



Happy are those who inherit the earth

Matthew 5:5

August 17, 2024

A few months ago I had the opportunity to preach for a couple of weeks and I thought that I would do just a short series on the Beatitudes out of Matthew chapter 5. But then after two weeks had passed, I only actually made it through two of the Beatitudes. So we are going to return there for today and next week to continue just to glean as much as we can from the most brilliant and most magnificent teacher ever, our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

So if you would turn with me to Matthew chapter 5. Matthew chapter 5, chapter 6, and Chapter 7 record an early discourse of Jesus's ministry. It's a brilliantly constructed sermon and it is fitting the Jesus here as Matthew records Jesus starting his ministry, beginning with a teaching regarding the kingdom of God.

The entire sermon is a laying out a kingdom ethic for God's people, how the true people of God are to live and to be. And from the beginning of this teaching, he lays out the true character of his people. He paints a picture of what a true citizen of heaven looks like, not just looking at the moralistic externalism that the Pharisees were so focused on, but it examines someone from the inside out.

It's the attitudes of the heart that overflow into actions. Those who are true Christians are so in attitude and action. Thus we have the word beatitude. That's a much too brief introduction to the sermon, but let's read the first ten verses of Matthew 5. I'll summarize then what we have covered in previous sermons and then where we venture today.

So Matthew chapter 5, verses 1 through 10, "Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and he began to teach them, saying, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"'Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they

shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. And blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'"

Martyn Lloyd Jones in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. He speaks about how the sermon, and in particular this section on the Beatitudes, it exposes our utter need for the gospel, for regeneration, for the filling of the Spirit, the strengthening of the Spirit, to live as Christ lays out for us here.

These Beatitudes, they reveal how utterly powerless we are in and of ourselves to live this way. Jesus was speaking to his disciples here with the massive crowd as his secondary audience, but he knew that eleven of them were kingdom citizens and yet we know from reading the Gospels that these disciples, they were far from meek, lowly, they were far from merciful and peacemakers, as they wanted to call fire down upon the Samaritans.

So Jesus knew these men were not here yet. And so he is here at the outset of his ministry, just giving us the high bar of what it means to follow Christ. He's setting the bar high.

He's not trying to necessarily disqualify all of those who already believe in him, but he's setting the bar high for us to set our sights on, to reach this high goal.

And so if you're here today and as we get into this, and maybe you feel like you don't reflect what we're talking about here, perfectly, you don't reflect these Beatitudes perfectly well, join the club. Jesus's point here in all of this is to, yes, set the standard for us to set our sights upon, to achieve, but it also is to reveal our utter dependence on him, on the Spirit, on the Word of God to sanctify us, to grow us to be what he says here his people are to be.

Even the disciples fell short in these. So beloved, don't despair. Press on in the strength of the Spirit depending upon him to work these things in you. But if these things are totally absent from you, then you may not be a kingdom citizen, you may not be a disciple of Christ.

So examine yourself in that, as we go through this, but let's summarize what we have covered in the previous two messages at length. We're going to summarize them briefly. The first beatitude is found in verse 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus' teaching contradicted much of the thinking of the day and of the religious leaders. While the religious leaders taught that people, for instance, who were beggarly, poor, and even sick were so because of their own sin or their parents' sin, that the righteous were wealthy, healthy, and happy, that's kind of how the religious leaders of the day thought.

Jesus declares a very different reality. Jesus declared in that first Beatitude that it is the beggarly poor of spirit who are truly blessed, because it is to them that the kingdom of heaven belongs. Jesus is teaching here and really all throughout.

The Sermon on the Mount is countercultural. It's paradoxical. But if we, as one commentator says, "If we read these backwards, so to speak, the paradox fades and we see more clearly." Thus I titled that first message Happy are the citizens of heaven. No one would argue with the truthfulness of that statement that happy are the citizens of heaven. But when Jesus describes the citizens of heaven, he says it is those who are beggarly poor in spirit.

Beggarly poor in spirit. It actually describes every human being in the fallen condition. We are all beggarly poor of spirit in the sense that we have nothing to commend us to God.



We have no righteousness of our own. And Jesus says it is only those who recognize their poverty of spirit, to cry out to God for mercy and forgiveness.

There's only these who receive atonement and forgiveness and citizenship in heaven; and we, those who do recognize their poverty of spirit, we are blessed and happy not because our everyday lives are happy situations, not because we feel happy in life circumstances, but this is a judgment that we are in a happy situation of being citizens of heaven, regardless of what our life looks like here on this earth.

And we can have joy; we can renew our minds with this truth when we are in difficult life circumstances. For the one who recognizes his poverty of spirit cries out to God for mercy. It's only natural then that he be mournful over his sin, which is the next Beatitude that we covered entitled Happy are the comforted.

Verse 4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Again, no one's going to argue with the statement. Blessed is the one who is comforted, but the one who receives comfort is only the one who deeply mourns over his sin against the holy God.

In that sermon we talked about how we as Christians, when we sin against our Lord who died for us and we go to him, his arms are wide open, ready to receive us, to forgive us. He doesn't wag his finger at us. He doesn't scold us for sinning again. He immediately wants to provide the the balm of the gospel truths to that sin sick soul and bring comfort to him.

But that comfort only comes after godly mourning that leads to repentance. And the moment that this morning happens, Jesus, the Spirit, stand ready to comfort. But if there's never really any comfort to your soul, there may not be any true repentance. For those who are truly citizens of heaven, the conscience is clear. The burden of sin has fallen off of our back.

Our mourning is turned into joy, because our hearts have been comforted by Christ and his gospel, we can, all those who've experienced this, can rejoice with David when he says in Psalm 32:1 to 2, "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered? How blessed is the man whose iniquity Yahweh will not take into account?"

And we who have been forgiven, who have received this comfort, we can only say Amen and Amen to that. Such a man is



blessed because he has received the comfort of the gospel and forgiveness and a clear conscience. And that brings us to a third beatitude, a third mark of a true citizen of Christ's kingdom, and then the attendant blessing of such a character.

The third beatitude is found in verse 5, which is what we'll cover today. "Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth." This statement, just like the others were countercultural. Let's just consider our current climate. It was just as countercultural in Jesus' day as it is in our day. But we can just consider our current political climate and those who rise to prominence who possess the world through their leadership.

Jesus says here that it is the lowly, the meek, the humble who will possess the earth. As we look at the people in charge of our country, the earth, but our country, that doesn't really fit what Jesus says, does it? We could consider other countries, but let's just stay close to home and consider our own country for those who possess it, who reign and rule it.

If we look no further than the President of the United States, do we find someone who is marked by meekness, humility, kindness, lowliness? Actually, what's in vogue right now in our society, what gets you political popularity is to have what

amounts to an adult temper tantrum and pop off and yell and scream obscenities about this thing that you're unhappy about; to make a scene to get attention that garners you political favor in the day and age we live in.

And our current president, I think in part gained in popularity because he was willing to speak truthfully, yes, but harshly, crassly, crudely, about anyone and everyone in the political realm. And he continues to do so about anybody he doesn't like.

We can see this apparent paradox here when Jesus says it's the meek, the gentle, the lowly that will inherit or possess the earth. It's paradoxical, because we just don't see that in the people of Jesus's day. They didn't see it either. The Romans, in the, with their iron fist, was ruling over them. They didn't have possession of their land. They lived there, but they were ruled with an iron fist by Rome.

So this statement that Jesus makes, it's countercultural, and yet it is true. But before we dive in to find out how it is that the gentle will possess the earth, here is my proposition. Here's what I want you to take away from this message today. As Christians, we all want the earth, and in particular where we live, to be ordered rightly, do we not?

We want justice to prevail on the earth. We want the wicked put in their place. We want the righteous rewarded. We want righteous leaders in charge; that is a good and right and godly desire. But as Christians, we must not go about achieving that end by worldly means. We cannot seek to attain this righteous end by acting like the rest of the world, to garner favor or take position or prominence.

Christ has called us as his people to act a certain way towards others, to act a certain way in the world that we live in, to be marked by a certain character. And here in this Beatitude, that characteristic is meekness. We are to act in humility, meekness, lowliness, and trust him for the outcome. And beloved, when we do so, we will not be disappointed.

So today we examine this chief characteristic that should mark our lives as followers of Christ, living accordingly and trusting him for the results. I've titled this sermon, Happy are those who inherit the earth, comes from this beatitude, "Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth."

This is the third beatitude, as I mentioned, it follows the same pattern as the rest. There is a divine judgment of blessedness. There is a characteristic of the earthly subject, and then there is what I have called a spiritual spectacle that

dispels the apparent paradox that Jesus is telling his followers.

So those are really the three points for the sermon, the divine judgment, the earthly subject, and the spiritual spectacle. We'll begin just briefly with the divine judgment, and briefly, because we've gone into this more in depth in the last two sermons, and it's a verbatim repetition. The divine judgment is blessed. Jesus's divine judgment is that the lowly, the meek person, is blessed.

When the world counts meekness really as weakness, Jesus boldly declares that the meek person is blessed or happy. Whether or not we believe it, whether or not we experience it to be true, this is a truth our Lord teaches us. Those who are poor in spirit are blessed, those who intensely mourn their sin are blessed, and those who are lowly or meek are blessed. That is to say, they are in the enviable position of divine favor.

That's what this word blessedness refers to. There's no better place to be than to stand blessed by God. There's no better place to be than spiritually poor, mourning your sin, and acting with meekness towards the world. Jesus's judgment is that the meek person stands in the best position possible in favor with God, even if that is in disfavor with man.

Meekness might land us on a cross in this life, like it did to Jesus, but the meek person stands in the enviable position of divine favor, and we all, do we not, want to be in favor with God? We want to be in right standing with him. We want to walk rightly before him. We want to receive his blessing on our life. We want to hear when we get to the end of our life. "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master, the blessedness of your master."

We all want that as believers. So Jesus here, he's about to tell us another character trait that marks his people, so they can be confident that they are his children and one day enter into eternal blessedness. So that is the divine judgement that brings us to point two; the earthly subject where Jesus describes a character trait that is to mark his people.

If you have an LSB translation, the word is lowly. "Blessed are the lowly." The ESV uses the word meek. The NASB uses the word gentle. The CSB uses the word humble. So many different words are used because none of these words in English really suffice to capture what's meant in this Greek word.

The Greek word is *praos*, and the leading lexicon says that this word refers to not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance. To be *praos*, to be meek, I think that's

the best English translation to use; is to be not overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance. And then the lexicon lists all of these words as possible translations: Lowly, meek, gentle, humble, but none of these words, lowly, meek, gentle, humble, none of these words capture the fullness of that Greek word.

I think meek or meekness is the best English word to use, but not maybe as defined by our culture or English dictionaries. For example, the Cambridge Dictionary defines meek as, and I quote, "quiet and unwilling to disagree or fight or to strongly support personal ideas or opinions." Now, we know from Scripture that Moses was the meekest man to live, and then there was Christ and so if the definition doesn't fit those two men, we know it's not biblical.

It might be societal here, but was Jesus quiet and unwilling to disagree or fight or to strongly support personal ideas or opinions? Was that Moses? No, that isn't what the Bible teaches at all really about meekness. Dictionary.com does a little bit better when they say the meek is someone who is humbly patient or quiet in nature, as when under provocation from others.

I could get behind that as part of what the Bible teaches regarding meekness. Humbly patient and quiet in nature when under provocation from others, we see that in Christ at his crucifixion, but then dictionary.com goes on to list some possible synonyms that you could use instead, as soft, timid, weak, unassuming, and passive, which is not at all how the Bible uses this word.

Merriam Webster, they list three definitions within this lexical range. Two of them have to do with lacking strength, lacking in spirit, and deficient in courage, but the first one that they list is helpful. Merriam Webster says it refers to, and I quote, "Enduring injury with patience and without resentment."

So I think that's a good place to start with a definition. It fits what we see in the Scripture. And again, if it can't be applied to Moses or Jesus, it's not a good definition. But after doing my own study, after doing my own reading, the best definition, the best explanation of what it means to be meek biblically, well, I don't think that there's a better resource than our very own Travis Allen. And I am not flattering him in any way.

He preached a sermon in February of 2024 entitled The Meekness of Christ, which was, the whole sermon was just defining this and seeing it in the life of Christ. It was comprehensive. It was clear and I can only commend you to go listen to that sermon again, if well, whether you've heard it or not, I read through the transcript this week and it was a blessing to my soul.

If you go to our website and you click the little magnifying glass in the top right corner and you just type meek in there and search that, that sermon is the first search result on our website. And I don't want to preach that sermon, but I do want to summarize his arguments and definition just to apply to our current context. It'll be a little teaser.

If you didn't hear the message yet, it won't make you want to go listen to that. But if you were here, it'll be a good reminder. So in that sermon, he gave a three-fold definition of meekness. First, he says meekness is kindness.

Meekness is kindness. He fleshes this out a bit to understand what he means by kindness. And I'm just going to read a short quote where he explains this. But I want you to think about this quality in a king, who has power and prominence and position. Because what those English dictionaries, they failed

to capture, is that they can't imagine somebody being meek who has strength and power.

They can't imagine somebody enduring suffering and wrongdoing when they have the power to change it. But we know from Scripture that that is not the case. Jesus was a king with power, prominence, and position, and yet he still acted with meekness. So think of that; someone who has power, prominence, and position, as I read this.

Travis says, meekness is being, and I quote, "benevolent and forbearing and mild mannered. Meekness is leniency, it's moderation, it's toleration, it extends kindness to those who are needy. It helps those who cannot help themselves, particularly those who are undeserving of any help or kindness. Meekness is the kindness of mercy, the kindness of compassion." End Quote.

I think this description, this aspect of meekness, was on display so marvelously in our Lord when he was on the cross. He is the King of the Jews, really the King of the universe, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, nailed to a cross by his own people. And while enduring that injustice, he also endured the insults of the thieves being crucified both on his right and his left.

And yet with it, when the time came, Jesus Christ was benevolent to pray that God would forgive, be forgiving towards those who might repent, even of putting him to death. He was forbearing in their insults. He tolerated them and he was lenient. And when the time came, he even encouraged the repentant thief, spoke kindly to him, compassionately, merciful towards him, even though he was totally undeserving.

Our Lord didn't care that just moments before this guy was hurling insults at him. He was quick to show mercy and kindness to him, to forgive him, even rejoice at his salvation. Christ, more than anything, loves to see the bond of sinners, broken; sinners, set free. Moreover, we see this kindness exhibited in Christ's life when he was so gentle with women and children.

Such an odd thing in that society. One example is from Luke 7, where he deals with the widow of Nain. Her husband died sometime in the past. Now her son has also died and Jesus comes upon the funeral procession, the mother weeping because her only son's died. She's a widow, she's going to be destitute. And the text says that, "Jesus felt compassion for her." And then Jesus tenderly tells this woman do not cry, proceeds to resurrect her son, give her son back to her.

Another example is a woman in Luke 13, that had a sickness caused by a spirit. She was doubled over, bent over, she couldn't straighten up. She'd been in this terrible condition for 18 years. Jesus, he tenderly lays his hands on her, straightens her, heals her. So kind, and in a society where kids were kind of a nuisance and less than, sent away for anything important, Jesus was tender towards them as well.

In Matthew 19:13 to 14 we read, "Then some children were brought to him so he might lay his hands on them and pray, And the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the children alone do not hinder them from coming to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' And after laying his hands on them, he departed.

In the Gospel of Mark, I love how it describes Jesus, his dealings with kids. It says multiple times in chapters 9 and 10, Jesus takes children up into his arms. He takes them into his bosom to hold them close, to comfort them, to heal them. Tender picture of Jesus, how he treats children when the rest of the society just shoos them away. Jesus is meek and kind towards them.

But Jesus' kindness, it's not just for physical ailments. He's primarily concerned for their souls. Think of John chapter

4 and the woman at the well, the Samaritan woman at the well, the thief on the cross. They're prime examples of Jesus' primary concern that sinners be set free from sin, not just physical ailments.

He not only reached out and touched them physically, but he reached down and and snatched their souls from the clutches of Hell, bringing them to faith in him. So meekness is kindness, but it is also more than that. In that sermon, Travis's second point was meekness. Yes, meekness is kindness, but meekness is also restraint.

Meekness is restraint and specifically he says, and I quote, "Meekness is a restraint shown to an enemy, someone who deserves stern, harsh treatment, but instead shows leniency. One who is granted clemency, mercy, when judgment is called for. This is the quality of a great king, who treats the people that he has conquered gently rather than roughly. He shows patience rather than vengeance, and this is the true nobility of his soul." End Quote.

In that sermon, Travis looked to the example of the meekest man on earth, in Moses. And so I don't want to retread that ground. You can hear that in that message, if you go back and

listen to it. But I want to look at another character in Scripture, I think exhibits this kind of nobility and restraint.

You're probably familiar with this story, but turn quickly in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 26. After David defeated Goliath, he rose in prominence in Israel, and Saul became jealous. The people were singing, "Saul has slain his thousand, but David is ten thousands." And Saul had been rejected by God as king. David had been anointed king and Saul was jealous for his own position and envious of David's fame and this drove him mad.

So multiple times he tried to kill David, throwing a spear at him. So David fled from his presence, but that didn't stop Saul. Saul haunted David, chasing him throughout Israel. And on one occasion Saul is hunting David, and while along the way he goes into a cave to relieve himself, and it just happens to be that David and his men are in the cave.

And instead of striking Saul dead, as all of David's men encouraged him to do, David spares his life to the absolute dismay of his men. Here in chapter 26 of 1 Samuel, we see David again spare Saul's life, really entrusting all of these things to God as the ultimate judge. But 1 Samuel 26, let's just read 5 through 11.

"Then David arose and came to the place where Saul had camped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, as well as Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army; And Saul was lying in the circle of the camp, and the people were camping around them. Then David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, saying, 'Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?'

"And Abishai said, 'I will go down with you.' So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him. Then Abishai said to David, 'Today God has surrendered your enemy into your hand; so now, please let me strike him with a spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him a second time.'

"But David said to Abishai, 'Do not destroy him, for who can send forth his hand against the anointed of Yahweh and be without guilt?' David also said, 'As Yahweh lives, surely Yahweh will smite him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and be swept away. Yahweh forbid that I should send forth my hand against the anointed of Yahweh; but now

please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go.'"

You can go back to Matthew. But here we see the true nobility of David's soul. He shows, quite frankly, Christ like restraint and leniency towards Saul, who has acted so wickedly towards him. This is a kind of meekness that is absolutely otherworldly, that when our world sees it, they marvel. What David did is unthinkable, humanly speaking, but it's the same kind of restraint that Christ exhibited when he subjected himself to the cross and the cruelty of men.

We've seen this so clearly as Travis has been preaching through the crucifixion narrative. Christ had the power to call down legions of angels to conquer Pilate, all of Pilate's forces, all the religious leaders, really the rest of the world. But there was a noble purpose restraining that act of justice, the noble purpose of a king to save his people from their sins even though they didn't deserve it.

So meekness is kindness, but it's more than that. It's also restraint, like a War Horse that's been tamed and is powerful, but under control. But it is also the third point Travis makes in that sermon. Meekness is calmness or composure, and in

particular, calmness and composure in the midst of conflict, in the face of personal injury and injustice.

And this, I think, is exhibited nowhere better than again in our Lord in the injustice of his arrest and trial. When you read the narrative, you can almost hear Pilate's indignation for Jesus' meekness, his calmness and composure. In this trial narrative in Matthew 27, the chief priests and the elders, they're bringing accusations against Jesus and Pilate can't understand Jesus' composure here.

It says in Matthew 27:12 to 14, "And while he," that is Jesus, "was being accused by the chief priests and the elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, do you not hear how many things are testifying against you? And he," that is Jesus again, "did not answer him with regard to even a single charge. So the governor marveled greatly."

This kind of meekness the world can't understand. They can't understand how you would unrighteously, when you have the ability, defend yourself in the midst of conflict. Meekness is kindness. Meekness is restraint, and it is a calmness that shines so brightly in conflict.

It's a characteristic that is so foreign to our world. When they see it, they absolutely marvel. They cannot believe their eyes. And beloved, when Jesus preaches this Sermon on the Mount, when he's describing what his kingdom citizens are to be like, he first addresses the spiritual condition of being made right before God, understanding our spiritual poverty, being made right before God through mourning our sin and repentance.

But then the first character trait that he mentions with regard to how his people are to interact in the world that they live in is this kind of meekness. This is the chief attribute that the Lord gives that should mark us as his people. We're to be marked by a kindness like Jesus exhibited in his life towards men, women, children.

We're to be marked by a restraint like David had towards Saul, Moses towards the Israelites, like Jesus towards sinners when they hit him and they spit on him and accused him. We're to be marked by a calmness and composure in the greatest injustices of life, because we know this: We know that God is sovereign and in control not only of the big things, but also of all the mundane things of our life.

Every little injustice in our life, we are to, as Christ did on the cross, entrust our souls to an almighty, all powerful

God and leave justice to him. This is how we are to treat one another, beloved. This is how we're to walk in the world that we live in. No matter the circumstance, no matter the conflict, whether it's enduring injustice from family members, accusations and the like, we're to respond with this kind of kindness, restraint, and composure.

So let me just ask you, is this how you conduct yourself in your home with your family, kindness, restraint, and composure in conflict? Is this how you conduct yourself at work in the world? Martyn Lloyd Jones talks about how there is no passage of Scripture that makes you feel more like a failure as a Christian than this.

These Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount; oh, how far short do we fall from this bar that Jesus sets for us. And yet, as Christians, Jesus' point in this is not to cause us to despair, but to lead us to cry out to him in humble dependence, seeking his strength to grow in our kindness towards one another, to grow in our restraint when people sin against us, to grow in our calm composure.

So, beloved, don't despair, but seek the Lord in prayer to give the increase of such character in your life. It is the chief characteristic he lists here at the head of the list. But

let's all seek to grow in this together. So Jesus' divine judgment is that the lowly or the meek person is blessed. The meek person stands in the enviable position of divine favor.

I don't think there were too many that day standing at Calvary looking at Jesus, thinking he was in the enviable position of divine favor. But that's because they weren't looking at reality through the same spiritual spectacles we have in Scripture.

And that brings us to our final point for this morning. The true reality of that awaits those who practice meekness on the earth. Christ citizens, the spiritual spectacle looking, looking at this reality from a fleshly perspective, we don't see too many meek people in positions of power, influence, possessing the land. It is the fleshly eyes that cannot see the truth of what Jesus is saying. But when we have eyes of faith, we can see clearly the reality of what Jesus teaches.

Jesus, his judgement, his declaration is that it is the lowly, the meek, who are blessed for they shall inherit the earth. This is an extremely important phrase that we want to dive into just to give us hope for the future. We don't want to make the same mistake that some have in the past of really just ignoring this all together.

Even Martyn Lloyd Jones, I love his commentary, but he gets done with talking about the meek and that's the end of the sermon. He doesn't even talk about this phrase. Jesus declares that it is the meek who inherit the earth. Jesus looks beyond the present reality, beyond the cross, to give his listeners hope, motivation for living meekly in the world.

And we must look at our present world through the lens of eternity and the grand scope of God's plan. And when we do that, we see that the lowly, they truly do stand in the position of divine favor. But the reason Jesus gives us here of this blessedness is that the lowly will inherit the earth.

We must not also, as some have, just spiritualize this phrase, that all of this promises spiritualized; to do so would be to gut all of the hope that Jesus intended to give his listeners. This phrase, the lowly will inherit the earth, is an almost identical phrase to the Greek translation of Psalm 37, verse 11 that we read earlier.

The only difference between that, that and this is that Jesus adds a definite article in there making the reference from the land to the earth, all of the land, the entirety of the earth, as it is translated here in Matthew 5.

One Commentator on Psalm 37, he believes that Jesus is quoting this verse, that verse out of Psalm 37, verse 11. Jesus is quoting it here in Matthew 5:5. In Psalm 37, if you remember from reading it earlier, David speaks of God's people inheriting the land five times. It's one of the major themes of that Psalm.

So Jesus is either quoting or alluding to Psalm 37, where the promise is for God's meek people to inherit the land and its emphatic, it gave them hope to continue to walk righteously in a wicked world, but it was a reference to literal land.

The Jews of Jesus' day likewise had tremendous hope that the Messiah would come and put all their enemies under his feet, give them back their land to live in freedom. They had this hope because of so many Old Testament promises from God regarding the land that had yet to be realized. We don't have time to go into all these, but Genesis 5:18, Exodus 23:31, 2 Samuel 7 are just some of them.

When Jesus made this comment about inheriting or possessing the land, the people listening, they wouldn't have had any question in their minds about what he was talking about. There was the literal land, that promised land, that God promised his people.

Even the disciples, until the night that Jesus was betrayed, they thought Jesus was going to inaugurate the kingdom, defeat the Romans, bring in the kingdom, the glorious kingdom of God and Jesus, he didn't correct them regarding the reality of that. He just corrected them regarding the timing of what had to come first, which was the cross.

So what is this reference to inheriting the earth? Referring to Calvin and Luther, they both talk about a present fulfillment of God's people enjoying the blessings of land now. Calvin looked at his congregation and we could do likewise and see how many of the people of God were blessed with land, with homes, with property. And so they saw a present fulfillment of this, that the meek really were blessed in this life.

And we can see the same thing in in our day. I mean, how many of us are not blessed? We have our own property. But Calvin also noted that there is an eschatological fulfillment of this as well. Most Amillennialists would see this promise as synonymous with the promise of inheriting the kingdom of heaven on the new earth. So when God makes the new heavens and the new earth, it's a reference to that.

But as a premillennialist using a grammatical historical hermeneutic, I think Jesus is referring to the now present

earth, the land that his listeners would have understood him to be referring to. I find it very difficult to make the leap of interpretation that Jesus would speak of the kingdom of heaven two verses later in Matthew, to then refer to the same future earth, future heaven by this phrase the land or the earth, when everybody else would have understood it as a reference to the land of Israel, that they knew.

It could be a reference to the new earth when God remakes the universe, but I think Jesus was speaking of a nearer referent, and that is the current earth during the thousand-year reign of Christ here on the earth.

Turn with me, if you would, to Revelation chapter 20. Turn to Revelation chapter 20 and when you get there, if you would put your finger there and then go all the way to Zechariah chapter 14. Zechariah is just before Matthew and Malachi. Matthew, first book of the New Testament. Go back a couple books to Zechariah chapter 14. Keep your fingers in those places.

We're going to kind of toggle back and forth between those a little bit this morning. So put your finger in Revelation and turn the page to Zechariah 14. At this point in history, just for the sake of time, we can't do a overview of the whole Book of Revelation. Got to summarize it here.

But at this point in history, as we come to Zechariah 14, Revelation 20, all the judgments of God have been poured out on the earth for a seven year tribulation period. At the end of that tribulation period, all the believers, all the unbelieving forces of the world converge on Jerusalem to try to destroy the people of God and the Jews.

Zechariah describes the Lord's second coming in destruction of those forces. Zechariah 14. We've got time, so let me just read the first fifteen verses, so you have a larger, broader context. "Behold, a day is coming for Yahweh when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. Indeed, I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, and the houses plundered, and the women ravished, and half of the city will go forth in exile, but those left of the people will not be cut off from the city.

"Then Yahweh will go forth and fight against those nations as the day when He fights on the day of battle. And in that day," and this refers to Christ's second coming, "His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to West by a very large valley, so that half of the

mountain will move towards the north and the other half to the South."

And we don't have time to talk about all these topographical changes, but there's a massive earthquake. The Mount on Jerusalem is split in half. It's greatly expanded to allow for topographical changes in the river of life. But we'll keep reading. We don't have time to talk about all those.

Verse 5, "And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel. Indeed, you will flee, just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Then Yahweh, My God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him. And it will be in that day that there will be no light.

"The luminaries will dwindle and it will be a unique day in which is known to Yahweh neither day nor night, but it will be that evening time there will be light, and it will be in that day that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them towards the Eastern Sea and the other half towards the Western Sea," because of that earthquake that split the land.

"It will be in summer as well as in winter, and Yahweh will be king over all the earth in that day. Yahweh will be the only

one in His name, One. All the land will be changed into a plain from Gabba to Ramon, South of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem will rise an inhabited site from Benjamin Gate as far as the place of the first gate to the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel to the King's wine presses. And people will inhabit it.

"And there will be no longer anything devoted to destruction, for Jerusalem will be inhabited in security." And now it kind of goes back in time a little bit to describe how Christ defeated those forces that came up against Jerusalem. Verse 12, "Now this will be the plague with which Yahweh will plague all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem. Their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth.

"And it will be in that day that abundant confusion from Yahweh will fall on them, and they will take hold of one another's hand, and the hand of one will go up against the hand of another. And Judah also will fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments and great abundance. And in the same way, the plague on the horse and the mule and the camel and the

donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps will be like this plague.”

That is how the Lord defeats those nations that rise up against him. Jesus will return with all of his holy ones to destroy all those who have come up against Jerusalem. All unbelievers left at the Tribulation, those who were not killed by all of God's judgments, they come to make one final attempt to march on Jerusalem. And the Jews who at this time have repented and believed in Christ as a nation of what Zechariah talks about previously in 12:10.

But all the saints, all the unbelievers, at this time, who come up against Jerusalem, they will be slaughtered by Christ. All unbelievers will be put to death and it is only believers who then enter into the millennial kingdom. So keep your finger there. Go back to Revelation where you have your other finger. Revelation 20 verses 1 through 6. “Then I saw an Angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.”

This is after that destruction of the forces. “And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, And he threw him into the abyss and shut it, and sealed it over him, so that he would

not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were finished. After these things he must be released for a short time.

"Then I saw Thrones and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their witness of Jesus and because of the word of God, and who also had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand.

"And they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

While it might sound at first reading of that, as if only the saints that were killed in the tribulation are the ones that rise and take part in the first resurrection and reign with him, the second resurrection is only unbelievers who will be resurrected at the end of the thousand year reign to stand and be judged at the Great White Throne judgment.

All Saints from history, including us, will take part in that first resurrection and we will reign with Christ for a thousand years. Revelation 2:26 to 27 says, "And he who overcomes and he who keeps my deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces as I also have received authority from My Father."

So that is talking about saints living in the Church age. They will be given authority over the nations and they, we will rule with him with a rod of iron over the world during that thousand year reign. Just a couple chapters later we read this about those who have been redeemed from every tribe, tongue, and nation in Revelation 5:10, where Jesus says, And you made them or, "In heaven you made them to be a kingdom and priest to our God and they will reign upon the earth."

Paul spoke of this reign of saints, future reign of saints with Christ and motivating Timothy, before his death. He spoke in 2 Timothy 2:11 and 12, said, "it is a trustworthy saying, for if we died with Him, we will also live with Him, and if we endure we will also reign with Him."

1 Corinthians 6:1 to 2, Paul also says, "Does anyone of you, when he has a case against another, dare to be tried before

the unrighteous and not before the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?" But what might this reigning with Christ entail? What do we have to look forward to as saints?

Well, go back. If you're not there, go back to Zechariah again. This kind of gives us a picture of what the world looks like during the thousand-year reign. Zechariah 14, I'm going to read 16 to 19, "Then it will be that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem, they will go up from year to year to worship the king Yahweh of hosts and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

"And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the king, Yahweh of hosts, there will be no rain on them. And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them. It will be the plague with which Yahweh plagues the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths."

So all those on the earth who survive the Tribulation and enter into the millennial kingdom, the thousand year Kingdom of Christ, they return to their countries of origin. They live in

the world that will then be governed by Christ as he sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

And when Christ sets up his government then across the face of the earth, because those who live on this earth, those who enter into the millennial kingdom, who had not been glorified yet, they will still reproduce and they will have children. And their children's children will have children. And not all of those children will be redeemed. Not all of those children will be believers.

And there will be again injustice in the world, and there will need to be those who will rule with a rod of iron to rule justly on the earth. And when Christ sets up his government on the earth for that thousand-year reign, those who will fill the cabinet position, so to speak, those will be given cities to govern, to judge as Paul talked about, will be made-up of the meek saints of church history, me and you.

And if the entire world is then repopulated, not just Jerusalem, that's a lot of cities that are going to need meek rulers, a lot of cities that are going to need just judges. When those unbelievers need judgment, we'll be given authority as Revelation 3 said, "to rule with the authority of Christ, with a rod of iron to discipline evildoers."

There will be no more prosperity of the wicked, no more delayed justice, for the meek will inherit the earth will reign in righteousness with Christ. Justice will be swift and yet appropriate and always perfect. So when Jesus looks at his disciples and those people around and he says, be meek for the meek or blessed, they will inherit the earth.

He points to a day of blessedness where we, we get to see all of our lands governed in righteousness and justice by righteous men, when all the rulers of the land will be meek followers of Christ. No more corrupt politicians, no more liars promising one thing and doing another. But all the leaders, all the rulers will be made-up of redeemed saints, glorified saints, ruling with a rod of iron, perfect justice alongside Christ.

We should have great hope in that, beloved. We should long for that day. But we're not there yet. Jesus wanted the saints of his day; he wants us in our day to see that we ought to first and foremost be concerned with being meek people upon the earth. We should not look to the wicked who rise to prominence and try to do the same by those wicked means.

We are to be a people that is otherworldly, totally alien, and if the Lord sees fit to put some of his followers, some Christians, in places of prominence or he chooses to give us a

small piece of land to enjoy now, we should strive first and foremost to be meek in all we do, never succumbing to the unkind, unrestrained, outraged spirit of our age, whether it's in our own homes, in the workplace, the World Wide Web, wherever we are.

We should strive to grow in our kindness, our restraint, our composure, as an heir of God, dignified sons and daughters of the king and we leave the outcome to him, trusting in his sovereign plan, knowing that one day all things will be made right and perfect justice will be meted out, and one day we will, even on this earth, live in a just society, with him as our king.

So let us, as we read earlier in Psalm 37, I'll just close with this. "As we dwell in the land," verse 3 in Psalm 37, "let's cultivate faithfulness to Christ." Verse 9, "Let us be those who hope in Yahweh. Let us be those who are meek because we will inherit the land." And again, "let us be righteous that we might inherit the land."

And finally, 34 "Hope for Yahweh and keep His way that He will exalt you to inherit the land." Let us remember salvation is the Lord's. Let us walk in kindness, restraint, and composure and trust the Lord to work his will in our lives. Let's pray.



Father, You have not left us without hope. You gave your disciples and those who listened, hope; longing for a day where it isn't the mighty who rule, but the meek. You being our chief example, our king. Lord, make us meek people as you were meek. That is our hearts desire. May we seek your spirit to strengthen us to do just that. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.