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The Result of our Calling is godliness.

Part Two – Meekness and Long Suffering

By Nick Bibile

Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.

Today we shall continue from where we stopped last time. Practical behavior of the Christian. God called us from darkness to his marvelous light from the wicked world to the Kingdom of God; he called us to himself, to live a life of holiness. As a Christian our chief goal is to glorify God and the only way we can glorify God is to live a life of holiness. We saw one of the fruits of regeneration is humility. Now we will continue in the same context, meekness and long suffering.

What does it mean to be meek?

Today we understand the word meek is to be kind of mild type person. Kind of a weak type person who is submissive to everyone. It says, "Meek as a mouse." Meaning kind of timid type person. But this is not the Biblical meaning of meek. The Greek adjective is *praos* and the noun is *prautes*. Some translations have suggested gentleness. But unfortunately our English words cannot give the full meaning. Meekness is not weakness of timid. The Biblical Greek scholar A. T. Robertson explains the following on meekness.

"The English word "meek" has largely lost the fine blend of poise and strength meant by the Master. He calls himself "meek and lowly in heart" (Mat 11:29) and Moses is also called meek.

Nu 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.)

Was Moses weak, timid, no. He was a leader, he was bold enough to go and speak directly to Pharaoh.

"Meek is the gentleness of strength."

We saw last time that humility is the mother of all character. As this is the first action our Lord Jesus took, leaving heavenly position and coming to earth and taking a very low position of a servant, and we ought to be lowliness of mind, instead of prideful. Refusing our rights and putting our neighbor's interest first. Remember Abraham when there was strife between his servants and Lot's servants, Abraham gave Lot the first choice to select the land he wants to go; he was neither greedy nor selfish. Give the others the best and you take the rest, even when it comes to food. Humility is bending down and seeking others first. Remember how Jesus washed the feet of the

disciples, the lowest job of a servant, this is humility in action. Apostle Paul became all things to all men that means coming down to their level. Missionary work and evangelism, being a light to the others need humility

The word meekness is closely linked with the word humility and gentleness Eph 4:2, Col 3:12; Zep 3:12 Meekness is first toward God, it does not struggle but simply submit to his authority, then in our daily life, it produces strength under control. Like a wild horse who has a lot of strength but now under control. And without being humble you cannot be meek. Remember Jonah, when God told him to go and preach in Nineveh he was not happy, he did not want to submit God but struggled against God's will. He evaluated the situation in his own eyes as he saw the people in Nineveh were extremely wicked and Jonah's strength in his own power failed and committed suicide but God already prepared a fish to swallow Jonah, he was tested and found to be prideful and in humility he learned salvation is of the Lord.

Then Paul goes on to say that we ought to be longsuffering. The Greek word is a Noun and a Verb. The Noun *makrothumia* it comes from two words combined. Makros – long and thumos – temper. Basically not having a short fuse but a long fuse. It means to forbear and to have patience. Longsuffering is to bear the cross. We see the saints of God like Job, David, Paul and many others went through heavy duty trials.

Longsuffering is when you are provoked to anger, you got angry as someone made you angry. Does this happen to you in normal life? Yes, ok then when this happens you will not hastily retaliate, you will not get a panic attack. Longsuffering is the opposite of anger and associated with mercy. Our God is longsuffering.

Ex 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Longsuffering is to have patience. When the unexpected provocations as someone make you angry in different circumstances, patience is something that will not surrender to circumstances.

Mt 5:39 But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Ro 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Not like Lamech who said:

Ge 4:23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding and a young man to my hurt.

How many of you need patience? How many need prayer for patience? Then I am going to pray that the Lord will bring you a heavy tribulation to you. Now I see your faces puzzled as you say you did not ask for a tribulation but patience.

Haven't you read Romans 5:3?

Ro 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.

Let me ask you a question, do you need patience if everything is going your way and no trouble all flows so smoothly. No. Patience is needed when you are provoked to anger, to trials.

Jas 1:3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

You can see it all springs with humility. If you say you don't have longsuffering and gentleness it's because you don't have humility. You cannot find these in our old nature but all these comes with the new nature the new man in Christ. We see apostle speaking of Christian unity as with these virtues we can forbear one another in love. The word forbear means to endure, to undergo to suffer with patience.

Humility if the first step for unity. Humility produces meekness – strength under control which we can bear with one another and preserve the unity. Why it that quarrels and insults is come? Because everyone is concerned of his love for himself, he is concerned of his interests only. We need to lay aside our pride, haughtiness, self interest, self love and cloth in humility, meekness, longsuffering forbear one another in love, and this is Christian unity.

1Co 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

Our old nature is opposite to all these. The old nature loves ourselves, loves our own interests before our neighbor's. Proudful, arrogant, self seeking, greedy, envious, have a short fuse, burst with anger, quarreling, getting upset and the result is having a lot of stress.

The old nature like to have humility, meekness, longsuffering forbearing in love but does not last while, only for a short time, the reason it does not last while as these fruits are not in them, so they try to act in their own power but when God put them into test in trial and hardship it falls apart.

As I said only the new man in Christ has these true Christian fruits. It is not an act they perform for a while but it is in them as they are in Christ, they follow Christ, they meditate on Christ and live on Christ. Christ him self is humble, meek and can give rest to our weary souls.

Mt 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Yes, all these come if you learn of Christ as he said learn of me. Apostle Paul said; follow me as I follow Christ. Jesus lived a very poor life, did not have a place to lay his head. Yet he never grumbled. You think you are under attack? Look at Christ, his enemies followed him every where and always looked to accuse him day and night. Even at the cross, he was physically beaten severely, mocked and ridiculed, yet there was strength under control as he did not utter a word. Look at the Beatitudes the only person who ever performed all of the Beatitudes was Christ himself. He is perfect.

You may say, certainly he is God and Christ was able to do it but I am a man and I can't. Then my question to you is this? Yes, you cannot do it without Christ but Christ is in you.

Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory.

If you are a Christian you are in Christ. You are not in the world, not in yourself but in Christ.

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

Look at the apostles the change they had, it was Christ in them that made the change. Yes, we have the same Holy Spirit in us.

When there are young Christians, babes in Christ comes to our church we see as infants in Christ there will be weaknesses in them. Instead of judging them right away we need to bear their weaknesses as they are still growing up in Christ. It's like a toddler growing up and we need a lot of patience in taking care of the toddler in the same way we need to have patience with babes in Christ. Look at Paul's example.

1Th 2:7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.

Ro 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2Ti 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Let us take examples of our Lord he was provoked to anger but did not get angry, even at the cross he was able to forgive his enemies. Remember David's enemies. They seek to hurt him, trap him, deceive him what did David do?

Ps 38:12 They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

13 But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.

14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.

15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

Spurgeon said, "Bad men never have enough of evil. They compass sea and land to injure a saint; no labor is too severe, no cost too great if they may utterly destroy the innocent."

Before you open your mouth, pray, humble yourself before the Lord and ask for wisdom, many times to be deaf and mute shows the power of God under control. In this world you will face all kinds of trials, sometimes from your closest friends, relatives and even from your own family, because we are living in a fallen world. See David's own son Absalom, Absalom killed his own brother Amnon David's eldest Son. Then he became the oldest surviving son to the King's throne. He came against his own Father as he seeks to kill his own Father for the throne. David's chief counselor deserted him and joined Absalom, There was a fierce battle and Absalom died. David cried for his son as he said: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! If only I had died in your place, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam. 18:33. Comp. Ex. 32:32; Rom. 9:3).

The word forgiveness is a powerful word, it ends the quarrel, and it ends the fight and brings love instead of hate.

Col 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfect ness.

The world is looking for answers which they cannot find, we Christians the elect of God have the power of God's spirit and his grace and we can show the world the power of Christ and his grace as we shine as his lights to a dark world.

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