

Sermon: Meek As A Sheep

Text: 1 Peter 5:1-7

Discussion Questions:

On a scale of 1-10—how meek are you? Commit to a number (& share it).

I'm guessing many of you put yourself pretty close to the middle...reasoning that if you say you're really meek, then there's a good chance you're not as meek as you think you are. At the same time, it's not altogether true that you're not NOT meek. C'mon...there's got to be at least a moderate amount of meekness in there, right?!

But the more-likely reason you went down the middle (or in the 3 to 4 range) is because, truth be told, you really don't have a good handle on what "meekness" is.

There are numerous dictionaries out there (how many of you remember the days when you only had access to ONE dictionary...the big red one that was sitting on the shelf!). Each dictionary puts a little different spin on the word **meek**—

Merriam-Webster: *enduring injury with patience and without resentment.*

Dictionary.com: *humbly patient or docile, as under provocation from others.*

Cambridge: *quiet and unwilling to disagree or fight*

- Having read these three—is this how you would have defined meekness?
- Work together to find a "common" definition. What's at the heart of meekness?

As we know, definitions change. In 1828, Noah Webster published the first truly "American" dictionary. In many ways, it contains the foundation of America's heritage and principal beliefs. It is contemporary with the American Constitution. Here is how Webster defined **meekness** nearly 200 years ago:

:Mild of temper; soft; gentle; not easily provoked or irritated; yielding; given to forbearance under injuries. Appropriately, humble, in an evangelical sense; submissive to the divine will; not proud, self-sufficient or refractory; not peevish and apt to complain of divine dispensations. Christ says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls (Matthew 11:29).

- How does Webster's definition differ from the three definitions we currently find in our modern dictionaries?
- What stands out to you about this definition?
- What do you think it means to be humble "in an evangelical sense"?

Back to the scale of 1-10. This time we can be more specific... (1-low; 10-high)

Mild of temper	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gentle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Easily provoked or irritated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Yielding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Patently self-controlled when injured	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Submissive to God's will	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Examination:

- Read **Matthew 5:1-12**
 - These words form the introduction to what we now call “The Sermon on the Mount.” What a blessing that the Holy Spirit enabled Matthew to record for us these divine and inspired words of Jesus! They come right at the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry—and in many ways reveal Jesus as the “new Moses.” In the same way that Moses went up on the mountainside to “hear” from God (Exodus 19 & 20)—we, as disciples of Jesus, also go up on the mountainside to receive our instructions. Looking at all twelve verses...what words or phrases stand out to you?
 - The word “*meek*” (v. 5) can tend to get a bit lost in the midst of these powerful verses. But in many ways—**meekness** is the uniting truth that pulls all of these commands together! Re-read Webster’s 1828 definition of meekness. Compare his definition with all that Jesus teaches us in the Beatitudes.
 - From what you know about Jesus—what are some examples from His life that reveal to us how to live a life of meekness?

- Read **1 Peter 5:1-4**
 - Peter begins this passage by addressing the “elders.” This would include people we now call “pastors.” They were the leaders of the various congregations that were scattered over the large region that Peter wanted this letter to be delivered to. Why do you think Peter felt compelled to first speak to the pastors & elders?
 - How important is it that Peter was an eye-witness to the suffering of Jesus (v. 1)?
 - Why do you think Peter employs the metaphor of a shepherd & a flock of sheep?
 - Look closely at verses 2 & 3. What is the manner in which these elders were to lead? What was to be their motivation? HOW were they to do it?
 - How does verse 4 remind us of the Upper Story? Why is this such an important mindset for all of us to have?
 - In what ways is Peter calling leaders to lead with a heart of meekness?

- Read **1 Peter 5:5-7**
 - Peter turns his attention to those who are younger—those who aren’t elders or pastors. What do you think he means when he says, “*In the same way...*” (v. 5)?
 - Submission is a very important theme for Peter. Why do you think that is?
 - Peter speaks of “putting on” humility in the same way that we would put on a jacket or a pair of pants. What are the implications of this metaphor?
 - Where does meekness and humility come from? Are we born with it? Do we become meek and humble by trying harder?
 - How does an awareness of “*God’s mighty hand*” (v. 7) help us in our understanding of humility and meekness?
 - How does verse 7 provide us with the key to living a meek and humble life?

Application:

Begin every day this coming week with this prayer:

“God, make me humble. Father, by your grace help me to be meek.”