

Matthew 5:5

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-5/matthew-55/>

The third statement (C) of Jesus's chiasm focuses on humility and meekness.

There is no apparent parallel account of this teaching in the Gospels.

Jesus's statement (C) *Makarios are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth* corresponds with (C') *Makarios are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

The third statement of Jesus's *Makarios* chiasm is another paradox. This time it is *the gentle* who are *blessed (Makarios)*. The Greek term which Matthew uses to capture Jesus's thought for *gentle* is the Greek word, "*Praus*" (G4239). It is sometimes translated as "meek."

Gentle in English means mild or soft, as opposed to stern, stiff, or severe. Unfortunately, the English words *gentle* or *meek* often carry a connotation of weakness. The Greek word, *Praus*, portrays an underlying strength being channeled, a power under control. It was a word used to describe a powerful war horse that was willing to go into the thick of battle when urged by its rider. Horses by nature are prone to either flight or dominance. An animal whose strength is submissive to its master has channeled its power to flee or dominate in service to the master.

To be *gentle* while standing firmly on the truth requires great strength. But it also requires an attitude of service. People are not our enemy. Spiritual forces of evil are our enemy. *The gentle* or *meek*, who are channeling their energies into service to their Master, in service to others, are *blessed*. They are happy and fulfilled (*Makarios*), because *they shall inherit the earth*. They are fulfilling their design. This is a future promise Jesus makes to *the gentle*. That one day, *they shall inherit the earth*. The word translated *inherit* includes the idea of possession. God granted the land of Israel to Abraham's descendants as a reward to Abraham for his faithfulness. But God told Abraham his descendants would not possess it for another 400 years (Genesis 15). They had been granted it, but did not experience the blessing of it until they fought the required battles to possess it.

The situation is similar for *the gentle*. Jesus has granted *that they shall inherit the earth*. It has been granted. The possession will take place in a future reign of servant kings in the new *earth* (Revelation 21:1). Jesus is saying that those who live with gentleness and humility now will one day *inherit the earth* and reign over it in harmony with Him. Genesis 1:28 tells us that God created mankind to have dominion over the earth. Revelation 21:24 refers to "the kings of the (new) earth."

The psalmist, contemplating God's mysterious purpose for man, marvels,

"What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him?
Yet You have made him a little lower than God,

And You crown him with glory and majesty!
You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet”
(Psalm 8:4-6).

From these passages (and many others) we can see that man was created to rule the *earth*. Because we were designed to rule in harmony with God, we cannot be *Makarios* (blessed, fulfilled, happy, satisfied, etc.) until we are ruling in harmony with God. Jesus’s statement—*Makarios are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth*—appears paradoxical, but only because the current earth is twisted from its original design. In the current age of the earth, the boastful and proud are usually in charge. The most ruthless tyrants are the ones who tend to build great empires. From Attila the Hun and Alexander the Great to Adolf Hitler and Genghis Khan. From the Caesars and Sultans to Mao and Stalin.

But the kingdoms of the current earth are destined to pass away. One day they will be no more. When Christ returns and creates the new earth, He will place His followers in positions of authority. He will exalt to places of authority those who used their gifts to serve others, as He did (Matthew 20:28; Luke 14:11; Philippians 2:3-11). Those who are *gentle* or meek will be elevated by Him to fulfill their destiny (*Makarios*) of inheriting *the earth*.

The proud kingdoms of the present earth seek to dominate and demand, coerce and control, but their time is fading. In the end those who seek power over others will be empty, for they will not inherit the earth. But Jesus tells us that those who serve now will reign later. Thus, *the gentle* are *Makarios*.

The *makarios* qualities beginning with *poor in spirit* and moving onto *those who mourn*, and now here with *the gentle*, reveal a progression. The *poor in spirit* are those who have come to a point of brokenness and become bankrupt of self. They realize that have nothing to offer of themselves (like the wayward son in Jesus’s famous parable in Luke 15:16-17). When we realize this, the appropriate response is to *mourn*. To *mourn* how we squander life by pursuing foolish dead-ends. This *poor spirit* and mourning leads to repentance. Repentance begins the process of building a new life according to God’s values. We show gentleness (or meekness) when we channel our power and capabilities as our master directs. Like a war horse commanded by its rider, we go where we are directed. Jesus desires fearless servants to reign over His kingdom, those who are willing to brave difficulty and continue to walk in obedience.

Biblical Text

5:5 Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.