

## More About Jesus, Week 23: Jesus was meek (Mark 15:1-5) by Paul Hammons

During the trial of Jesus, we see the fulfillment of one of the most prominent Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. We read in Mark 15 that Jesus was before Pilate, and the Jewish leaders were hurling all manner of false charges against him.

And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. - Mk 15:4-5.

Here we see the Bible's greatest example of meekness - a quality that Jesus showed throughout his life and continued even while he was being unjustly accused, and eventually crucified.

For most of us, our first instinct when someone falsely accuses us is to strike back, either by attacking the statements being made, or even the person making those statements. Jesus refused to do that, and in doing so, points us back to Isaiah's prophecy: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

This wasn't Jesus simply displaying a natural quality of timidity. Jesus actively cultivated meekness in his own character, and he appealed to it in calling disciples to himself by saying "I am gentle (meek) and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Mat. 11:29).

When we talk about meekness, we invariably give the definition of "strength under control." And while that might be a good description of what meekness looks like in some cases, it isn't truly the word's definition. Meekness refers to someone who is gentle or humble in nature, one who is "not overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance" (BDAG).

In other words, a meek person understands his role or position in a given situation. He does not make things about himself or respond based on a need to justify or defend self.

Jesus' meekness shows dramatically in his trial and crucifixion. In the midst of false charges, lies, insults, and physical attacks, Jesus didn't lash back in anger. He didn't even try to correct the falsehoods being stated about him. He understood that his purpose in that moment was to bear our sins, to take the pain and suffering to the cross and die, knowing that all of this was God's will (Mark 14:36).

So how can someone who is meek in character also be the type of person who storms into the temple, chase out the money-changers and livestock merchants, accusing them of turning the temple into a "den of thieves" (Mark 11:17)?

The answer is not that Jesus "put his meekness aside" in some cases. Meekness isn't about being weak, accepting sin, or staying quiet when others are doing wrong. A meek person acts in the way that reflects a servant of God, doing whatever is required, regardless of how it looks to the world.

Jesus submitted his will to the Father in all things, and that included taking strong stands against sin and corruption, condemning unlawfulness and hypocrisy. Those reactions were never about his own personal standing or outrage. He did not respond in defense of his own pride or dignity.

Instead, he took abuse on himself and his own name, but stood firm in condemning those people when their attacks also included God and His revealed word:

And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come - Mt 12:32

When Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Mat. 5:5), he's essentially quoting Psalm 37:9, which reads "For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land" (Ps 37:9). This is language used consistently in the Old Testament in reference to God's promise that Israel would possess the land which he had sworn to give them.

How would they possess it? Not by their own strength, but by "waiting on the Lord," trusting in His power and strength to fulfill what He had promised. That's what the meek person does: he trusts in the Lord, not in his own strength, and he does not attempt to make God's promises about his own ability.

Developing the meekness of Jesus means seeing ourselves as servants of God, not acting out of pride or an attempt to assert and defend self, but acting as one who cares about ensuring that God is glorified, doing whatever is required to pursue that goal - even when that calls us to "deny self, take up your cross, and follow me (Mark 8:34)."