**Lesson 4—The Power of Gentleness**

*Blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth*. Matthew 5:5

***Lesson Notes:***

Welcome back. This week we talk about the power of gentleness. Yes, that’s right - gentleness. Another word for gentleness is *meekness*. Matthew 5:5 is often translated *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*.

***Questions:***

1. What’s the first word, thought or image that comes to your mind when you hear the word *gentle*. How about *meek*? What do you think of when you hear that someone is meek? Is it positive or negative?
2. The condition that merits God’s promise in the verse is gentleness. The word *gentle* can also mean *humble*. Regardless of how you translate it, it’s probably not on the list of attributes that are considered vital for getting ahead in our culture.

What are the risks, or perceived risks, that might face the meek or humble in today’s western world?
3. Get your Bible and turn to Psalm 37. Have someone read the Psalm out loud. It was clearly a favorite Psalm of Jesus’ and heavily influenced his thinking. Try to listen for the places in Psalm 37 that might have influenced Jesus.

Where did you hear Jesus in the Psalm? Specifically, how many times did you hear the writer reference waiting, resting, and inheriting the earth?
4. The promise given to those who are meek or gentle is that they will *inherit the earth*. The word *inherit* comes from a noun which speaks of *a piece, a portion, or a share of something*. The verb form simply means to receive the portion that you are due. It describes an heir receiving what is rightfully his or hers.

What’s interesting and even encouraging here is that the heirs mentioned here are described as meek. The basically received without any effort what God had for them. And notice that their inheritance is *the earth*—the land or the soil.

So put yourself back in that impoverished, subjugated and agrarian crowd that Jesus addressed and think about the weight of what he was saying. In his Kingdom, what is the promise to those who are meek and humble? (And, you can’t say “inherit the earth” in your answer. Use different words
5. Now contrast that with today’s “elbow your way to the front” culture. What is Jesus saying about Kingdom culture? Can you think of any other places Jesus gave similar teaching to his disciples? (Hint: See Matthew 25-28.)
6. Talk about the differences between achieving something and receiving something. In our world we value high achievers, and we look down on those who are entitled and want everything given to them. However, it’s different in God’s Kingdom. That’s what this verse is teaching. It’s impossible to achieve the reality of God’s Kingdom on your own, on your own power. You just can’t go do it. You have to receive it. It all comes from God.
7. Consider the examples of King Saul and King David. One was driven (Saul), one was called (David). One tried to achieve his kingdom, one waited for it and received it. One lost it even though he fought to keep it. One had it given to him and his name was established forever. See the difference?
8. Read John 15:4-5. Where do you see the contrast between achieving and receiving in these verses?
9. Ok, time to get down to brass tacks. What are the implications of this Beatitude on how we live, work, spend and treat enemies or competitors? How are we to live in light of Jesus’ teaching in this verse?
10. Let's acknowledge the interconnection here. The meekness that Jesus describes in verse 5 is fruit of the comfort the grieving receive in verse 4. Because they grieve over their brokenness, they receive comfort. Because they’re comforted, they walk in gentleness and meekness instead of striving. And because of that, they receive the earth. They are given everything they need (See Matt 6:33.)

And as we’ll see next week, because they have received the earth, their pursuits change. They decide instead to pursue God’s righteousness and God’s justice. Stay tuned.