



Luke 22:39-53 & 63-71 - Jesus' Model of Meekness

Opening Discussion: share a story about a time you watched someone exercise strength under control.

- **Peter modeled weakness (vs54-62) while Jesus modeled meekness.**
 - **We must acknowledge our weakness, and then follow in Christ's meekness.**
 - We often confuse meekness with weakness. They actually sound similar, and yet that is the point.
 - Meekness isn't necessarily mild like the Christmas Carol communicates. Meekness isn't cowardice; in fact, meekness by definition is confident and courageous because it gives someone the ability to give a measured response in the face of threat or disrespect instead of an explosive reaction.
 - Meekness put's its long and strong arm against the angry bully and allows him to keep swinging with out the need to swing back. Meekness is a gentle giant.
 - When someone is meek, it means they understand both their strengths and weaknesses and are properly measured in their actions and reactions.
 - Meekness is strength under control.
 - Meekness responds rather than reacts.
 - **As believers, we cannot be meek unless we are first fully surrendered to God, and fully trust God.** If we are filled with pride or fear, meekness is not truly attainable. Pride and Fear always eventually out themselves.

Question: Why is meekness so difficult to exhibit when someone is struggling with pride and/or fear?

- As we enter this garden story and glean intimately from the model of Christ in His meekness, I want to glean from the wonderful silver-tongued preaching of Charles Spurgeon. He said this in his sermon on Gethsemane: "Since it would not be possible for any believer, however experienced, to know from himself all that our Lord endured in the place of the olive-press, when He was crushed beneath the upper and the nether mill-stone of mental suffering and hellish malice, it is clearly far beyond the preacher's capacity to set it forth to you. Jesus Himself must give you

access to the wonders of Gethsemane: as for me, I can but invite you to enter the garden, bidding you put your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground.”¹

- **Jesus modeled trust**
- **Luke 22:39–46 [39] And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. [40] And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” [41] And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, [42] saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” [43] And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. [44] And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [45] And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, [46] and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”**
 - **Jesus encouraged prayer in advance of temptation.**
 - This admonishment was very much a part of the Lord’s prayer he had given to his followers. “Lead us not into temptation...deliver us from evil!”²
 - If you begin to pray during temptation, you are already behind in the fight of faith.
 - Paul stated “pray without ceasing” in 1 Thessalonians 5:17!
 - As I said last week, the concept of praying in advance is the concept of “Abiding in Christ”.
 - **John 15:4-7 [4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. [6] If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire,**

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Passion and Death of Christ*. (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1965) 8

² Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

and burned. [7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (ESV)

- The disciples were sleeping because of sorrow or discouragement. This was a situational depression in their sadness of heart that Jesus was headed into grave danger and even death. When we are discouraged, our tendency is to ruminate ourselves into hopelessness, but Jesus encouraged his disciples to do the opposite through prayer.

Discussion: why is constant and consistent prayer so important to the every day life of the believer? Share personal practices with each other of how you as individuals remain in a perpetual state of prayer.

- **Jesus sought His Father's will.**

- First of all, don't miss that Jesus prayed alone. In fact, he would walk through his whole trial and death alone. Jesus went to death alone, so that you and I would not have to be alone in death.
- Secondly, don't miss the reality that Jesus asked His Father for a different option. This should give us heart and courage to plead with our Heavenly Father as well when we are uncertain or fearful of what we perceive to be His plan for us. However, we must do this with a heart of trust that our Father's will is sovereign and perfect. Jesus acknowledge out loud that His Father's will was what He desired to do.

Question: What does the Bible say about prayer in connection with our Heavenly Father's will?

- **Jesus prayed more fervently in struggle.**

- Jesus was "in agony"! This word in the greek communicates the idea of mental wrestling, or wrestling with ones mental struggles and emotions.³
- Jesus was praying with loud cries and tears!⁴ Jesus was praying so fervently that his tears were mixed with sweaty blood. When the body is under great stress, our sweat glands can be under such pressure that they bleed. This medical condition is called hematohidrosis.⁵

³ agōnia (Strong's G74 ἀγωνία)

⁴ Hebrews 5:7

⁵ <https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/hematidrosis-hematohidrosis>

- Puritan Richard Baxter stated that Jesus' anguish "was not from the fear of death, but from the deep sense of God's wrath against sin; which He as our sacrifice was to bear: in greater pain than mere dying."⁶
- What Jesus was willing to do required a deep trust in the faithfulness and goodness of the Heavenly Father. It reminds me of Isaac trusting his father Abraham, and surrendering to the process of having his hands bound and his body laid on the altar. Jesus, our sacrificial lamb, followed the same path, but fulfilled the sacrifice himself. No ram was offered in replacement, for Jesus was the lamb.

Question: What do you find encouraging about the truth that Jesus wrestled mentally and emotionally with doing His Father's will?

- **Jesus modeled surrender**
- **Luke 22:47–53 [47] While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, [48] but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" [49] And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" [50] And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. [51] But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. [52] Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? [53] When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."**
- **Jesus offered grace and healing in the midst of betrayal.**
 - To Judas, Jesus spoke with grace. He asked him why he would exhibit a sign of friendship in his betrayal, for the kiss on each cheek was a sign of welcome and friendship. Jesus was asking this to give Judas every opportunity to see and recognize Christ's meek and gentle kindness. ⁷ It is after all, kindness that leads to repentance according to Romans 2:4.

⁶ Richard Baxter, as quoted by J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Luke* (1858; reprint Cambridge: James Clarke, 1976), 2:427.

⁷ Alexander Maclaren states: "Thus to the end Christ seeks to keep him from ruin, and with meek patience resents not indignity but with majestic calmness sets before the miserable man the hideousness of his act. *Expositions of Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 252.

- To Malchus, Jesus offered healing instead of defense.⁸ Jesus did not need to concern himself with the fallout of this attack against him, but he was more concerned with the lives of his captors than defense and retribution.
- One of the most difficult asks of God that we struggle to surrender to is when we are mistreated and disrespected and the right course of action is to extend grace and healing.
 - Let me be clear, grace and healing isn't always the first course of action, but it is always the long term goal of conflict resolution.
 - However, sometimes God does lay upon us the incredibly difficult burden of responding with kindness rooted in grace and mercy to difficult, offensive and unkind people. This takes a willing act of trusting God and surrendering to his providence. Mistreatment from others unjustly given can feel like a cruel providence. The Gospel reminds us that it is a privilege to endure hardships on behalf of Christ.⁹
 - Illustration: when I smote the rock like Moses.

Group Reflection: take a moment to look up the lyrics of the old Hymn “I Surrender All”. What is significant to you about these lyrics when we process what it is like to follow Jesus’ example of surrendering to our Father’s will?

- **Jesus understood and accepted what God had asked of him.**
 - Jesus’ statement that this was “your hour, and the power of darkness” was a nuanced way of saying: “Satan is being released to work his plans, and you are helping him.” This is nuanced because in the statement directly before, he reminded them that no violence had been executed against him when he was in the temple courtyard preaching and teaching and turning over money tables. This was not because the religious leaders didn’t want to seize him; it was rather that God had not allowed it with the pressing crowds, which is why they needed Judas’ help to do this in the secrecy of night when no crowds were around.

⁸ John 18:10 gives us the name of the High Priest’s servant: Malchus.

⁹ Matthew 5:11–12 [11] “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. [12] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (ESV)

- God's providential plan was not being thwarted. Satan, whether he recognized it or not, was still under God's decreed will. This was why Jesus had the courage and confidence to surrender to his trial and death.
- As we looked at this passage, Jeremy reminded me that this is another example of the "sovereignly allowed sifting" of Satan. God is still sovereign over this moment, but Satan believes he is executing a perfect plan. It reminds me of the book of Job, and Satan truly believing he is going to teach God a lesson.¹⁰
- **There are two different responses to God's providence, or sovereign oversight:**
 - **Confidence:** we accept the strength of truth that God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent.
 - **Control:** we get angry that God is in control and we bristle with frustration.

Group Discussion: which do you tend to exhibit more with God's providence: confidence or control? Why? What other issues might be under the surface in your relationship with the Lord if you struggle to rest in God's providence?

- **Jesus modeled meekness**
 - Meekness is strength properly exercised, or strength under control.
 - Weakness reacts but meekness responds.
 - Jesus responded in two ways during his trials.
- **Luke 22:63–71 [63] Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. [64] They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" [65] And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him. [66] When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, [67] "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, [68] and if I ask you, you will not answer. [69] But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." [70] So they all said, "Are you the Son of God,**

¹⁰ Ephesians 1:11-14

then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” [71] Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”

- **Jesus used silence for strength in responding to attack instead of lashing out in an angry reaction.**
 - I want to once again exercise caution to make sure you don't hear what I am not saying.
 - Is there ever time for “heat” in our response? Yes, and Jesus modeled that in the temple courtyard when he turned over the money tables and whipped the money changers. (John 2; Matthew 21)
 - Paul even said there is a time to be angry, but without letting our anger spill over into violent sin. (Ephesians 4:26)
 - What is taking place in this moment for Jesus is a willing surrender to what God has asked Jesus to endure, which included the unkind attacks (both verbal and physical) of these ungodly men.
 - There are times that God asks his servants to endure unfair treatment and respond with silence.
 - Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Nehemiah and several of the prophets all had to endure this type of treatment and either respond with silence or with only the exact words God gave them to say in response.
 - As a pastor, I have endured this type of scenario several times, and every time I chose to let God do the speaking, I experienced the wonderful blessing of living without guilt and seeing God do work beyond my fleshly abilities.
 - I can remember adults in the old days telling kids to “speak when spoken to”. The safest way to know what it is that God is asking of us in our response to others is to speak when spoken to by the Holy Spirit. Don't speak, if he isn't speaking to you.
 - Do I just ask God to tell me what to say? Absolutely!
 - **James 1:5–6 [5] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. [6] But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. (ESV)**

- What if I don't know what to say and I just keep waiting? It might get awkward, but you won't regret remaining quiet until you know what to say.
- **David said "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!" - Psalm 141:3**
- **Solomon famously stated: "Even a fool can seem wise when he keeps his mouth shut!" - Proverbs 17:28**

Question: was there ever a time when silence was the only recourse or the right response to a difficult situation? How did you come to that conclusion? Was there ever a time when you should have spoken instead of remaining silent?

- **Jesus offered truth in response to mistreatment.**
 - If God gives you a message to speak, be sure to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!
 - David faced his own version of unfair treatment as part of God's plan. He worked very hard to respond only as God would have had him to respond, and he wasn't always perfect at it. Here is his own prayer for help to respond correctly with truth:
- **Psalm 141 [1] O LORD, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you! [2] Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! [3] Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! [4] Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies! [5] Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it. Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds. [6] When their judges are thrown over the cliff, then they shall hear my words, for they are pleasant. [7] As when one plows and breaks up the earth, so shall our bones be scattered at the mouth of Sheol. [8] But my eyes are toward you, O GOD, my Lord; in you I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless! [9] Keep me from the trap that they have laid for me and from the snares of evildoers! [10] Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by safely. (ESV)**

- What can we always count on as the ultimate response of truth no matter the circumstances? The only universal truth response is the Gospel. The Gospel is always the best truth applied in any situation!
- As we wrap up this section of Scripture, it is important that we glean a proper Gospel perspective. This passage, although useful for applying Christ's model of meekness, was given to show that Jesus was required to exercise his meekness because of our universal weakness.
- You and I are just like Peter, Judas, Thomas and all the other disciples too. We struggle not to doubt, deny or even betray Jesus in our minds and hearts. Jesus, in his compassion, walked through the trials and sacrifice of the cross with a view to rescue us from the death we deserved. He knew he would rise again, he had predicted it.¹¹ **He was meek, because we are weak.** The knowledge of this Gospel truth allows us to acknowledge our weakness and then follow in his footsteps of meekness.¹²

Concluding Discussion: can you see a time in your life when Jesus exercised meekness with you in response to a sinful attitude or action?

¹¹ Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; 26:1-2

¹² Philippians 2:1-11