

Two Visions of the Church

1) A people so awestruck by God's grace, and so humbled by their unworthiness, that they are too paralyzed to hold up their end, and actually do the work God has in mind for them – putting on the "new man", warning against departures, "trying the spirits", restoring the faltering, etc. OR,

2) A people so energized by the great and undeserved privilege of being God's children who have been saved by grace that they submit joyfully to the life He demands of them, remaining fiercely loyal to His every wish, and devoted to a "partnership" with God, defending and advancing the gospel, His "power...unto salvation". **(Rom 1:16-17)**

By Aubrey Belue

Which vision is yours?

(Others can tell by your priorities, and the life you live.)

"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. **(Acts 20:29-32)**

Sunday 5:15 Kid's Class at the Building	Sunday PM College Devotional and Singing at the Pender's	Tuesday 8 PM "Truth Seekers" at Student Center - Room 2310	Wednesday 12 Noon Ladies Proverbs class at the Rouse's
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Sick				September Birthdays	News and Notes
Donna Rutledge (Ashley Tucker's aunt)	Eli Williams (Friend of Sarah Norman)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)		
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jeffery Miller (Friend of Walker Davis)		
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphne Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)		
Gaylor Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Diane Hudson (Josh Hudson's grandmother)	Arline Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)		
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Emily Stallings	Carl Alexander (Hannah Alexander's Uncle)		
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frances Fultz (Davis Fultz's grandmother)	Judy Nichols (Suzanne's Mother)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)		

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

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It's easy to stand with the crowd. It takes Courage to stand alone.

Thoughts to Ponder

When moral courage feels that it is in the right, there is no personal daring of which it is incapable.

Beatitudes: The Strength of "Weakness"

By Paul Earnhart

The second basic statement of the beatitudes is that the kingdom of God does not yield itself to the "mighty" who seek to take it by force, but it is easily accessible to the "weak" who yield their cause patiently to God and abandon their own rights for the sake of others. The world in which the beatitudes were first spoken was not a hospitable place for such an idea. Seneca, a prominent first-century Stoic philosopher and brother of Gallio **(Acts 18:12)**, gave expression to the sentiment of his times in the following words: "Pity is a mental illness induced by the spectacle of other people's miseries....The sage does not succumb to mental diseases of that sort" (Arnold Toynbee, An Historian's Approach to Religion, p. 68). Wholly outside the spirit of His age, Jesus announced the blessedness of the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers and the persecuted. It was not an idea "whose time had come." It still is not.

"Blessed are the meek" **(Matthew 5:5, KJV)**. In a world of harshness and cruelty, meekness would appear to be a quick way to commit

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suicide. The violent and self-willed prevail. The meek are summarily run over. The truth is that in the short run this may indeed be so. People that are drawn to the kingdom of God must face this. The gentleness of Jesus did not save Him from the cross. But, ultimately, Jesus teaches us, it is meekness alone that will survive. The challenge for us is to understand what true meekness is.

Meekness is not a natural disposition. It is not an inborn mildness of

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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temperament. It is not the obsequious behavior of a slave whose powerless station forces him to adopt a servile manner which he despises and would abandon at the first opportunity. Meekness is an attitude toward God and others which is the product of choice. It is a disposition held by a steely moral resolve at a time when one may have the power, and the inclination, to behave otherwise.

Meekness is not an indifference to evil. Jesus endured with much patience the assaults made on Him, but He was strong to defend His Father's name and will. He hated iniquity as much as He loved righteousness (**Hebrews 1:9**). Moses was the meekest of men when it came to abuse offered to him (**Numbers 12:3**), but his anger could burn hot against irreverence offered to God (**Exodus 32:19**). The meek man may endure mistreatment patiently (he is not concerned with self-defense) but he is not passive about evil (**Romans 12:9**). There is in him a burning hatred for every false way (**Galatians 1:8-9; Psalm 119:104**).

Meekness is not weakness. There is no flabbiness in it. The one who had 72,000 angels at His command (**Matthew 26:53**) described Himself as "gentle and lowly in heart" (**Matthew 11:29**). The depth of meekness in a man may indeed be gauged in direct proportion to his ability to crush his adversaries. Jesus was not meek because He was powerless. He was meek because He had His immense power under the control of great principles—His love for His Father (**John 14:31**) and His love for lost men (**Ephesians 5:2**). It would have been far easier for Him to have simply annihilated His foes than to patiently endure their abuse. He took the hard road.

The meekness of the Son of God is powerfully demonstrated in His attitude toward the privileges of His station ("who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied

himself," (**Philippians 2:6-7 ASV**), and in His submission to His Father "though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered," (**Hebrews 5:8**). He came into the world as a servant. He emptied Himself for the sake of others.

Although kingdom meekness derives from a new view of oneself in the presence of God ("poor in spirit") it's primary emphasis is on a man's view of himself in the presence of others.

"Meekness" (Greek, *praus*) is found in the constant company of words like "lowliness," "kindness," "longsuffering," "forbearance," and "gentleness" (**Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12-13; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 3:2; 2 Corinthians 10:1**). Even when applied to our Savior the word seems to speak to His relationship to men rather than to His Father (**Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Corinthians 10:1**). "Meekness" (*praus*) had a special use in the ancient Greek world. It was applied to an animal that had been tamed (Barclay, *New Testament Words*, p. 241). The meek man is one who has been tamed to the yoke of Christ (**Matthew 11:29**) and, consequently, has taken up the burdens of other men (**Galatians 6:2**). He no longer seeks to take by force even that which is rightfully his nor attempts to avenge the injustices done him—not because he is powerless to do so, but because he has submitted his cause to a higher court (**Romans 12:19**). Instead he is concerned to be a blessing, not only to his brethren (**Romans 15:3**), but even to his enemies (**Luke 6:27-28**).

The meek man has had enough of himself. He has felt his own ultimate spiritual emptiness and yearned for a right relationship with God. Self-righteousness has become a disaster and self-will a sickness. The very ideas of self-confidence and self-assertiveness have become a stench in his nostrils. He has emptied his heart of self and filled it with God and others. Like his Master, he has become the ultimate servant. And for this very reason the future belongs to him.



"I Alone Am Left"

By Andy Sochor

After contending with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and proving to the people the power of God, Elijah was forced to flee from the wrath of Jezebel. He then spoke to the Lord at Horeb about what was troubling him.

"Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He said, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away'" (1 Kings 19:9-10).

Elijah had just been a part of a decisive victory for the Lord over Baal on Mount Carmel. But despite this, he was in such a depressed state that he wished the Lord would take his life (**1 Kings 19:4**). He was focusing on the challenges, hardships, and persecution before him, while being convinced that there was no one else who was of like-mind, striving to serve the Lord.

As Christians, we may also feel isolated from others and, as a result, face what seems to be a daunting task of enduring the hardships that will come for servants of God (**2 Timothy 3:12**) without aid, comfort, or encouragement from others. We may feel as though we are alone in standing for the truth while everyone around us seems to be compromising, apostatizing, or wholly apathetic about contending for the faith. During such times, it is important to remember a few points.

God is with us – Elijah knew that God was with him, from the answer by fire on Mount Carmel (**1 Kings 18:36-38**) to the food and water that was miraculously provided him while he fled from Jezebel (**1 Kings 19:5-6**). We can be encouraged knowing that the Lord is with us as well and will not forsake us (**Hebrews 13:5-6**). Even if God is the only one with us, we do not need to despair. Paul said, "If God is for us, who is against us?" (**Romans 8:31**).

We may become more of a target – Being alone (or appearing to be alone) made Elijah an obvious target as his enemies sought his life. We know that "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (**2 Timothy 3:12**). But one who is (or appears to be) alone makes an especially attractive target for the

enemies of Christ. The wise man spoke of the strength of numbers and, by implication, the vulnerability of isolation: "And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart" (**Ecclesiastes 4:12**).

There are others who are faithful – The Lord told Elijah that there were "7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal" (**1 Kings 19:18**). The fact that Elijah was unaware of such faithful individuals did not mean they did not exist. Just because we may not be aware of such faithful brethren, that does not mean that there are not others who are striving to serve the Lord, live holy lives, contend for the faith, and follow the pattern found in the New Testament.

We can (and must) remain faithful – Elijah was faithful when he was alone against the prophets of Baal (**1 Kings 18:22**). He was still "zealous for the Lord" (**1 Kings 19:9**), even though he was isolated from other like-minded brethren. Isolation may make our lives more difficult, but it does not make our service to God impossible. God's commandments for us are "not burdensome" (**1 John 5:3**). He expects us to remain faithful to Him, despite difficult circumstances (**Revelation 2:10**).

Whether we have plenty of like-minded brethren around to provide encouragement, or we are (or feel like we are) alone to face the challenges before us, we are able to handle whatever might come. Remember what Paul wrote:

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

We know that God is faithful. Therefore, we know that we can handle every challenge, difficulty, or temptation that might otherwise lead us give up our faith in God. Rather than falling in the face of life's trials, we can (and must) endure and become complete (**James 1:2-4**). Do not lose heart! Continue to serve God in faith and you will be rewarded by Him in the end (**Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:7-8**).

