

I. THE CAROLS OF CHRISTMAS: GAZING ON THE BEAUTY OF JESUS CHRIST

- A. The celebration of Christmas would not be complete without the glorious songs surrounding the birth of Jesus. The Songs of Christmas invite us to come and behold the face of Jesus Christ. There is something mysterious, majestic, paradoxical, surprising, and heart-warming about the fact that the Son of God is born among men.
- B. There is a majesty and beauty to the day on which Jesus was born. Christmas is unique in that ordinary people (shepherds, children, seniors, people from all walks of life), not just prophets, priests, and seers were able to look upon the face of the Son of God. They could go to Bethlehem and see Jesus. It's an historic event on a cosmic scale.

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

- C. "Away in a Manger" is a simple song that describes the circumstances around Jesus' birth. Caesar Augustus had ordered everyone to participate in a census, so everyone had to return to their hometown to register. Joseph was from the lineage of King David, so he had to go to Bethlehem to register with His betrothed wife Mary. It was while they were there that Mary gave birth.

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)

- D. We don't know if Jesus really was asleep on the hay but, a manger is a feeding trough, so there needed to be some sort of padding.
- E. "Asleep on the Hay" speaks of meekness that Jesus displayed at his birth and throughout His entire life.
 - 1. Our society and culture has redefined pride as a virtue. Celebrities, politicians, the scholars take every opportunity to exalt themselves. Contestants on reality TV shows do not usually value or display meekness.
 - 2. Yet, the greatest Person who ever lived was a meek and humble man.

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29)

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEEKNESS IN GOD'S KINGDOM

- A. What is meekness?
 - 1. Meekness is "enduring injury with patience and without resentment." (Webster's).

2. Meekness is related to the idea of gentleness and humility. Gentleness implies leniency and long-suffering.
- B. Meekness is not:
1. Weakness. Meekness is not cowardice, lack of conviction or just being nice. Meekness takes courage, strength, conviction, and faith in God.
 2. Having a low view of self.
For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)
 - a. This does not mean we have to display a surface modesty, or false-modesty. Jesus knew who He was and boldly declared it. I AM!
 3. Personality type. Meekness is not a laid-back personality. Meekness is a trait that all believers must show.
- C. Functional definition: Meekness is power under control.

Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?”¹¹ Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above...” (John 19:10-11)

1. One word from Jesus’ lips and legions of angels would be there to demolish the entire city, yet, Jesus does not respond with anger, fear, or impatience. Meekness involves a patient restraint for the purpose of a greater glory.
He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. (Proverbs 16:32)

Whoever has no rule over his own spirit Is like a city broken down, without walls. (Proverbs 25:28)

III. JESUS: MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART

- A. Meekness characterizes everything about Jesus – not only his birth, but throughout His entire life and ministry.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:3-11)

1. Taking on the role of a Mediator was not forced upon Him. He took it up by choice. “He humbled Himself” and united His nature with ours so that He can lay down His life for ours. He chose to be meek for redemptive purposes.

- B. Jesus' whole life was ordered around this trait of meekness. From the moment He was born, to His submission to His parents, to being baptized by John, in doing and saying only what the Father was doing (John 5:19-20, 30), washing His disciple's feet, answering their questions, healing and delivering people, His entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey (Matt. 21:5; Zech. 9:9 as had been prophesied), His kind treatment of sinners, tax collectors, and His love for children. Then, He went lower and lower, He became humbler and humbler, to display and prove His love for us, all the way to the cross.
- C. Jesus describes Himself as meek.
- Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*** (Matthew 11:28-30)
1. The yoke of Jesus is not burdensome. Jesus does not lead us to be domineering over us. He is Lord, but He leads us in love and meekness. He is a servant-leader and a Shepherd.
 2. People take advantage of other people's failure and weaknesses. Jesus steps down from heaven to humanity, but does not exploit us. He came to lay down His life for us.

IV. EMBRACING MEEKNESS

- A. Jesus' whole life was ordered around this trait of meekness. Meekness is the reason that Jesus is exalted above every other name. (Phil. 2:9)
- B. Meekness is a magnet that attracts God's grace.

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6)

Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. (Psalm 37:11)

- C. We become like Jesus as we behold Him.
- Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*** ¹⁸ ***But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*** (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)
1. There is a liberty of the Spirit that allows us to be transformed. We don't need to live bound by the things of this world anymore. We are being transformed into the image of Christ day by day, from glory to glory.
 2. How do you grow spiritually? Get in God's face! We were made for encounter, for experiencing the presence and pleasure of God. This is how we grow spiritually – not through a book or a seminar in and of itself. If the book or seminar or sermon helps unveil who Jesus is, that act of gazing on Jesus is what transforms us into His likeness.
- D. Beholding Jesus Christ.

1. How do we behold Him? We can encounter Jesus, the Living Word, through the eternal Word of God. (John 1:1; 5:38-40)
 2. Looking upon Jesus cleanses us in the areas of pride and arrogance in the human heart. It produces a desire in us to be like Him.
- E. Gentleness and meekness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. As we fix our gaze on Jesus, the Holy Spirit's fruit is manifest in our lives.
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- F. We can come to Jesus. Children can approach the manger scene and be invited in. All who are burdened and heavy laden can come to Jesus.
Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)
1. How can One who is so strong stoop down so low in tenderness toward us?
 2. May you experience an even greater glory of gazing upon Jesus' face with all the joy, fascination, wonder, and power that it entails.