the spirit of God told her, I know that's your desire and I honor it. I want you to go now anyway. In other words, I want you to bend your will to my will. I don't want you to be demanding about your desires, and I want you to trust me.

And so she went to Nairobi, Kenya, worked in a missionary hospital for years. She actually passed away over there. But just the sense of. She realized I can't be demanding about my desires. Same on the topic of desires.

Not being demanding about desires. I'm going to talk about marital conflict. And you might be like, oh, no, please don't talk about that. I've talked to some of you. I talked to Dick and Jane somewhere around here.

That's your real names, married for like 47 years. So maybe you had no conflict. I don't know. So what happened? I'll tell you about a conflict.

My wife I have. But I'm going to be general about it. Not to necessary to hide it, but I think you'll relate to it. All right. And again, think about desires and what does it mean to be meek in our desires?

So my wife and I had conflict about a certain issue, and she felt strongly about a. Her desire was a. My desire was z. All right. Both desires were good.

Not immoral, not sinful. I want a yde. I want z. I wasn't even B. I was at z.

So here's what I did.

I thought I'd try to bend her will to mine and some of your wives. Don't be elbowing your husband right now. But you know what I'm talking about. I want to bend her will to mine. So I.

And then she was like, didn't want to give. So she's like, uh, uh, uh.

So then I just. I had a sense in this situation that God told me, stop doing that. Stop bringing it up.

And it didn't require an immediate decision. So we had a chance to live life, and then God bent both of our wills in the same direction, but we had to wait.

When neither one of us got exactly what we wanted, we got a better option. So sometimes, whether it's Tammy, my stepsister, or in your marriage, we can be really demanding about our desires. And God says, I want you to be meek. I want you to let me direct you. God doesn't.

He doesn't throw away our desires. He's not diminishing them. I mean, Jesus said, take this cup from me. God wants our desires to be expressed to him, but he may, at times, ask you to let go of those desires that are good, biblical, whatever else, and let him lead you. Otherwise, he may say the same thing with rights.

I had a right not to cut down the tree, doctor, or pay for it. Doctor Willer had a right to cut down a student. But instead of being rigid about rights, God may be asking you. God may be asking you, I want you to bend on that toward what I want you to do, and you'll have the argument I had. But God.

But, God, I know my rights. God's like, I do, too, but I want you to bend your will toward mine. Those are hard conversations with God because we don't understand that. God, he didn't read the Bill of Rights. What's up, God?

What's coming? You know what's going on here, but God knows what's best. He's trying to set us free. He's not trying to squash our whites. He's not trying to kill our desires.

He's trying to set us free. And once we understand that, it doesn't make it easier. But it's kind of like you did with the position and promises on the beatitudes. You realize I want the promise and I trust what God wants to give me, that if he wants me to go through those positions, like in this case, if he wants me to take a meek option, I will, because I want that. Because God's promising me that.

And if you think you can get to those things any other way than through what God wants, then do your best and get there. All right? So even in this one. So here's my challenge for the day, and that's gonna be this. Choose meekness.

Choose meekness. Cause again, it's a choice. It's not a personality disposition. It's not something someone else forces on you. God does, but not your husband, not your wife.

You don't choose meekness because I don't want to have conflict. You don't choose meekness because I'll give in this time, my spouse will give in next time. That's not meekness. That's just. I don't know what it is.

It's not meekness. It's not godly right. Choose meekness in whatever situation God has you in. If God tells you something, choose meekness. If he's asking you, I know what your desires are.

I know you have rights for these things, but I want you to bend your will toward mine. Because what really, Meekness is someone who's willing to hear the voice of God and do whatever he tells you. And you might say, okay, why? Why do I choose Meekness? What does the beatitude say?

Blessed are the meek for what they will inherit the earth. And we're like, what does that mean? I get double my property size? What does that mean? What am I getting out of this?

Well, inherit the earth. If you look at the Old Testament, psalm 37, we already referenced to, and God often told David, King David, and other times in the Old Testament told people, you will inherit the land. You will inherit the earth. And it's not simply, he wasn't selling King David or other people throughout the Old Testament. You're going to get a few three acres of property or whatever unit of measure they used, then, I don't know.

But inheriting the land, if you had the land that God gave you, it meant you were living in peace. It meant you were living in prosperity. It meant you were living under protection and safety of God. Cause he gave you the land. So when Jesus said, inherit the earth, the people weren't thinking, oh, I get more property.

They were thinking, oh, wait a minute. So you're saying if I choose meekness, you're going to give me peace, prosperity, promise, protection. I mean, it's a life we all want. That's what we want in our souls. He's like, yeah, that's the pathway to that.

And if you think you have any other pathway to get to peace and prosperity and protection, then you take it. I promise you, you won't get there unless you do the way of Jesus.

So here's again, choose meekness. Is that up on the screen? Put that back on the screen for a second. Choose meekness if you can, or even if not, let's just say that out loud with me. The two words, one, two, three.

Choose meekness. It's choice, and it's between you and God. It's not a disposition. It's not somebody else coercing you. So here's how I want to end this morning.

Sean's ended the last few weeks with an exercise where it's palms up and palms down. This week, I want us to just do palms up, and I'll have you do that in a second. Don't do it quite yet. So I want you to be willing to ask God, is there some situation or is there some relationship where you know your rights and you're not going to give up on that or give in or you know your desires and they're good, so I'm going to get it. Is there some situation or relationship where you

put that before God and say, God, you tell me what to do about this.

Trust me. It's scary because you want God to agree with you, right? I always want God to agree with me. Why wouldn't he? Right?

So will you ask God? Will you listen? All right, so keep your eyes open right now, but I want everybody to put one hand in front of you and a closed fist, like, tightly closed on your rights. You have them. It's legitimate.

Tightly closed on your desires. They're good. They're not immoral. All right, now I want you to close your eyes, and I want you to slowly open your hand to God. To God.

And I'm going to take, like, a minute of silence now, and I just want you to listen to see what God might say to you about what you're holding in your hand.

Keep your hand open, but keep your eyes closed. God, we have our hands open before you, and we do want to respond to you. We're scared. We're honest. We're scared.

We're afraid of what it might cost us if we bend our will to you with our rights or bend our will to you with our desires. But we also trust you, and we trust your promise that if we're willing to bend our will to you, you will lead us to peace and protection and prosperity and fullness of soul. So we trust you with that. And we ask this in your name. Amen.

Now I want everybody, we're going to finish my stand. Everybody stand up if you're able to. As soon as I got this topic, my mind went straight to this passage of Philippians chapter two, because we're going to read together how Jesus did that and why he did that, and he did it for us. Right? So I think about the slide that says we have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus.

So let me stop right here. So before we read this, this is Philippians two. It's a hymn that was sung in the early church, and they're basically singing about Jesus who gave up his rights and his desires. All right. And the passage says, Paul says to the Philippians, have this same attitude as Jesus had.

Then he says this. Read with me. Now go back. Yeah. Who, out loud?

Being in very nature, God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. Let's read that verse again. Now grasp your fists together. All right. Who, being in very nature, God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.

Now you can open up, because Jesus did rather out. He made himself

nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance of a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Next one. Raise your voices a little bit. Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth, and unto the earth and every tongue.

Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Go and have a seat, God, we want to follow the way of Jesus. We love you, Jesus. Amen.