

When you Google the definition of the word meek, the result is, “quiet, gentle, and easily imposed upon.” Is this the sort of meekness to which a disciple of Christ is called? Are we called to become doormats for others to walk all over? Is this what Jesus meant when He said, “Learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart”?¹ Simply put, no. While we might describe Christ as quiet and gentle in some moments, the description “easily imposed upon” is a far cry from the Christ who proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom, turned over the merchants’ tables in the Temple, forgave sins, healed the sick, raised the dead and repeatedly cried, “Woe to you, Pharisees!” even as they were plotting against Him. Even though some might say the Christ on trial, Christ walking to Calvary, or Christ crucified is “easily imposed upon,” I don’t believe that you or I would. Although Christ does not fight against His death on Calvary, He exhibits great strength throughout His whole Passion; it is this quiet strength in the face of adversity that is true meekness.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.”² God promises an *inheritance* to those who are meek; the word inheritance implies a parental-child relationship. Our identity as beloved sons and daughters is essential to holy meekness. We must listen to the voice that says, “You are my beloved.”³ We must let those words echo deeply in our hearts until they define us at our core. When we are confident in our God-given identity as a beloved son or daughter of God, nothing can shake us. We have no need to get defensive, worry about the opinions of others, or justify our actions or beliefs to those around us. We have full confidence that God sees us and loves us, and we recognize that His love is worth more than love or admiration from anyone else on this earth.

I share this Henri Nouwen quote that highlights what the opposite of meekness looks like: “The farther I run away from the place where God dwells, the less I am able to hear the voice that calls me the Beloved, and the less I hear that voice, the more entangled I become in the manipulations and power games of the world.

It goes somewhat like this: I am not so sure anymore that I have a safe home, and I observe other people who seem to be better off than I. I wonder how I can get to where they are. I try hard to please, to achieve success, to be recognized. When I fail, I feel jealous or resentful of these others. When I succeed, I worry that others will be jealous or resentful of me. I become suspicious or defensive and increasingly afraid that I won’t get what I so much desire or will lose what I already have. Caught in this tangle of needs and wants, I no longer know my own motivations. I feel victimized by my surroundings and distrustful of what others are doing or saying. Always on my guard, I lose my inner freedom and start dividing the world into those who are for me and those who are against me. I wonder if anyone really cares. I start looking for validations of my distrust. And wherever I go, I see them, and I say, ‘No one can be trusted.’ And then I wonder whether anyone ever really loved me. The world around me becomes dark. My heart grows heavy. My body is filled with sorrows. My life loses meaning. I have become a lost soul.”⁴

Jesus, how often we run! Teach us how to rest in our identity as beloved. Teach us true meekness.

We are living in a very charged political climate, with the election just over a week away. Seemingly now more than ever there is a temptation to get defensive and tear down others, especially on social media. I challenge you to be pillars of meekness as the world around us fights about what is best for our country. Let us remain steadfast in the knowledge that, no matter the outcome of the election, we have a Father who loves us and who is providing for us at every moment, for we are His beloved children.

In Christ, Aurelia Vaiana

¹ Matthew 11:29

² Matthew 5:5

³ Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22

⁴ Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* p. 47