

**The Rock: 03-27-2022****A year with the master**

**Title:** Blessed are...

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:5 / Matthew 26:47-56  
(black bible Pg. 759/ 782 ESV)

**Theme:**

What happens when the script is flipped and the kingdom principle of meekness inherits the earth? How can we live this out as Jesus did? Especially with all of the issues in our world today.

**Introduction:**

History has shown us that "the strong survive" -that the bullies and tyrants tend to win the day.

Rome was known for a lot of things, and one was the ability to keep their empire in check and in good order, doing so by how they ruled or rather dominated its people.

They were warriors, violent, and proficient at killing whenever necessary to ensure the peace of Rome ruled, and its people lived in safety and security.

They dominated for almost a thousand years through power and fear. It would be

a tedious exercise to look back over the history of humanity and see just how nations, kingdoms and empires have always operated in this way.

It is why at times, good men must do bad things, if for no other reason than to keep bad men from continuing to do horrible things -but that is not for today.

We land in Matthew this week as we look to understand what it means, what it looks like, to be meek in such a world.

### **The Story:**

Each of the gospel writers gives their perspective of just what happened that night in the garden. Mark, having become a disciple of Peter, gets his information from him.

Luke, reporting as he has all along, from those whom he interviewed gives his narrated account.

Then there is John, and well, John does the same, albeit from his memory as a very old man. John helps with cleaning up some of the details of the night as he reflects back, most especially with the names.

Here in Matthew, we find Jesus praying, asking the Father to change direction in His plan:

**-Matthew 26:36-39 (ESV)**

"Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

To try and put yourself there in that moment, it becomes a very heart wrenching scene.

Jesus is praying as the man he was, perfect and sinless -yet terrified at what was ahead for Him. He was after all a man, as much as He is God. 100% of both, a concept that is hard for us to understand.

Where does Jesus, the divine Son of God stop, and Jesus the son of Mary, start? Couldn't He do all these things because

He was God? How could He expect us to be able to? We are just men and women.

In this moment as we see Jesus, wrestling with what is before Him, we also see the tools of success: Prayer and watchfulness.

We see Peter, James and John, the inner circle of His most trusted are sound asleep when Jesus comes back from His first session of prayer:

**-Matthew 26:40-41 (ESV)**

"And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Watch and pray -there they are. The tools at Jesus disposal, and at ours if we would use them. Watch what is going on, pray for strength and God's will to be done. Then get to it -whatever IT may be.

There are so many times, as each of these beatitudes build on each other, where we fight to power through, we wrestle with God and ourselves at our circumstances.

Asking the why question and wondering, most especially if something is bad or doesn't go our way, what God is up to.

Great questions, we all ask them. It's why praying and watching are the tools. No big Kaboom, I know. No divine formula that makes figuring these things out easy, but essential for what is about to happen.

Because three times Jesus pleads with God that He doesn't want to go down this road. Yet at the same time, God's will and design for His life is what He wants.

Jesus gets His answer in the silence from His Father. In other words, the plan remains the same.

(Talk about this. God always answers prayer -ALWAYS. Sometimes it is in the silence of a "non-answer", but that is an answer.)

SO, He gets His answer in the form of a crowd that has just showed up in the garden:

**-Matthew 26:47-50 (ESV)**

"While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. Jesus said to him,

"Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him."

What a painful scene. "Friend, do what you came to do." I am not certain I would have responded in such a way. But I could, and you could too.

If prayer is the priority at moments like this, the Spirit of God will strengthen you to not only respond well when persecuted, but to be able to stand up under the weight of it.

I am reminded of Psalm 41 every time I read this -the betrayal of Judas and of Jesus' comment, 'friend'.

**-Psalms 41:8-10 (ESV)**

"They say, "A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies." Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me. But you, O Lord, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them!"

I cannot get what N.T. Wright says about this out of my head:

"We see...Jesus' last reaction to the traitor as he led the arresting party right to the place where he knew they would find Him. 'My friend,' he says,

'What are you doing here?' It is of course this word 'friend' that causes us to catch our breath. Friendship for Jesus, does not stop with betrayal, even though now it is tinged with deep sadness."

**-NTFE Pg. 164**

What a violation of such a tender word. 'Friend.' Someone you trust, you do life with, share your struggles with and joys with. I do not think 'friend' is the name many of us would have chosen.

David too, would have many friends- some of whom would also turn on him. His words in this Psalm are prophetic -painful in fact.

Given that we know Jesus bent down to wash the feet of His betrayer, and that Judas partook of the very first communion offering, as Jesus, in what can only be seen as one more plea to the man destined to be the betrayer / the villain.

Don't do it Judas -But he does -and the response is a bit surprising:

**-Matthew 26:51-52 (ESV)**

"And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus

said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."

We have to go to John to discover who the guilty party is here, the one who decided to take matters into his own hands. Shock of shocks, it guess who? Our pal, impetuous Peter:

**-John 18:10 (ESV)**

"Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)"

Blow for blow, sword for sword -it's the Roman way, the world's way. The devil loves it when we fight back in that way - blow for blow.

But: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Meekness is not weakness. Remember that.

As an aside to this, there is a question to be asked: Are there times when we, as a people, are to stand our ground and fight? Answer: Yes, there absolutely is.

So please don't take away from this today that we are to become everyone's doormat, suffering abuse from tyrants and bullies. That is weakness.



It is not my assignment today to unpack that for us. That will come at some point this year.

Yet, we must recognize that there are times, such as the one we have before us in our text, where and when it is the will of God that we come under the hand of worldly persecution and suffering BECAUSE of our obedience to the Scriptures.

That is what is happening here, and that is meekness. The world and this gang of bullies actually think they are in control of events. They are not.

Peter, once again in his letter to the church, so many years on:

**-1 Peter 2:18-23 (ESV)**

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in

his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”

He recognized what Jesus had done, and encourages the Church in the world to follow His example. Why? Because we are to be watching and praying, being mindful of God and what He is doing, and what He has instructed us to do within that.

Jesus is the perfect example of meekness -as He suffers unjustly at the hands of his persecutors.

Is that hard? Yes, as Peter makes clear that Jesus suffered, giving us the example to follow. Should we go looking for trouble, as if we have some type of martyr syndrome? No. It will find us, but in the watching and the praying, God will prepare us to be able to walk in the meekness of Jesus.

Well, back to Matthew, and Jesus' response to Peter:

**-Matthew 26:53-54 (ESV)**

“Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how

then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"

The very definition of meekness - certainly not weakness, as though He is allowing Himself to be handed over like some sop for abuse and entertainment.

No, this is exactly what the prophets foretold, that it had to be this way. All of these people, again, think they are in control of these events. They are not!

God is, and Jesus the man, is being perfectly obedient to His Father's plan as His son.

It has to be this way, as Jesus is headed for His throne and coronation - The cross and crown of thorns:

**-Isaiah 52:13-15 (ESV)**

"Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind— so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand."

The paradigm moment in the history of humanity, where the Son of Man is lifted up and draws all men to Himself.

"No Peter, this is not a chaotic course of events, where we must fight to win the day. Meekness will win the day. These men will have their way - at least in their minds.

But to fix the world, to make it so that the meek inherit the earth, this cup must be poured out upon me, not passed from me.

Peter, do you not know what is at my disposal? I can call twelve legions of angels."

By definition a Roman legion consisted of 5,200 infantry and 300 cavalry. So, as skilled as I am at math, that means at Jesus command He has 62,000 angels and 3,600 cavalry.

Now, to put that into perspective biblically, just about every time and angel (ONE) visits someone in the Bible - fear overtakes them. In fact, the prophet Daniel fell sick for days after his encounter with the angel Gabriel. (Daniel 8:16, 27)

What is astounding here is not that Jesus had all of them at His command, but rather that He did not exercise His right

to command them to change His circumstances.

Why? Because He was right in the center of God's will:

**-Matthew 26:55-56 (ESV)**

"At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled."

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

As we come to a close this morning, please notice the very last statement. All the disciples left Him and fled. Judas betrayed Jesus, but they all ran away afraid for their lives, leaving Jesus all alone.

The soldiers bound Him and led him out and into the darkness, alone and abandoned by all who were His friends. Even Peter, who had, only moments before took out his sword and began to fight.

Not able to handle what was coming, they took off, forsaking Jesus and leaving Him to face the next thing all alone.

Yet, Jesus wasn't alone. He had been watchful and prayerful, and full of the Spirit, He would endure.

As will we every time, if we give ourselves over to God's calling in our lives. Blessed are the meek..

That is a promise that God has declared, and one which Jesus has secured. We have and will continue to inherit the earth, but persecution and suffering will come. Yet, in that God has given His promise that He will return and make all things new:

**-2 Peter 3:13 (ESV)**

"But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

**-Revelation 21:1-4 (ESV)**

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear

from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Amen...