

Meek and Lowly in Heart

Sacrament Meeting Talk 2000

By Cameron Ford

There are many aspects to living in the world, but not of the world. There are several things that could be listed to better help us to live in the World but not be of the World. First and foremost, we have all of the commandments of God. We have the counsels of modern prophets and priesthood leaders. We have the Holy Temple and the sacred ordinances that take place in those sacred buildings. We have weekly sacrament meetings to reflect on our lives and renew our commitment to the Lord. The list could go on and on. There are many things we can and should do. These things all will have the result of purifying our souls and helping us feel closer to our Heavenly Father. It is just like baking a cake from a box. If we follow the directions on the back of the box we will end up with a wonderful cake. If we don't, there is no guarantee as to the outcome. To live in the World but not be of the World, all we have to do is follow the directions of our Heavenly Father.

It is that simple.

The crux of the issue though, is why we as members don't do many of the things that we should do, or if we do them, why do we do them only half-heartedly and inconsistently. In many ways it is like a Doctor proscribing a medicine to cure an illness and the patient diluting the medicine, or taking only part of it. The illness never fully goes away and continues to sap away the strength of the patient.

It is the same with us. The Lord promises us in Doctrine and Covenants 59:9-10, "And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High". Our leaders have repeatedly taught us that in order to truly keep the Sabbath day holy we are to refrain from shopping or making Sunday a day of play. And yet we as a people seem to have ignored their advice. R-rated movies are another example of where the Lord's prophets have repeatedly counseled us not to watch them. Yet we, just like the person with the illness, seem to think we know better than the Doctor.

It is on the solution to these many weaknesses of ours that I would like to focus my talk. I believe with all of my heart that the solution is the attribute of meekness. Meekness is defined by Webster to be "patient and mild; submissive; spiritless". The Lord's definition differs slightly to that of Webster. While patience and submissiveness are part

of the Lords definition, spiritlessness or timidity definitely are not. To quote the Apostle Bruce R. McConkie "the most forceful, dynamic personality who ever lived -- He who drove the money changers from the temple, and with violence threw down their merchandising equipment -- said of Himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart"". If Christ was meek, what is meekness then? How was Christ meek? The answer is found in the Garden of Gethsemane. As our Master trembled before our Heavenly Father, preparing to take on more pain and anguish than we can possibly imagine, he pleaded with our Father "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. In other words -- please Father, there must be some other way. This is more difficult and terrifying than I had imagined. Please don't require this of me. Nonetheless, if it is your will that I do this, I will do it. That is meekness.

Imagine how it would be for us if we approached the comparatively easy things asked of us with even a particle of the meekness that Christ had.

Meekness as demonstrated by Christ is submissiveness to the will of our Father in Heaven and trust in his wisdom. When approached in the spirit of meekness the commandments of God and the counsels of his prophets are not difficult things meant to hold us down and restrict our activities, rather they are stepping stones that lead us ever closer to God. When approached in meekness our callings are not burdens to be endured, rather they are opportunities for growth. To the meek, trials and tribulations are not cruel injustices inflicted by an uncaring God, but rather experiences by which a merciful and loving God teaches us patience and humility. The meek will always see the glass as half full instead of half empty.

Even in the face of unjust criticism, meekness shows us a better way. An example from the life of Brigham Young illustrates this. Most of us would not assign the attribute of meekness to fearless Brigham. And yet in the truest sense of meekness, he was. Apostle Neal A. Maxwell relates the experience: "For one brief moment, the Prophet Joseph Smith unjustifiably reprovved loyal Brigham. Of that brief episode, which involved the transgressions of William Smith, President Lorenzo Snow said, "Brigham Young was equal to the danger" and instantly and meekly yielded to the Prophet." Although Brigham was correct, and later William Smith was excommunicated, in the spirit of meekness Brigham knew that the Lord would eventually work it out. It was not worth jeopardizing his relationship with the Prophet just to prove a point.

It is in meekness that we can obtain answers to our prayers. The most powerful answers to prayer I have ever received have come when I have prayed in the spirit of meekness. When I was on my mission I had prayed many times to gain a spiritual

witness of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. No matter how much I prayed, I could not get a satisfactory answer to my prayer. I felt good when I prayed, but not to the point where I was absolutely sure what the Lord was trying to say. Finally one morning I finally learned the key to receiving answers to my prayers. In effect I said to the Lord: I have studied and pondered the Book of Mormon. It is reasonable that it could be true, none-the-less, I am willing to receive any answer you want to give me. I will not hold back my heart from any answer, no matter how difficult. If you tell me that the Book of Mormon is false, I will call the mission President and ask to go home. If you tell me it is true I will dedicate the rest of my life to building up your Church. Please just give me an answer. Is the Book of Mormon true? Was Joseph Smith truly a prophet? At that point, when I had meekly submitted my will to my Father in Heaven, I felt a rush of so much joy race through my soul that I could not deny that it is all true. It is all true. What a precious gift that knowledge is.

Finally and most importantly, in meekness we find true rest for our souls. The Savior said: "Come unto me. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." What burden is he talking about? The burden Christ speaks of, which is so hard for all of us to carry, is all of our sins and all of our cares and worries. Our load is lightened as we meekly give our sins to Christ.

If this is true, why is it that we have such a hard time believing the Savior? This is where we need to recognize that there is a difference between believing "in" Christ and "believing" Christ. It is one thing to believe that Christ is the almighty God, the Creator of the world; the Savior of mankind. But it is quite another to actually believe the things he says. Believing the things he says is the more difficult part of being a disciple of Christ. Christ has said he will lighten our burdens. Yet so many of us seem to go on carrying the burden Christ has lifted from our shoulders as though it were still there. We have such a hard time letting go of the worry, stress and guilt that he will so willingly carry for us.

But now, what about the yoke of Christ, which he claims is easy. What is the yoke of Christ? The yoke of Christ is the calling to serve in his kingdom. Do we believe that the yoke of Christ is easy and restful? Many members, weighed down by their callings and their sense of duty, feel overwhelmed instead of rested. They find it so difficult to just do the work and let the Lord worry about the outcome. Others feel guilty because they do not do more, and yet still hesitate because they fear the difficulty of the task. None of us will find "rest unto our souls" until we meekly allow the Savior to lift the worry and fear from off our shoulders. He is more than strong enough to bear them. With him at

our side we can say with Paul "I can do all things through Christ". How much easier is our task when we feel the strong hands of Jesus guiding our hands.

The illustration of this comes to us, as usual, from the example of children. Most children are scared when trying to learn to swim for the first time. The parent or swimming instructor will encourage the child to come into the water. The child learns to overcome its fears because of their faith in the strength and abilities of the person instructing them. Can we have the same kind of faith when the Savior says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."?

The only way to truly come unto the Savior is in the spirit of meekness. Perhaps this is why he said: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." I hope and pray that we can all learn to be meek. And I do so in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.