

# Sermon – Blessed are the Meek...

13 September 2020: Matthew 5:5

Transcript:

Kia Ora church family – we are here week 3 of our Kingdom of God series. I'm really excited this week to bring you Blessed are the Meek for they will inherit the earth.

So we have been talking about the Kingdom of God and it is both upside down and crazy.

We are currently in Election season, everyone important is heading out on the campaign trail. People of parliament heading out all over this country. I was following Jacinda Ardern on Facebook as she was in Hawkes Bay, then Whakatane and Tauranga. She was going around trying to get people to vote for her. Everywhere she goes I imagine she is the most important person in the room. She has security follow her all the time; I have seen her walk up Hill Street to Parliament and she's so important that she has security before and after her.

Today, is Saturday and I was at hockey earlier, refereeing. Afterwards we got talking about one of the Umpires who is a councillor for the Porirua City Council. One of the questions raised was if you can call him by his first name or whether we should call him Councillor first. He as a councillor has a title and that brought me back to important people, all these important people who have titles. The Right Honorable Jacinda Ardern or Councillor Blank.

I wonder too whether we think the same for people up the front of church – the Reverends. The thing is New Zealand (like most Western societies) have a general culture where we are fascinated by celebrities and being important and being noticed. In fact, I suffer from this quite often. I often get quite wound up in my head about being important. Am I important in the right peoples eyes? Am I important enough for people to notice me? Is what I do important enough? This is often the story I have going around in my head.

Am I really important? Am I good enough? Am I good enough to be considered an important person?

Then we come to the Beatitudes. These are things that Jesus states embody the Kingdom of God. In fact Jesus embodies them himself. These 8 things he talks about in Matthew 5. We need to consider when we get to Matthew 5 however, that these are not broken up bits of scripture that we can take and digest separately. It is actually a story put together very well and craftily by Matthew. So think of it as one continuous story. There have been a whole heap of events that have led to this moment when Matthew starts talking.

I have talked a little bit about this before. Matthew is setting Jesus up to be the New Moses. So he starts out by pointing out the lineage – how is Jesus related to all the people in the old testament?

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, Solomon right down to Josph Jesus' father. Then some really important kings come and visit Jesus at his birth – the Magi. Politicians rallying for his support!

Then like Moses Jesus takes the journey of the Israelites – he leaves Israel and flees to Egypt to avoid being killed. He comes back – is baptised like going through the parted sea. He then is tempted 40 days in the wilderness like the 40 years that Israel were in the wilderness. He follows the path of Israel.

Jesus is the new Moses character. He is the one who fulfils the Old Testament prophecies and then he begins to preach. He begins to talk about how the Kingdom is here and how people need to turn from the worldly ways.

He then calls two sets of disciples: Peter and Andrew, James and John. These guys are fishermen and Jesus says Come, follow me and they do! So now Jesus has some fishermen following him, who are rejects in the Jewish education and revered system.

Next Jesus get people brought to him (Matthew 4:24) who are ill, demon possessed, having seizures, paralyzed. He heals them and preaches throughout the land. So he now has a crowd! He notices this crowd and he takes them to a hill and sits down to teach. Again Moses comes to mind where he took a group of people (Israel) to a mountain and

received the way this new people are meant to live – the 10 Commandments. Now Jesus does the same thing he takes his group of people and now says how are they going to live. So we hear about it in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus sets out all these people in his Kingdom who are Blessed.

Peter talked about Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

Jonathan talked about Blessed are the Mourners of Justice

This week is Blessed are the Meek – for they will inherit the earth.

Who is Jesus talking to? The crowd he has just gathered full of people who are sick, paralyzed, demon possessed etc. To these people he starts naming people who are in favour with God.

Blessed are the Meek for they will inherit the Earth.

Who at present inherits the earth? I was thinking about property owners – I own a little property up on Harbour View but there are many more people who own lots of property. Sometimes I think if you have the most money that you will inherit the earth. Perhaps you think of the important leaders? I am not sure who will inherit the earth. But Jesus says the meek will!

Meek is a funny word – because not many people use it now a days. But I think Jesus means those people who are unimportant. The people before him in a Roman society are unimportant. You don't have to know much about the Roman society to know it was cut throat! There was no social welfare, no unemployment benefit. If you were suffering in some way you were shunned to the outcasts and corners of the streets and empire.

Jesus is talking to the people he has gathered and saying in Jesus' kingdom these are the people who will get all the earth. The meek are the ones who are actually going to win out in the end. They are the important ones. To all you who are sitting on the hill – Jesus says you are the important ones!

In Jesus' kingdom the unimportant people are the ones who God favours first!

Now some people have described the Beatitudes to me before as a checklist – be like this, be like that and God will bless you.

Two major theologians NT Wright and Stanley Hauweras say actually it is not about gaining the blessing of God but rather a declaration by God that these are the people who are blessed.

Jesus himself embodies each one of these Beatitudes – as I said earlier.

When Jesus comes to his trial before Caiaphas, the high priest, The High priest asks him:

Matthew 26:63:

I demand in the name of the living God—tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

Jesus replied, “You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand[i] and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

In Matthew 28:18: Jesus again exclaims:

“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.”

Who inherits the earth? Jesus the one who was enthroned on a miserly Cross. One of the Empires crucifixions. Someone who the empire disregarded and threw out. Jesus was an unimportant person in the eyes of the Roman empire and the high priests. But it was him who was exalted!

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

It is really important not to view these as things to be attained but rather declarations over the people who are meek. So for me this week this brings up one important task:

- I want to go and find the unimportant (meek) people and get to know them. Listen to them and learn from them. Because Jesus says these are the people who find favour with God first. These are the people who understand and are part of God Kingdom first.

Go and find the meek – the unimportant people and listen, learn and engage with them. Why are these people so famous with Jesus?