

MEEKNESS: IT MAKES THE BELIEVER ABLE TO AVOID STRIFE

GOLDEN TEXT

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love”. (Ephesians 4:1,2)

USEFUL PRACTICE

Meekness, as a fruit of the Spirit, makes the believer able to avoid contention, strife, and dissension.

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 4:1-7

- 1- As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.
- 2 - Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
- 3 - Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
- 4 - There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;
- 5 - one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- 6 - one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- 7 - But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To show that meekness, a fruit of the Spirit, makes the believer able to avoid strife.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. **To know** that meekness is the opposite of arrogance;
- II. **To show** that the believer needs to avoid strife and contention;
- III. **To understand** that the meek are blessed.

INTRODUCTION

In today's lesson, we will study one more aspect of the fruit of the Spirit: meekness. We will also see strife as the work of the flesh and as opposed to mildness. To be meek, the believer needs to have another virtue that is humility. Arrogance, like strife, is the work of the flesh, and he who practices it cannot please God, because he detests the proud in heart (Prov. 16: 5). In the Word of God, believers are compared to sheep. Why such an allegory? Because sheep are docile, meek, and submissive animals to their shepherd (John 10: 14,15). If you are Jesus' sheep, then learn how to be meek and humble. Listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd.

I - MEEKNESS, THE OPPOSITE OF ARROGANCE

1. Meekness is not cowardice. To be meek is to be humble, kind and polite. Meekness, as a fruit of the Spirit, is an inner attitude that leads us to act with grace and love, even in the face of difficult situations. While he was writing the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul was facing a very difficult situation. Some false apostles were slandering him, distorting his messages, undermining his authority and apostolate (2 Cor. 10-13). However, the apostle acted with meekness and kindness toward the brothers. He begins the epistle by speaking about the comfort he received from God and his brothers (2 Cor. 1: 1-6). Many may think that Paul was rather harsh on his brothers, but he was very balanced. When it was necessary, he acted firmly to those who, unwilling to walk in the truth, defied his apostolic authority (1 Cor. 4:21), but, in dealing with believers, he was like a patient and loving nursing mother (1 Thessalonians 2:7).

2. Being meek is being brave. Meekness does not make the believer a cowardly or timid person, but it allows him to oppose the spirit of arrogance and live in such a way that the name of the Lord be exalted. Moses was meek, but, at the same time, he showed strength and courage (Num. 11:15; 12:3). Jeremiah was a strong proclaimer of divine truths, but he said that he was just a meek lamb (Jer. 11:19).

3. Meekness, a fruit of the Spirit. As a fruit of the Spirit, meekness is part of the qualities that must be present in the life of the subjects of the Kingdom of God (Mt 5:11). Jesus taught meekness and offered his burden to all those who were suffering from the loads imposed by Judaism, the Romans, and Satan (Mt 11:29, 30). Jesus was simple, humble and gentle (Mt 11:29). People took pleasure in being by his side. It is very difficult to be alongside haughty people. In general, the haughty like strife, because they believe that they are always right and that they have the monopoly on the truth. Do you know anyone like that? Then pray for them, so that they may come to repent, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to develop the fruit of the Spirit.

II - AVOIDING STRIFE AND CONTENTION

1. Strife and discord. In the Portuguese language, such words have almost the same meaning, but in Greek, the word used for discord is *eritheiai*, which means disagreement and disharmony. This word is also used to describe a mercenary, a person who fights for position and glory. Paul exhorted the believers in Galatia by showing that enmity, fights, emulation, strife, and dissension are the work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).

2. Actions of the fleshly man. Today, many are no longer fighting for the cause of Christ, but only for offices and positions. One of the signs that a person is not prepared to exercise the Christian ministry is when he displays an uncontrollable desire to reach positions and mandates by overriding everyone. The believer who is wise, and has ministerial gifts, waits patiently and meekly for the moment of God. He does not engage in strife and does not use political methods to achieve what is divine, for he is aware that such attitudes comes from his old nature.

3. A brave spirit. The believer should not engage in any kind of strife or fight (2 Tim. 2:24). God demands holiness from his people. We need to keep ourselves incorruptible, holy, sincere and righteous in a world of darkness (Phil. 2:15). Those who are in the world have worldly mentality and values. People often encourage others to fight, to contend for their rights, but the Christian who lives his life in accordance with the teachings of Jesus is different, because the Master commands us to follow the second mile and love those who persecute us (Matt. 5:39-44). The only way to combat strife is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). The Comforter helps us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. He never sought to be famous, but was humble and loving (Phil. 2:5-8).

III - BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

1. The Sermon on the Mount. We find in chapters 5 through 7 of the Gospel of Matthew the principles established by Jesus for all who want to be part of the Kingdom of Heaven. One of the principles of the Master is meekness (Mt 5:5). The Jews were under the yoke of the Romans, so they longed for a messiah who would come to make a revolution and free them from political oppression. But Jesus showed that his kingdom was not of this world, and that happy were not those who were involved in strife and riots, but the meek and the peacemakers. What does being meek mean? Being meek means being humble and submissive to God. It means that we give everything to the Father. In the Sermon on the Mount, there is a reward for the meek: "[...] they will inherit the earth" (Mt 5:5).

2. Stephen, a meek man. Stephen was full of faith and the Holy Spirit. In the presence of his tormentors, he fell on his knees and cried out to the Lord for them by saying: "[...] do not hold this sin against them [...]" (Acts 7:60). If Stephen were a carnal man, he would surely want revenge and act angrily before those who stoned him. Only filled with the Spirit can we remain meek and quiet in front of those who want to harm us and do it.

3. The meekness of Christ. The Lord Jesus suffered the worst pains a man can experience. His pains were physical and emotional, but at no time did he open his mouth to complain or murmur against his Father and those who mistreated him. The text of Isaiah states that "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." (Is. 53:7). How do you act before those who mistreat you and want to harm you? May we ask the Lord for meekness!

CONCLUSION

Let us avoid all kinds of strife, because we are now new creatures (John 3:3). Let us be meek and humble in heart, always following the example of our Savior, seeking in everything to glorify his name.