

CHARITY AND ITS FRUITS
Jonathan Edwards
Lecture IV – Charity Meek in Bearing Evil and Injuries

I Corinthians 13:4 – “⁴Love is patient and kind.” – ESV
“Charity suffereth long, and is kind.” - KJV

Review & Introduction

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

- I. All true grace in the heart is summed up in charity, or love.
- II. Charity, or love, is more excellent than the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.
- III. All that can be done or suffered is in vain without charity, or love.

Chapter 4 “Charity Meek in Bearing Evil and Injuries:”

- Take notice of some of the various kinds of injuries that we may receive from others.
- Show what is meant by meekly bearing such injuries.
- How that love, which is the sum of the Christian spirit, will dispose us to do this.
- Objections against such a meek and quiet bearing of injuries as has been spoken of.

“Meekness is a great part of the Christian spirit. Christ, in that earnest and touching call and invitation of his that we have in the eleventh chapter of Matthew, in which he invites all that labor and are heavy-laden to come to himself for rest, particularly mentions, that he would have them come to learn of him; for he adds, ‘I am meek and lowly in heart.’ And meekness, as it respects injuries received from men, is called long-suffering (patience) in the Scriptures, and is often mentioned as an exercise in the fruit of the Christian spirit (Gal 5:22).” - Edwards

Matthew 11:28-30 “²⁸Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give your rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Galatians 5:22-23 “²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Matthew Henry – The Quest for Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.

- I. The Nature of Meekness.
 1. Meekness to God.
 - a. Silent submission to the Word of God.
 - b. Silent submission of the soul to the providence of God concerning us.
 - (1) When the events of providence are grievous and afflictive.
 - (2) When the methods of providence are dark and intricate and we are at a loss what God is about to do with us.
 2. Meekness to all men (Titus 3:2).
 - a. Meekness teaches us prudently to govern our own anger whenever anything occurs that is provoking
 - (1) To consider the circumstances at that which we apprehend to be a provocation so as at no time to express our displeasure, but upon due and mature deliberation.
 - (2) Work of meekness is to calm the spirit so that inward peace may not be disturbed by outward provocation.

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- (3) Meekness will curb the tongue and keep the mouth as with a bridle when the heart is hot.
- (4) Meekness will cool the heat of passion quickly, and not suffer it to continue.
- b. Meekness teaches and enables us patiently to bear the anger of others.
 - (1) To enjoin silence.
 - (2) To indite a soft answer.

Discussion:

1. Pray
2. Discuss how the world defines meekness.
Is that different from Biblical meekness?
3. Read Numbers 12:3 ¹³“Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.”
Discuss Moses’ character.
How does Moses exhibit Biblical meekness?
4. Read the following by John Calvin on meekness and mercy:
“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst on account of righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for mercy will be shown them (Matt. 5:5-7).

Then lifting up his eyes upon his disciples, he said, Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled (Luke 6:20-21a).

“If we would only heed what nature teaches us we would enjoy the happiest state that humans could desire. For God has created all of us in his own image, so that we have only to look at our neighbour to see ourselves. We are one flesh. And although appearances and attitudes are very different, it is impossible to efface the unity which God has conferred on us. If only that were firmly etched in our minds, we would all be living at peace with each other, in a kind of earthly paradise.

The opposite, however, is the case. Everyone around us follows his own interests and looks to his own advantage; everyone wants to lord it over others. Hence our pride, our surliness, our venom the instant we are provoked. Harshness and even cruelty abound. We are vindictive and cause no end of trouble: it is as if lightning should fall from heaven every time someone is offended. So if in the course of life we endure many difficulties, we do not have to look far for the explanation: the pain men suffer comes from their fellow men. It is, of course, true that people all have their excuses. They want nothing better, they say, than to be gentle and mild-mannered, and to show patience toward those among whom they live. But, they add, it is not possible to deny our human nature: we must hunt with the hounds, because to be a sheep is to risk becoming someone else’s dinner. That, then, is the excuse usually offered by men to cloak their actions. In reality so full are they of bitterness, arrogance, and pride that they cannot abide one another. It is all the more fitting, then, that we remember the lesson which the Son of God has for us here. For although we think we are hard done by when we cannot retaliate against those who ill-treat us, he tells us that *it is the peace-makers and the meek who will possess the earth.*

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Now common sense tells us such a thing is not credible. Experience, too, suggests that victory and success go to the boldest and most aggressive, while the unassuming dare not open their mouths to protest or complain, even though others may rob and fleece them of all they have. So common sense dictates that people who are meek will always suffer insult and abuse, unable even to find some small corner where they can draw breath or shake off their pursuers — lambs, so to speak, among a pack of wolves. For all that, our Lord Jesus Christ made no false claim when he promised that *the meek will inherit the earth.*” **Meekness & Mercy - John Calvin** https://www.the-highway.com/Calvin_meek2

Discuss Calvin’s assessment of meekness.

5. How, if at all, do you think differently about Biblical meekness?
6. Pray.

Conclusion

Matthew Henry – The Quest for Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.

- II. The Excellency of Meekness.
 1. Consider how creditable a meek and quiet spirit is.
 - a. There is in it the credit of a victory.
 - b. There is in it the credit of beauty.
 - c. There is in it the credit of an ornament.
 - d. There is in it the credit of true courage.
 - e. The credit of a conformity to the best patterns.
 2. Consider how comfortable a meek and quiet spirit is.
 - a. He enjoys himself.
 - b. He enjoys his friends.
 - c. He enjoys his God.
 - d. It is not in the power of his enemies to disturb and interrupt him in these enjoyments.
 3. Consider how profitable a meek and quiet spirit is.
 4. Consider what a preparative it is for something further.
 - a. It makes us fit for any duty.
 - b. It makes us fit for any relation which God in his providence may call us into.
 - c. It makes us fit for any condition according as the wise God shall please to dispose of us.
 - d. It makes us fit for a day of persecution.
 - e. It makes us fit for death and eternity.

Colossians 3:12-13 “¹²Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”