

‘Meek’ is not ‘weak’ – Matthew 5:5

What we need to understand is what Jesus intended to say. We need to interpret from His point of view, not ours, or anyone else’s. First: ‘meek’ is not ‘weak’, it is power under control. A little kitten is merely weak; a lion can act in a meek way, with its claws withdrawn (with animals we use ‘tame’). Further, to be meek is not to remain passive in the presence of evil, nor is it to remain inert when God is working on you. It could be the lack of personal ambition, but that does not jive with the second half of the verse. Second: “inherit the earth” is not a synonym for ‘go to heaven’ (nor for receiving spiritual blessings); the earth is one thing and Heaven is another (and spiritual life yet another). Also, ‘the’ earth (the Text has the definite article) must refer to this present earth, not to a new or different one. Surely, because there is only this earth in the context, and the Apocalypse would not be written for another 60 years.

We may begin with Moses. Numbers 12:3 says: “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth”.¹ Hey, wait a minute! How could he be the meekest man on the planet? He could, precisely because he was also the most powerful man on the planet, in his day. Moses was not weak, he was meek. Further, he did not remain passive in the presence of evil, nor did he remain inert while God was working on him.

Then there is Sovereign Jesus, while He walked this earth. Matthew 11:29 says: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls”. Jesus declared Himself to be ‘meek’. Can anyone imagine that Jesus was weak? I think not! Much like Moses, Jesus was meek precisely because He was the most powerful, in His day. It is more than clear that He did not remain passive in the presence of evil, nor did He remain inert about the suffering determined by the Father.

Very well, meek is power under control, but just how can the meek ‘inherit the earth’? To begin, they will need power, lots of power. Then, they will need to know how to make use of that power. Surely, because in order to inherit the earth they will have to take it out of Satan’s hand. Has anyone forgotten Luke 4:6? While Satan was testing Jesus he offered Him the world, saying, “because it was handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I want to!” Recall that Jesus did not deny Satan’s right to do so. It is true that Jesus won the victory over Satan by the cross and the resurrection, but for His own reasons God permits Satan to continue operating in this world as if he were still the owner. It is up to us to oblige the enemy to acknowledge his defeat. It is up to us to “undo the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8); yes, because Jesus said, “Just as the Father sent me, I also send you” (John 20:21). Well then, where is the necessary power for doing it?

We may begin with Ephesians 3:20—“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is working in us, to Him be the glory in the Church in Christ Jesus, . . .” The range of my imagination represents my personal limit; obviously I will not ask for something that I cannot even imagine. But the power that is working in me (us) “is able to do immeasurably more”. In other words, on God’s side the power is unlimited. It is on our side that the business fails. We do not know how to ask, or what to ask for, and even less how to use such power. But that the power is available to us, yes it is.

¹ Taken from the translation of the Jewish Publication Society.

Consider Ephesians 1:19-21. Paul is praying for the Ephesians, and he asks that they may be able to know three things, including:

What the exceeding greatness of His power into us who are believing, according to the demonstration of the extent of His might 20 which He exercised in the Christ when He raised Him^[S] from among the dead and seated Him at His^[F] right, in the heavenly realms, 21 far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion¹—even every name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the next.

The Text does actually say “power into us who are believing”—please note that the power is to be within us, but the verb ‘believe’ is in the present tense; that you believed yesterday is not enough, you must be believing today. Note also Christ’s present position: at the Father’s right, far above any and all ranks and names, which includes the angelic beings and Satan himself. Now consider Ephesians 2:5-6—“But God, . . . made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus”. This is tremendous! Here we have our position and authority. If we are in Christ we are at the Father’s right, and therefore we too are above the enemy and all his host.

Now consider Luke 10:19—“Take note, I am giving² you **the** authority to trample on snakes and scorpions,³ and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing at all may harm you.” Since Jesus has been given “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18), He is certainly competent to delegate some of that authority to us. Now then, authority gives orders to power. Since Satan’s power is a malignant power, we should not think of using it to do good; to do good we have the power of Christ, that is far greater. I believe that we should use our

¹ It is generally understood that the reference is to the angelic hierarchy. The two thirds that remained faithful to God were never a problem, so presumably the special point is that Christ defeated Satan, with his one third, and is now (as the God/man, the second Adam) seated ‘far above’ that enemy.

² Instead of ‘am giving’, perhaps 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘have given’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—a serious error. Jesus said this perhaps five months before His death and resurrection, addressing the seventy (not just the twelve). The Lord was talking about the future, not the past; a future that includes us!

³ The Lord gives us the authority to “trample snakes and scorpions”. Well now, to smash the literal insect, a scorpion, you don’t need power from on High, just a slipper (if you are fast you can do it barefoot). To trample a snake I prefer a boot, but we can kill literal snakes without supernatural help. It becomes obvious that Jesus was referring to something other than reptiles and insects. I understand Mark 16:18 to be referring to the same reality—Jesus declares that certain signs will accompany the believers (the turn of phrase virtually has the effect of commands): they will expel demons, they will speak strange languages, they will remove ‘snakes’, they will place hands on the sick. (“If they drink . . .” is not a command; it refers to an eventuality.) But what did the Lord Jesus mean by ‘snakes’?

In a list of distinct activities Jesus had already referred to demons, so the ‘snakes’ must be something else. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus called the Pharisees a ‘brood of vipers’, and in 23:33, ‘snakes, brood of vipers’. In John 8:44, after they claimed God as their father, Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil”. And 1 John 3:10 makes clear that Satan has many other ‘sons’. In Revelation 20:2 we read: “He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is a slanderer, even Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and bound him for a thousand years.” If Satan is a snake, then his children are also snakes. So then, I take it that our ‘snakes’ are human beings who chose to serve Satan, who sold themselves to evil. I conclude that the ‘snakes’ in Luke 10:19 are the same as those in Mark 16:18, but what of the ‘scorpions’? Since they also are of the enemy, they may be demons, in which case the term may well include their offspring, the humanoids [see my paper, “In the Days of Noah”, available from prunch.org]. I am still working on the question of just how the removal is done.

delegated authority to **prohibit** the use of Satan’s power, against us and in other circumstances —based on my own experience, I would say that it is necessary to be specific. When Jesus said “and nothing at all may harm you”, I take it that He was presupposing that we would be using our delegated authority to forbid any initiative against us. I do this every day. However, the protection is not absolute; every now and again my Owner allows the enemy to get to me. And why would God do that? I understand that it is to keep me humble and dependent.

But just how do we manage to ‘inherit the earth’? How much space can a solitary person occupy? For example, in order to transform a neighborhood, I suppose it will require a collective effort from the ‘meek’ who live there. By definition, the ‘meek’ are people who know how to use God’s power and are disposed to do so. They should also know how to be guided by the Holy Spirit. And it will be even better if at least one of them is maintaining an intimate relationship with God to the point that he can know what the Father is doing (John 5:19).¹ Still, in general terms, since “the Son of God was manifested for this purpose: to undo the devil’s works” (1 John 3:8), I believe that we may and should take action against anything that is of the enemy. Since God Himself hates “all workers of iniquity” (Psalm 5:5), I take it that we also can and should do so.² And in Psalm 97:10 we have a command to hate evil. So how may we remain passive in the presence of evil if we are commanded to hate it? And then there is the very nature of *agape* love: it necessarily includes the hating of evil, because of the consequences of evil against the loved ones.

Let us give a little more thought to the idea of remaining passive in the presence of evil. In Ephesians 6:10-11 we are commanded to “be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power” and to “put on the full armor of God”. What for? Consider 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

Well, we do walk about in flesh, but we do not wage war that way,³ 4 because the weapons of our warfare are not physical, but are powerful in God for demolishing strongholds.⁴ 5 demolishing sophistries⁵ and every arrogance that sets itself up against the knowledge of God; taking captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”⁶

If we have weapons for waging war, it is because we are supposed to be doing it! Psalm 78:9-10 is to the point: “The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back

¹ Psalm 32:8-9 also deals with intimacy: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with my eye. Do not be like the horse . . . whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.” To guide with the eye requires intimacy, and to develop intimacy requires time.

² In John 6:44 Sovereign Jesus declared: “No one is able to come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him”. (With objects the verb ‘draw’ means ‘drag’.) So, would the Father ‘draw’ someone that He hates?

³ Well, at least we shouldn’t!

⁴ The subject of biblical spiritual warfare is generally not well understood in Christian circles. Much of what has been written concerns defensive procedures, but this text speaks of demolishing strongholds (presumably the enemy’s, since no one will want to destroy his own), that has to do with taking the offensive. For more on this subject the reader may consult my site: www.prunch.org.

⁵ A sophistry is a false argument that is presented in such a way as to appear correct, and impressive, especially if not properly analyzed. Satan has purveyed a number of sophistries designed to keep people from the knowledge of God, such as humanism, relativism, materialism, Freudianism, and so on.

⁶ I suppose that the two gerunds—‘demolishing sophistries’ and ‘taking captive every thought’—are some of our weapons, being grammatically subordinated to ‘demolishing strongholds’. In the context, the thoughts we take captive are not our own (though that also is a good thing to do), but those of the enemy’s servants. I do this in so many words, aloud or in thought, and thereby avoid unnecessary complications.

in the day of battle. They did not keep the covenant of God; they refused to walk in His law.” God considered those men to be traitors; by refusing to fight, albeit well armed, they broke the covenant. So there it is: if we have weapons for waging war, it is because we are supposed to be doing it! Of course, because the enemy of our souls never stops attacking us; never.

But just how does one go about forbidding and undoing the enemy’s works? As part of the armor described in Ephesians 6 we find “the sword of the Spirit” (verse 17). A sword is a weapon for offense, although it is also used for defense. Now the Text declares that this sword is “the ρημα of God”—ρημα, not λογος. It is God’s Word spoken, or applied in a specific way. Really, what good is a sword left in its sheath? However marvelous our Sword may be (Hebrews 4:12), to produce effect it must come out of the scabbard. The Word needs to be spoken, or written—applied in a specific way.

In the Bible we have many examples where people brought the power of God into action by speaking. Our world began with a creative word from God—spoken (Genesis, 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; and see Hebrews 11:3). Moses did a lot of speaking. Elijah spoke (1 Kings 17:1, 18:36, 2 Kings 1:10). Elisha spoke (2 Kings 2:14, 21, 24; 4:16, 43; 6:19). Jesus did a great deal of speaking. Ananias spoke (Acts 9:17). Peter spoke (Acts 9:34, 40). Paul spoke (Acts 13:11; 14:3, 10; 16:18; 20:10; 28:8). In short, we need to speak!

Here in Brazil, there are said to be many millions of ‘believers’(up to 35), but they evidently are making very little difference in the national life. Satan controls all the governments—federal, state, county. Satan controls the education, the instruction, at all levels (beginning with the nurseries). Satan controls the health services, the commerce, the media, the culture, the entertainment, and a fair share of the churches—any church with a pastor who is a Freemason is in Satan’s hand (in Brazil a very great many pastors are Freemasons). Well dear me, how may it be possible to ‘inherit the earth’ in a country like Brazil? What can we do in concrete terms so as to change that reality?

I would like to offer a proposal, as follows. Consider the public schools in a given town, both grade and high. It has been a while since they were taken over by demons, drugs, sex, crime violence—the teachers have a hard time to even maintain a semblance of order; to teach something constructive has become almost impossible. The time has come for a collective effort by the ‘meek’ who live in that town. With the authority and the power available to them, they can clean up their schools: they should send the demons to the Abyss, forbidding any others to take their place; they should declare the premises to be off limits to any drug, illicit sex, indecent conduct, crime, violence, and whatever else the local situation dictates; thereupon the teachers can get back to teaching, in an ambient of peace and respect. Now then, in neighboring towns there will be no lack of distressed parents, seeing their children being damaged at school. When they hear of the transformation going on in the schools of the neighboring town, what will they do? They will run over to find out how it was achieved; and in that way the transformation will spread. What was done in the schools can be done in other areas as well; health, commerce, government, and so on, until the whole country is changed, thereby inheriting the land where they live.¹

¹ I happen to believe that we will participate in the administration of the Messianic Kingdom, as well as of the new earth, but that is a different topic.

“The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1). Really now, how many believers do you know who conduct themselves like lions? A lion can act in a tame way, but can also be a fearsome beast. The prophet Elijah was a lion type, and the third captain fell on his knees before him (2 Kings 1:13). A lion type believer knows that he can be bold because “the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” (2 Chronicles 16:9). “Since God is for us, who is against us?” (Romans 8:31). So take courage! Have at it!