

## THE BEATITUDES: PORTRAIT OF THE MASTER PART 3: BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

Like most of the Beatitudes, the blessedness of the meek seems counter-intuitive. Our world teaches us that to the victors go the spoils, and that the earth belongs to the strong who take it by force. But Jesus promises that the earth he has come to create will belong to the meek, fulfilling the words of Psalm 37: “Yet a little while, and the wicked man shall be no more; though you mark his place he will not be there. But the meek shall possess the land, they shall delight in abounding peace” (10-11).

Meekness in the Bible does not mean weakness or mouseyness. It refers to the spirit of those who, when facing a situation over which they have no control, do not grumble or complain or lash out in frustration but patiently and faithfully carry on, placing their hope in God, who reigns over all. Far from being a sign of weakness, seen like this, meekness is a sign of true strength which comes from our faith in God.

Jesus perfectly models meekness in his own life as he constantly surrendered himself to the will of the Father, particularly in his passion and death, throughout which he uttered no complaint but remained silent and resolved, fulfilling the words of Isaiah the prophet: “Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7). It was his meekness that enabled him to fulfill the Father’s will for our salvation, passing through the humility of the cross to the glory of the Resurrection: “The Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity. If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendents in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him...Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; and he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses” (Isaiah 53:10,12).

Such a willing spirit of surrender may seem difficult to us, conditioned as we are by a world that values power and control and virtually unlimited self-determination above all else. Meekness is very easy, however, when we join ourselves to Christ: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Matthew 11:28-30). Where do our frustrations and anxieties in life come from if not our endless, hopeless quest for control - over ourselves, over things, over others? And in the end, after all the times we butt our heads against the wall, how much control do we really have? The key is to let go of our desire for control and to place our hope in God. If we do that, the peace he promises will be ours, not just in the future, but right here and now, because we will realise the liberating truth that we don’t have to carry the world on our shoulders; God already does. Letting go of my desire to control it, the whole world truly becomes mine, not as a possession, but as a

limitless opportunity to know true joy by selflessly loving God and neighbor, just as Christ does. That is why the meek will inherit the earth, and that is why they are blessed.