

Go Low and Gain the World

Good morning. So good to see you. Would you bow with me in prayer? Father, we come and we ask that again You would be our vision, that You'd give a sight from Your Word, O High King of Heaven, that you would occupy our lowly hearts and that You would reveal to us Christ the merciful, the gentle, yet again through Your Word. We ask it for His name's sake. Amen. Amen.

Well, if you would turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 5, verse 5, Matthew 5:5. We are continuing to move through the Sermon on the Mount, beginning with the Beatitudes, where we read Jesus say, "Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth."

Now everybody wants to rule the world. So says Tears for Fears. And it was tears for years as the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Ottomans ruled. But where are they now? And where are their leaders? Where are their emperors and kings? Well, Nebuchadnezzar is in heaven with his High King. And Queen Victoria really enjoyed reading and learning theology through the sermons of Charles Spurgeon. So that's a good sign.

But their the exceptions, and David reminds us of that in Psalm 37. Psalm 37 is the backlighting to this Beatitude. Jesus quotes from His ancestor King David directly. He just lifts right off the page from the Old Testament and brings it into His Sermon on the Mount.

I'm going to read the words of David in Psalm 37. This is describing the lowly, describing meekness, describing gentleness. And it's not quite what we think when we hear those words. "Do not fear" or envy "the evil who die like grass."

You hear that? That's what meek is. Meek is fearless. Is that what you think of when you think of meek? Fearless? Don't fear. Don't envy the evil who die like grass on the lawn in Fresno, California every summer.

Trust in Yahweh and do good. They're God confident. They're certain of their God. They're committed to doing good. They're committed to living for their Lord. This does not sound like meek as we've learned it.

Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Stand God's ground as the world is cultivating other characteristics or cultivating other values or cultivating other ambitions. You cultivate faithfulness and stand God's ground.

Delight yourself in Yahweh. Oh, they love God. He is their relish. He is their appetite. They delight in Him, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

In the first service, I very sarcastically said, I tend to be more spiritual than God. Because I read that and I go, really? All the desires of my heart? I don't think so. You are not concerned about the desires of my own heart? I need to be devoted to Your glory and Your work and all the big things you are doing. But really, I am a little too spiritual to believe that He will give me the desires of my heart. I had people come up to me afterwards. They said, "Did I hear you right?"

Did you say you are more spiritual than God?" I said, yes, I said that. But my tone was sarcastic and a few of them said, we did not hear that part. And I said what preachers tend to say now and again, quietly in my soul, oh, no. That's what came into my mind. Oh, no, we're in trouble. So the first service, folks, one third of the church thinks I'm a heretic, and I made a couple other blunders in the second service. Hopefully we get it right the third service.

And I'm going to obey what David says in Psalm 37 as he continues to write, commit your way to Yahweh. Trust in Him and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness and your rule. As the noonday, be still in Yahweh and wait patiently for Him.

That's the meek. They trust in Him. They're calm in Him. As people are frantic and worrying about how the world is going, they sit down in Christ and they say, come what may bring your worst, we'll bring ours. We trust our God. He's going to bring about our right. He's going to show the whole world that we're the righteous ones. He's going to bring about our reign on planet Earth before long. That's the meek. Does that sound meek to you? That's the biblical definition of meek.

David continues, stop being angry. You have to tell the stop the meek to stop being angry. Yeah, you do. Stop being angry. Do not fear. It leads only to evil. Yet a little while and the wicked will be no more. You will look carefully at his place, and he will not be there. You will look, where are the wicked? Where are the wicked today? They used to live there. They used to go shopping there. And you won't find them.

But the lowly will inherit the land. Fact, the lowly will inherit the land. Jesus quotes that verbatim and says, blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth. The lowly are fearless. They fear no evil.

This is the eschatological beatitude. This is our fate. This is our destiny. This is our future. This is certainty. We are a happy people. And we can go low to gain the world, because that's the promise that God has given.

We will inherit the cosmos. You get to walk outside, you see the sunshine. You see the sky. You see the trees and the grass. You see all that the world contains. And you can say everywhere, like a little child, mine, mine, mine. That's mine. That belongs to me. Mine, mine, mine. And I don't even have to do anything to get it. My God is going to give it to me as I go low with Him, and I trust him, and I'm still with Him, and in Him, and patient for Him. And I stand His ground for the Gospel. It's all mine.

We don't panic. The meek seek the Lord. We want God. We stand His ground. Scary things and scary people don't scare us. Why? Because our God is. Is scarier.

As avaricious Vegas places bets on the Super Bowl. Who's going to win it? Who's gambling in Vegas on the lowly to win it all? Why aren't the bets being taken for that? Not condoning gambling, but if Jesus was here, He'd say, I didn't just bet money, I shed my blood. So that would be the reality. I'm betting on Him.

Stop reading the Beatitudes as the nice folk. Start reading the Beatitudes as the champions of the world. They're the winners. The evil are the losers. If you're living for yourself, if you're living for sin today, if you've not turned from your sin and yourself to Christ, a gracious Savior, you are, with all the love in my heart, a loser. You're not a winner. You think that you're winning by resisting Him. You think that you're winning by getting away from His Lordship. And you are dead wrong. And the good news is, He says, come win. Come win the world with me. Come to me and live.

Now, here's the interesting thing. Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth, says Jesus. Only the lowly, by the way, only the lowly. Roy Oberson. Only the lowly is the right lyrics. Okay? The lowly and the lowly alone. But He gets this from David, who says that the lowly inherit the land. So did Jesus misquote David?

Well, in Hebrew and Greek, the words earth and land are the same word. We have different words. In Greek and in Hebrew, the word is exactly the same. In Hebrew, it's eretz. That's earth and land. In Greek, it's gain. That's earth and land. We get the word geology from it, because we pronounce it strangely, but the same. And so you have to interpret what's being meant by context.

Now, why the ambiguity? I think that it's sovereignly ordained by God. Well, I know it's sovereignly ordained by God, but I think God had the ambiguity in this term on purpose. Why? Because thousands of years before Jesus, Yahweh had pledged a specific land, a geographical territory. Where Abram, some Babylonian well, Mesopotamian man, God called out of his pagan idolatry and promised him to be the father of a great nation, one great nation through which God would bless every other nation on planet earth. Land, earth combined in Genesis 12, the promise to Abraham, all the land you see, I will give you forever. You shall inherit the land. Cause this people to inherit the land.

God says to Messiah and Isaiah, you will make them inherit this desolate inheritance. Psalm 37, to quote a few other places in that Psalm. "They who hope for Yahweh will inherit the land. The lowly will inherit the land. The blessed by Yahweh will inherit the land. The righteous will inherit the land. Forever hope for Yahweh and keep His way. And He will exalt you to inherit the land when the wicked are cut off. You'll see." That's what He says. You'll see.

And so blessed are the Jews who bow low to their king Jesus. They will certainly inherit the land promised to them. And blessed are all the other nations, the Gentiles we hear today, who bow the knee with them to King Jesus. For we will inherit the earth, it's ours. By the sovereign hand of God, the planet will go the way of that land.

What does Nebuchadnezzar say, the pagan king of Babylon? Even he admits in Daniel 4, the Most High is the powerful ruler over the kingdom of mankind and gives it to whom He wishes and sets up over it. Who? The lowliest of men. The lowliest of men.

And Jesus says in Matthew 8, many will come from east and west and dine with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob in the kingdom. Every continent, every culture, every color, and a parade of Godly diversity. And every, every single one of them lowly. They'll take the land. They'll take the

world by faith, not force. They're given it, they inherit it by God's grace. A kingly gift indeed. And so Jesus says, blessed are you. You could say that again, Jesus. Blessed. God says, if you are in Christ this day, blessed.

The mountain law had said, cursed from the land, but mountain love. Here in this sermon says, bless the man who inherits the land.

The lost world says that meek is weak. But our Lord says through smiling teeth, blessed, blessed. Ephesians 1, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." And O, the earthly blessings. They're coming.

Psalm 32, "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. You are my hiding place. You guard me from trouble. You surround me with songs of deliverance. Do not be as a horse or the mule which have no understanding whose harness are bit and bridle to control them. Otherwise they will not come near you." What does he mean? What does he mean by that?

The lowly, they take refuge in Christ. Their sins are covered, they're so blessed. The proud say, I don't need covering. They're unprotected. Don't be like a horse or a mule who need bit and bridle to direct them. He's getting at meekness. He's getting at lowliness.

Blessed are the praus. That's the Greek term, praus. It existed before the Bible, as all the Greek words did. The Greeks used it to mean modest or mild. But most poignantly, they used it as a word for medicine that wasn't too harsh. They used it for a wild beast that had been domesticated. And so the Greeks, they said that a broken bronco is praus. Horsepower.

You know that one shire horse holds the world record for pulling by itself? 58,000 pounds. Staggering.

I don't even know what 58,000 pounds would look like.

Praus is power. It's power under control. It is the opposite of weakness. The wild mustang is worthless. Majestic, yes, but meaningless if unbroken. Raw power is pointless. It's useless, it's reckless, it's even dangerous. But harnessed power is praus. It is a force of godliness put to good use.

You know, I rode an elephant in Chiang Mai, Thailand, years ago. I know. It makes me way more interesting a person. Some of you think I am boring and I just sit in my office all day. But I ride elephants sometimes. Okay, 12 foot tall, 12,000 pounds. 100,000 muscles in its trunk alone with which it can lift 800 pounds. Some elephants are known to carry seven tons. That's 84, Sam Musgraves. I did the math. But if not meek, a matriarch or a wild bull will absolutely pulverize you.

By the way, is Jesus talking about some personality trait. Is He saying, blessed are those who happen to have the genetics that make them more passive or more quiet or more agreeable.

You're lucky, you're the lucky ones. You get heaven. All the other ones, yeah, they're out. Thank God that's not what He said. Thank God that's not what He means.

And I want to destroy something here today. If you're arrogant and obnoxious and you're running around like a wild elephant in the African bush and you're trampling people like a bull in a China shop, you're not meek and you will not inherit the earth, period.

The opposite is also true. Do not think that because you're here today and you're not one to really self-express, you don't dominate a room, you're more, you know, subdued in your personality that you're automatically in. This is not what Jesus is talking about, personality characteristics whatsoever.

All of us were born weak. Even that 9 pound 11 ounce Greenwood baby this morning, he's weak. I could beat him up. I'm not going to, but I'm pretty sure I could take him. I think we're all born weak. Not a single one of us was born meek. What gentle baby have you ever met. And I know the moms are probably hating me right now, but I've been around a lot of babies lately. You can't escape them in this church. They're everywhere. It's an infestation. And none of them are gentle. Once they can grasp, they scratch, they claw, they pinch, they cry. It's miserable. And you have to tell them, soft, soft, soft.

You see? Lowliness. Lowliness is supernatural. Gentleness is a fruit of the spirit. Spiritual. Humility is miraculous.

Want to ask you a question here you profess the name of Christ, but are you an enigma to the lost? Do they see, hey, I know you're capable of speaking up there and you didn't, what's up? Or men, I know that you've got to be feeling angry and you didn't act out in that anger, what's going on? Or they do look at you and they see your life and they say, oh yeah, you're just like us. You talk just like us. You react just like us. You got a temper that you show just like us. There's no mystery to you. You claim that God has made you a new creature, but the evidence is entirely lacking.

Or are you a new creature? New creatures are meek. New creatures are lowly. New creatures are gentle. New creatures. They are the most powerful force on this planet. And they restrain that force, to put it to good. They're restrained by the spirit of Christ to be made like Christ.

I'm going to read a definition to you. This is just a lexical definition. I opened up my Greek dictionary, and here it is. I had people from the first service. They were frustrated over my sarcastic remark that they didn't realize was sarcastic. And they said, you know what? Why don't you just read that definition about 50 times and eliminate all the rest of the sermon. They didn't really say that, but this definition is really good. Okay, it's worth reading three times.

Lowliness toward God is that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good. And therefore, without disputing or resisting. Lowliness toward God is that frame of spirit, that attitude, that disposition, that determination, that resolve, that reaction that, that worldview in which we accept all of God's dealings with us as good. And therefore I can't dispute, I can't resist.

Did you hear that? Lowliness is that frame of mind is that way of life, is that predetermined decision. You wake up in the morning and you resolve in your thoughts. All of God's dealings with me are good. Today's going to be a good day because my good God is going to do good and work all things good for my life so that there is nothing that's going to happen today that I can dispute God and resist Him. This is the meek man. This is the meek woman. They're God confident.

You might be saying, yeah, Sam, I'm here singing. We're vibing. We're doing pretty good this morning. I'm enjoying myself here, being with God's people. I'm feeling pretty lowly. I can pretty much hear anything you've got to throw at me, and I'll take it as good. We're charged up spiritually. But then you get in your car and you drive and you try to get onto Willow Avenue without dying, right? Or you stub your toe. How lowly are you? You step on a Lego. How lowly are you?

How lowly are you when you sin? How lowly are you when you've been sinned against? How lowly are you when you watch other people sin? How lowly are we truly? David says, in pain. David says, in danger.

Psalm 39 "I do not open my mouth because you have done it, God." Oh, God. Whatever harm, whatever danger, this is your work. I don't see all the good that you're doing through it. I just know you're good. And I know you're working it for good. So I'm going to close my mouth because you've done it. And I'm going to go low with you.

You remember Shimei, the relative of King Saul? King David had been evicted from Jerusalem. His own son. The tragedy of his life. Yes, David sinned. He did horrible things, horrific things. But one of the greatest heartbreaks of his life that someone else committed against him was Absalom. His own son, whom he loved, usurped the throne, led a mutiny revolted against his father. And here is David at his lowest low. And they're. They're leaving Jerusalem. They're fleeing Jerusalem. And here's Shimei taking the high road. This is what you deserve, David, speaking in the name of Yahweh, in the name of God. God's doing this to you, David. And he's throwing stones at David, literal stones. You can hear him clanging off the pieces of armor. They're clanking and bouncing and falling beside the way.

And David's bodyguard says, let me chop his head off. What does David do? What does lowliness do? What does a man who's so certain that God is good, how does he react?

2 Samuel 16. This is the man that slays giants. This is the man that kills Philistines and collects foreskins. I mean, this is a brutal, violent man. He could do the worst that any man could do. Saul's got his thousands, but David killed his ten thousands. We're talking about a force to be reckoned with. We're talking about a mighty man. We're talking about a powerful man. And what does he say, this man screaming at him, in the name of Yahweh, you are cursed, David, he says. 2 Samuel 16 "If he curses, and if Yahweh has told him, curse David, then let him curse. Perhaps Yahweh will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day."

That's what the Christian says. Perhaps. Perhaps I don't deserve that, but perhaps you'll look on me, take pity on me, and God will do instead of this cursing this day.

It's for this reason that Charles Spurgeon said, if a man thinks ill of you or speaks ill of you, don't be angry at him, for you are far worse than he thinks you to be. It makes you impervious. Meekness does whatever happens. All right, Lord, apparently you wanted me to hear that for some reason. Whether it be true or not, I could go low with you.

David retakes the Throne. Shimei freaks out. He cries like a little sissy girl. David spares his life again. Years later, Shimei rebels. And David says, hey Solomon son, as you become king, that Shimei guy acts up again. Take him out. And he did. Shimei met his end. An unrepentant sinner claiming to speak in the name of God found his end.

The meek get angry. Aristotle, the famous philosopher, said that meekness is avoiding excessive anger, and it's avoiding not being angry at all. If you're here today and you're just dispassionate against injustice, you're not meek, you're wicked. The meek get angry. They just don't exceed appropriate anger. They get angry. They don't avoid anger altogether. They're bridled. They're harnessed.

You might remember Miriam criticizing arrogantly, her brother Moses at his lowest point. The nation is revolting against him. Out in the wilderness. They're wanting to usurp his authority. They're wanting to displace him as their leader. And here come Aaron and Miriam. Hey, this is probably a good time for us to tell you we don't like some of the things that you're doing. Miriam, the most vocal of them, his own sister. And she says, you know, God speaks to us too Moses. Moses has killed an Egyptian soldier. Moses is capable harsh violence. And Moses shuts his mouth. He's learned. He's becoming meek. Numbers 12 says, Yahweh heard it.

Do you know that, brothers and sisters? Someone speaking evil against you, Someone's saying something that's not true, about, you know, this. Yahweh heard it, and He'll deal with it. Either you're hearing some vile vomit from a fellow believer whose words and sins have been washed by the blood of the Lamb and they're forgiven forever, or God will deal with that person. The meek man knows this.

So Yahweh heard it, what Miriam said. And then in parentheses, we get this parenthetical statement, we get this aside. In that moment, Yahweh heard what Miriam said. Now, the man Moses was very lowly, more than any man on the face of the earth. Moses does not react against Miriam. God does. She gets leprosy. Boom. Right there on the spot. And Moses mercifully cries out, O God, please heal her.

He doesn't say, ha, ha. Like so many siblings might say. You got leprosy. Ha ha. He immediately responds, oh, Father. I mean, this is Jesus on the cross. Forgive them, Father. They know not what they're doing. God heals her.

You remember What Jesus says to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. This is Saul who became Paul. This is before his conversion. This is when he was converted, Saul. Now Paul,

looking back on that time, says, Jesus said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.

A goad is a sharp cattle prod. It pokes the oxen to keep them on track, to direct them. The farmer is gently poking them to discomfort them, to keep them on track. If the ox kicks against the prod, they only hurt themselves more. They don't hurt the farmer.

And so I want you to see the heart of Christ. This is an unrepentant man. This Saul of Tarsus is murdering Christians, persecuting, imprisoning Christians. This is a horrible, horrible human being who is against God's purposes. And Jesus says to him, man, doesn't that hurt? It hurts you to resist me.

You might be here today and you're resisting the Gospel. You're resisting Christ. And you know as you hear those words, you know the reality is true. It only hurts you to resist grace, to resist your only hope, to resist true love.

Christian, you're here today and maybe there's some secret sin that's began to develop into a habit. And you know this is true, that it's hurting you. Oh, how hard it is for you to kick against God's good, wise, loving control. Don't resist Him.

Peter and James learned this quite well, and they wrote, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. So lower yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the right time. Casting all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you, He gives a greater grace. Draw near to God. He will draw near to you. Lower yourself. He will exalt you.

You see, I want to ask you a question. I want to apply that earlier definition to right now. How happy are you with your life? How happy are you with God's dealings today? Because Jesus says, the lowly are happy. My God's good may not be pleasant. My God's good. I rejoice in the Lord always.

The psalms say, He saves all the lowly of the earth. Yahweh takes pleasure in His people. He will beautify the lowly with salvation. And the crescendo is so pristine. And the prophet Joel, I love this. He says, let the lowly say, I am a mighty man.

Is that meekness to you? Because it's meekness to God. My God is mighty. His mercy is mighty. I am mighty in Christ. I'm an invincible man.

Go low. Resign control. Find strength, O lowly ones, in the Most High God. Yours is the kingdom of heaven. You will be comforted. You shall be satisfied. You will receive mercy. You shall see God. You shall be called royalty, sons of God. Yours is the kingdom of heaven. Rejoice, be glad. Your reward in heaven is great.

Salt and light of the world. Rid your heart of hatred. Befriend the broken. Be true. Love enemies as Christ loved you. Be rich in heaven, not in religion. Look at the God of lily and sparrow. Run the low narrow. Seek His kingdom and seek His Son. This is the Sermon on the Mount.

Did that describe you? Or did that damn you? Now, I want to be swift here, because if you're saying, Sam, I'm a little afraid because I thought I'm a Christian and that damned me. I have very good news for you. Go back to the beginning of the sermon and start it over. Blessed are those who know they are poor.

If this sermon is richness, if obedience to this sermon is rich riches, I'm poor. Christ says, you got the sermon. You understood it. Aren't you happy? But I mourn that I don't see more of this in my life. And Jesus says, blessed are you.

You say, oh, Father, please forgive me. I do believe that I'm poor in spirit. I do grieve my sin. But when people tell me that I'm poor in spirit and grieve my sin, I get all riled up at them. He says, good, you see that you got a ways to go in lowliness. You're not meek enough yet.

But there's good news that though you need a righteousness that exceeds the scribes and Pharisees, a righteousness that far surpasses the strictest religion, you can't get it. And so it makes you despair until you've heard that there is one righteous one. The Righteous One came down to earth. He's speaking to you these words so that you would absolutely despair of yourselves and go out of yourself to Him. And He died. And He rose and He lives. And He is lowly. Behold. Look. This is Christianity. We don't have a religion. We have reality.

Behold, Matthew 21. Your king is coming to you. Lowly. You feared He was racing to you to condemn you. And here He comes. Lowly, approachable.

I went out. There was a baby out there in the foyer. And instinctively I knelt down to interact with her. Lowly. It's instinctive to us. How much more is it instinctive to Him who is lowliness personified.

He's approachable. And what does he say? Matthew 11 Come to me. Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden.

You read this Sermon on the Mount and you're weary. You think it's too big, it's too much. It doesn't describe me as much as I need it to describe me. And you're heavy laden. And He says, come to me. Good, good, good, good, good. Come, come, come, come to me and I will give rest to your souls. Because I'm going to describe my heart now. My heart is gentle and it's lowly. And you will find rest for your souls in me. In me.

We say, this sounds too good to be true. Father, can it possibly be true? And the Father says in Matthew 12, behold. Look. Look at Him. Look at Him. Listen to Him. My servant whom I have chosen.

The highest service that God could possibly imagine, for which he sent his highest servant is to be gentle with you, to be lowly for you, to love you, to die for you, to reign with you, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon Him. And a battered reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick he will not put out. Until He brings his righteousness to full victory in your life He will not give up on you.

What love could remember no wrongs we have done. Omniscient, all knowing He counts not their sum throws them into a sea without bottom, without shore. Our sins, they are so many, but His mercies are so much more.

So we cry, Psalm 25 with David, forget my sins, remember me by how you love. For your goodness sake, teach this lowly man all Your ways are true grace. And for Your name, O Yahweh, pardon my guilt, for it is greater than I know.

Look to Christ, the highest heart went the lowest. Lowliness is His likeness, moderation is His middle name. Meet Him on the low road it is safe down there and nowhere else. Where God is good and beyond dispute or resistance, where a fatherly God who spared not His Son, does not know how to withhold a single good thing from the lowly. And where the lowly win the world with Christ, which we celebrate together. Here we proclaim His death for us, we proclaim His resurrection for us. We proclaim His reign. We proclaim our reign with Him. We celebrate what He's done for us until He returns together as a people, happy and low before the throne of grace.

Father, we ask that You would now settle our hearts under Your kindness. O God, Your dealings with us, you have dealt bountifully with us. Forgive us, Lord. We do ask forgiveness for our anger, which is just fear, which is just unbelief. We do confess. But we've confessed Christ in its place, our righteousness, our joy. And we ask, Father, this would be a sweet time together now, as your people, as we preach Christ together at His table, it's in His name we pray.