

"What Does It Mean, Jesus" – August 28, 2016

By Wayne J. Schneider – Soli Deo Gloria

### ***"What Does it mean, Jesus?"***

St. Matthew 5:4

How do we discover what the third Beatitude means? What do "*The Meek*" look like, and how can we interpret "*Inherit the earth?*" Separate Bible translations enlarge its meaning: One translation says "*Happy are the meek; they will receive what God has promised.*" Still, another says, "*Blessed are those who are free of pride. They will be given the earth.*" One more: "*Healthy are those who have softened that which is rigid within them. They shall receive physical vigor and strength from God.*"

In Scotland, there is a medieval castle kept open by an old man. This guard keeps all of his personal mementos in a room in the castle, that is double locked. He calls it 'his happiness' room. When showing the castle, he often says that "*The door to my happiness room is double locked.*"

The door to blessedness in this third Beatitude is also, 'double-locked.' To open this door requires two keys, and Jesus provides them. The answer to be genuine happiness, to find blessedness, we look behind this puzzling double-locked door of our human experience. The 'keys' to this door are the words gentle and inherit; surrender and expectation.

Jesus was not emotionally blocked and no pride was found in him. Rigidity is a death of the spirit. Jesus was enthusiastic about change and growth; he was not set in his ways. Jesus is sure of his faith, but was willing to listen to others.

In his teaching and dialog with people, Jesus did not give a theory, or a theology that they had to fit within their pet theories. Rather, he taught through parable to captivate their attention, and to help them apply this truth in their lives. Jesus did not tell them what to think. He offered no new set of commandments (except one new/old

commandment!), but taught values by which we are to live. He trusted that those who heard him would make correct decisions.

There is tension or stress in our physical and spiritual worlds. In our bodies we feel stress most of the time, and some of us are never free from it. It is the locked door of worry over so many things, that makes happiness of body difficult to experience.

The tension of our spiritual and psychological worlds is the anxiety resulting from the pressures of life, it stretches us in so many directions: schedules, people, and responsibilities. Our too-full agendas are sometimes blamed for our stress, but this is not true. The essential problem is deeper, found in our choices. For example, our internal insecurities cause us to say "yes!" more often than we ought.

Jesus teaching of this parable is not to make us passive or defenseless, but to help reinforce our relationships. This kind of training opens new doors of communication for one another, without dysfunction.

There is a disparity between belief in the facts, and value judgment. Humanity in initially believed the world was flat. Science has since shown us the truth, but at the time this belief was a hard fact, a judgment of the facts. As a child, I thought Jesus was female, because he was always wearing a dress! Eventually, I corrected that misunderstanding. As an adult, my understanding and practice of meekness has helped me to grow and change.

When we believe that all people are created equally, or when we understand that "everyone matters," this is not an interpretation of fact, it is a value judgment. Much of humanity does not agree that all people are created equally, because they have a list of things required before a person is considered equal; it could be the color of one's skin, language, religion, or IQ. Or, they could score a person's value by where she fits on a scale. Jesus did none of this.

Thomas Jefferson came up with the political idea that all are created equal. He was knowledgeable about the Bible, yet he took his copy of the Bible and cut out those

passages he did not agree with. Equality among people is 'value judgment' not a scientific exploration, it is based on how we choose to view our sisters and brothers.

Jesus promises that to the meek will be given physical and spiritual strength, as those who are no longer rigid in how they think, believe, and act. You see, if we are open to change as our life experiences continue, and as our knowledge changes, our relationship with God and others will become more genuine. The meek are empowered to serve at a higher level as we serve together in equality.

Many of us learned that in the state of Washington, the weather often moves from west to east. We have a fair idea of the diverse changes in climate. We discovered there was an ice age and the likelihood that there will be another. As we grow in meekness, it will be easier to make adjustments in the physical changes that happen around us. Our health and strength are affected by the degree of our rigidity.

Of course, our climate is not our prime source of the need for meekness. The apostle Paul wrote: "*When I was a child, I spoke like a child, but when I became a man, I thought like a man.*" Maturing requires change, and meekness facilitates change. As I review my life from my first remembrance to my present vantage point, I realize that I did not always act in meekness. All too often I can see the temptation to '*not rock the boat,*' (I am a middle child!) the pride of achievement, and personal gratification were pretty much present all of the time.

'*Followers of the Way*' continue to search for the truth regarding their minds, bodies, spirits, and the world around us. We are meek in the face of life's mysteries. The meek search while the rest of the world often asks no questions and pursues no change.

The answer to authentic blessedness is being pulled, in spiritual tension, into the presence of God.

In Aramaic, the language of Jesus, this third Beatitude reads like this: "*Healthy are those who have softened what is rigid within; they shall receive vigor and strength from God.*" May it always be so for each of us. Alleluia. Amen.