

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Part 5 – They shall inherit the earth

I. Your Kingdom Come

1. Central to the life of the believer is longing for the kingdom of God – in greater and greater measure now, and in fullness one day.
Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
2. Just how central is longing for God to the Christian life? Jesus calls it the wineskin into which all that He desires to pour out must go.
Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?” 15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. 17 Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”
3. Mourning is the inward expression of that heart – longing for more of the presence of God in our life.
Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
4. Meekness is the outward expression of that heart – longing for all things to be brought into submission to the will of God.
Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

II. Created to Rule the Earth

1. On the surface, desiring to rule the earth may seem un-meek and even un-Christian. On the contrary, though, the Bible teaches that it is the very purpose for which we were made, and it is our eternal destiny.
2. The desire to inherit the earth is the other half of the longing for Eden. We long for God to come alongside us (the literal meaning of comforted) as He did in Eden, and we long to rule the earth together as we did in Eden.
Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

3. It is a reality that awaits restoration for which our souls naturally long.
Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.
4. There is a God-given desire to want to change the world. The problems arise when that longing is allowed to separate itself from a longing for all things to be in submission to the will of God.

III. Passion in Submission

1. Our picture of meekness is in many ways contradictory to what Jesus actually meant by the charge. We need look no farther than Jesus Himself to see that meekness does not always manifest the way we think it ought to.
2. It does not always look like docile surrender. Jesus went like a lamb to the slaughter without a word in His own defense, and He was so gentle the sinners and prostitutes were totally comfortable in His presence. He also confronted the Pharisees time after time and was downright violent with the money changers in the temple.
3. By the time Jesus used the word meek (Greek *praus*) it was well established in Greek culture as the virtuous center point between two errors: someone who is easily angered and someone who is not upset by anything.
4. What determines when to exercise which? It is definitely not a recognition of our place. Jesus was gentle with those who were by society's definitions below Him and bold with those who were in authority.
5. The term for meekness (*praus*) originates as a reference to the domesticating of an animal. It is the bringing of our passions and behaviors into submission to a higher authority (in the case of the Sermon on the Mount – God).
John 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

IV. A People Zealous for Good Works

1. Biblical meekness means a surrendering of our right to stand up for ourselves. It does not mean we don't stand for anything. We are to be zealous for God's sake.
John 2:13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. 15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. 16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."
Numbers 25:11 "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. 12 Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; 13 and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.'"

2. It is absolutely un-Biblical and extremely dangerous for the people of God to retreat into self-preservation mode in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.
Ezekiel 9:4 and the LORD said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.”
Matthew 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.
3. We know from Biblical prophecy that darkness will increase as the tares come to fullness, but we also know that light will increase as the wheat comes to fullness. As the world grows darker it is not a time to retreat, it is a time to cry out for a breakthrough of the glory of God.
Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.
2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.
4. Jesus is looking for a people who burn as He burns for good works and godliness.
Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.
5. We are called to be ones who affect change in the world around us – drawing out the good and holding back the bad.
Luke 14:34 “Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

V. Your Will Be Done

1. Biblical meekness means zealously pursuing a God-given end by a God-given means. It is a zealous pursuit of justice, but a steadfast refusal to pursue a human standard of justice rather than God's or to pursue justice by human methods and not God's.
2. Much of what God calls righteousness we could call injustice. Biblical justice is not based upon human rights but on complete surrender to God.
Matthew 5:38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.
3. God's means are also very different from ours. While we never know what doors God may open for us to change the world we do know where it starts: a radical pursuit of holiness, sacrificial love, giving, prayer and fasting.
4. Meekness means directing our passion in a constructive way. We restrain the lashing out of our own flesh and instead channel our passions into partnering with God in affecting real change.
Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

VI. Entering into the Struggle

1. Disconnecting from the great struggle between light and darkness going on in this world puts our hearts in a dangerous place. It leaves us prone to accuse God by defining Him according to the current state of our world rather than His ongoing work of redemption.
2. To stand silent leaves room for the same accusation in our heart that is in the heart of the wicked – that God does not see. Instead, we stand on the truth that God sees and hears, that He is zealous to act on behalf of the oppressed.

Psalm 10:13 Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, “You will not require an account.” 14 But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief, To repay it by Your hand. The helpless commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless... 17 LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear, 18 To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, That the man of the earth may oppress no more.

3. Disengaging leaves us prone to offense when God begins to shake things. God's judgment is meant to be our redemption – our peace. The final victory in a long war against our adversary – sin. The problem is we're barely engaged in the battle, so to us God's judgment looks like the end of peace and the beginning of war.

Psalm 97:10 You who love the LORD, hate evil!

4. In times of darkness and injustice God is always looking for something: an intercessor.
Ezekiel 22:29 The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. 30 So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

Isaiah 59:14 Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter. 15 So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him That there was no justice. 16 He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.

5. In this darkest hour He will raise up the greatest cry – a Bride who is not silent but enters in to the cry of His own heart crying out for justice day and night.

Luke 18:7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

Isaiah 62:1 For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns... 6 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, 7 And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

VII. Agents of Change

1. Mourning is our God-given means of reaching for revival. As we enter into longing for more of God's presence He comes alongside us to console us.
2. Meekness is our God-given means of reaching for transformation. As we enter into longing for our world to come into submission to the will of God He breaks in and shifts things in heaven and on earth.