

PREFACE

*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*¹
Matthew 5:5

Salvation wholly by the sovereign grace of God is a misunderstood doctrine of Scripture. It has been distorted and falsified so that the strong contenders of its true doctrines are similarly misrepresented to be some sort of prideful and arrogant egotists, who have no concern for others. According to some, anybody who believes in salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin completely by the grace of God must be self-centered, vain, and haughty. But how wrong they are, because those who understand and stay attentive to the Doctrines of Grace are most meek. Just as understanding the precious truth of eternal security for believers works only faithfulness and love toward the Securing Savior, so also understanding Christ's precious truth of salvation by Sovereign Grace will similarly work, not only faithfulness and love, but meekness, which denotes an unassuming way of love toward others. That is what the Apostle Paul shows in *Titus 3:1-7*, our text for this exposition.

Therefore, this study is not just about meekness, but is Paul's divinely inspired argument that the true grace of God, when properly interpreted and understood in the light of the cross, will not cause arrogance in its adherents, but will produce in its devotees the Christ-like virtue of genuine meekness.

To know the truth about His grace is to know the unworthy character of us recipients. And to know the worth of us Christians, as far as our own value is concerned, is to know the utter futility and falsity of any reaction to His grace other than meekness toward God and other men.

¹ See Addenda, p. 34 .

Accordingly, to know the details of His grace, to know the real truth concerning His kindness and love, and to know the absolute freedom of God either to choose to save me or choose to pass me up—with neither divine choice recommended to Him, or extrinsically endorsed for Him, or mandatory or obligatory upon Him or His attributes—to know that, is to have within oneself a God-produced, self-abasing, meek spirit that could never fail to consider others preferable to oneself.

May God reveal more of the truth of His grace to us, and likewise cultivate within us an increased appetite for more understanding of His sovereign grace, and in so doing, produce more of Jesus' wonderful meekness in us Christians of the reformed faith.¹ Amen.

¹ To that most noble and God-honoring end, the Author would suggest that the reader, after one reading of the exposition, go through it again with an open Bible, and seek the Scripture truth in the footnotes.

MEEK CHRISTIANS: THE OFFSPRING OF SOVEREIGN GRACE

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.

For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:1-7

The Book of Titus is a compilation of Christian wisdom. Paul's instructions to this young pastor are full of the proper attitudes and actions for all Christ's servants, whether they are those of a pastor or church member. Indeed, the wisdom of this Book of Scripture is practical and applicable for all Christians.

In these verses Paul seeks to instruct Titus in the way of *meekness*, a Christian virtue of outstanding quality, one of principal exhibition in our Lord Jesus Christ. Meekness is an

inner strength that enables Christians to be reserved toward those around us. It is the harnessing of one's own powers in order to benefit those with whom we have relations. Christ is our supreme example of this as He is in all virtue. He had such an elevated position and prominence with God and man, yet He condescended to be very common in His attitudes and actions toward all men, and even toward God, His Father. Meekness is for us today the same as it was for Jesus. Christians, who possess this distinctive excellence, restrain and limit themselves toward others so as not to offend anyone. We must not act as if we were better than others, as if a great deal of appreciation were due us, simply because we are Christians.

Analysis of the Text

In our text this meekness is the key element. First, Paul encourages this meekness toward others in direct and specific injunctions, *verses 1-2*. He then follows with direct and specific reasons for being meek, *verses 3-7*, which constitute much of our exposition. Consequently, this exposition will confirm this primary thesis:

Although Christians are preferred before other men in the sight of God, they are to be meek toward all men because of their former condition and because of the phenomenal features of their salvation which have made them Christians.

Our exposition will attempt to expound and to enlarge upon that thesis by pointing out:

First, the particular meekness, which Paul commanded, *verses 1-2*.
Second, the particular reasons for the appropriateness for such meek deportment and conduct by Christians, *verses 3-7*.

I. THE MEEKNESS COMMANDED

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.

Titus 3:1-2

Paul summed up the commands in these two verses with a concluding admonition in verse two, *showing all meekness unto all men*. Meekness is the permeating element contained within the other injunctions in these two verses, which he would have Titus to bring constantly to the *mind* of the church at Crete. The words, *be subject to*, *obey*, *to speak evil of no man*, and *gentle*, are all closely akin to the idea of meekness. Together, they show a readiness to submit to the desires of others and to live for the welfare of others rather than for oneself, which together is the predominate essence of meekness.

Meekness Toward Government

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates....

Christians are *to be subject to*, or literally, “to be arranged under government in orderly fashion,” as soldiers are under their superiors. That word, *subject*, is used in Scripture of wives’ subjection to husbands, of Christians’ subjection to other Christians, and of Christians’ subjection to Christ.¹ The same kind of obedience that the Christian yields to Jesus is the kind of obedience to be given to principalities, powers, and magistrates,

¹ Respectively, *I Peter 3:1*; *Eph. 5:21, 24*; *Heb. 12:9*

the civil governing authorities. This group will cover every strata of governmental authority, whether local, state, or national; all are covered. This requires meekness since fundamentally they are pagan, heathen, ungodly in their department and disposition; and we know the real Authority and acknowledge His supreme rule over all. We are tempted to rebel against them, especially as they carry out their functions in such evil ways. But Christians are to yield cheerful and free obedience so long as their requirements are not contrary to *good work*. This is a true distinction of meekness.

Meekness at Every Opportunity

...to be ready to every good work.

This phrase regulates the parameters of the just mentioned governmental subjection, that it be always and only when it can be *good work*. If any command of the persons in ruling jurisdiction should breach or infringe upon God's more authoritative commandments, then the Christian must *obey God rather than men*.¹

Furthermore, this readiness *to every good work* is applicable in other ways to the Christian life. Meekness is itself a readiness to accommodate all opportunities to do good for others regardless of what those accommodating actions might work as a return to us, whether for our good or for our evil, just as our Lord Jesus taught meekness,

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. [Added emp.]

Luke 6:27-28

¹ Acts 5:29

To be ready to every good work is to be prepared, equipped, inclined, and primed for doing good to and for others. This requires having a disposition steeped in the love of Christ, filled with the knowledge of God's grace, and, through this love and grace, having a disposition saturated with meekness.

Meekness in Tongue

To speak evil of no man...

Meekness is essential in order to possess a quiet tongue. *To speak evil* of others is literally "to blaspheme" them. The Greek word used here so designates. This certainly necessitates meekness, because the natural tendency in us sinners is to judge and harshly condemn others for what we deem their errors. But he that speaks evil of others is guilty of blaspheming God's image, for *in the image of God made he them*. It takes an unusual and unique spiritual growth in godly meekness in order to accomplish this high Christian virtue. One must control the carnal nature that is ready always to speak out to harm and belittle those with whom we disagree. This injunction from the apostle imposes a degree of restraint on our actions, which in turn is possible only through a more mature and Christ-like meek attitude in us.

Meekness in Attitude

...to be no brawlers, but gentle,...

Brawlers is not referring only to physical disorder, but to any and all kinds of disagreements. A *brawler* is one given to arguments and quarrels, which may or may not result in physical altercation. His outlook mainly is one of a quarrelsome

disposition. The contrast to a *brawler* is a *gentle* demeanor. The Christian is to be forbearing, moderate, and hard to be excited so that “the torch of anger” is rarely lit. It requires meekness to be satisfied with less than what is our just due. The negative is not to be a *brawler*; the positive is to be actively *gentle*.

Gentle means to be yielding, to be considerate of the feelings and sensibilities of others more than for those of ourselves. A *gentle* person is not much absorbed in one’s own desires or rights, and is even passive toward others when they surely could be made to see their error. That requires grace from above and the cultivation of Jesus’ own character of meekness.

Meekness in Character

...showing all meekness unto all men.

Meekness is defined as the quality of being “tamely submissive; easily imposed on.”¹ However, the Bible definition somewhat limits that submission. The Greek word translated *meekness* is prauteta, meaning “gentle, kind, mild, benevolent, humane.”² Paul is calling upon Titus as a pastor to be thoughtful of others and to admonish his church to be considerate and kind to all men also.

Christ was a perfect and exceptional man among imperfect and mediocre men, yet He regulated His attitudes and words and actions in such a way as to benefit those with whom He had relations. This is *meekness*: the orderly and unostentatious and

¹ Webster’s New World Dictionary (Cleveland: World, 1964), P. 915.

² The Analytical Greek Lexicon (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), p. 340.

unassuming way of love toward others. Jesus never displayed His superiority senselessly, or when it would harm or jeopardize others. He habitually took an unassuming posture, which would best help those around Him. In this sense *meekness* is closely kin to humility, but with exceptions. While humility resists any display of power and self-worth, *meekness* gladly and joyfully displays anything and all things if it will benefit others or glorify God. Jesus' godly power might be restrained by humility, but all the power of God was at work in Jesus' *meekness* when upon occasion He used God's greatest resources to do good for others through the display of those resources. In this sense, Jesus was the meekest of men, and is truly our counselor, guide, and model of *meekness*.

Meekness is the quality that is content to receive the afflictions, insults, persecutions, and injuries flung at us since they are being permitted and orchestrated by God; Who, because we are sinners and subject to sin's troublesome environment, employs all our experienced difficulties for the chastening and purifying of us as His elect. David demonstrated this *meekness* when Shimei cast curses and stones at him. Whereupon, David's companion, Abishai, threatened to kill Shimei for this show of hatred, but David said:

Behold, my son [Absalom], which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.

[Added emp.] ***II Samuel 16:11***

In David, *meekness* reasoned that it was just and proper for him to suffer these things, "however unjustly the other

[Shimei] might inflict them.”¹ He that is meek will know himself to be a sinner among sinners; and this knowledge of his own sin will teach him to endure meekly the provocations with which others may vex him, and not to withdraw himself from the burdens which their sins may impose upon him.² That is true Christian *meekness*.

This kind of *meekness* possessed our Lord Jesus Christ and upheld Him to die on the cross at the hands of sinners; and it is to be ours also, as dying daily to self, taking up our own cross, and following after Him—walking in the same spirit of *meekness* as He.

¹ Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), P. 198.

² *Ibid.*

II. THE REASONS FOR CHRISTIAN MEEKNESS

For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:3-7

Paul now gives his inspired argument for Christian *meekness*. The small word, *For*, which begins this section, introduces the basis for Paul's logic, which expects, and even requires, *meekness* in Christians. In other words, what follows that *For* are his reasons for Christian *meekness*. *For* means that what preceded is inferred from what ensues. The vitality of the admonition to live meekly, as given in *verses 1-2*, is based upon what Paul presents here in *verses 3-7*, where he provides three basic reasons why *meekness* will be a very constant and permanent part of every Christian's habit of life.

His inspired logic touches upon the doctrines of the sovereign and altogether free grace of God, as being the catalyst for *meekness* in Christians, and goes something like this:

We should be meek toward God and in our relations with all men—saved or unsaved—for, or because, if it were not for the work and accomplishments of God’s grace by which we were saved and thereby made to be different, we Christians would be just as those who are presently unsaved. We too would still be ungodly.

In fact, Paul clearly states that at one time we were like the outsiders, *verse 3*. Then he details in *verses 4-7* the process by which Christians were made to be distinct from the world, and to be the product, not of man’s works, but of God’s kindness and love, *v.4*, His mercy, *vs.5-6*, and His grace, *v.7*. It is only by means of these Divine endowments of love, mercy, and grace toward us Christians that we are different from the world and made as we are, and are destined for the inheritance of eternal life. Through these endowments of God’s origin, He has generated life in us through Jesus’ work and by the Holy Spirit, *vs.4-5a*, is renewing us presently by the Holy Spirit, *vs.5b-6*, and will Himself finally fulfill His work in and for us, *v.7*.

To follow this arrangement of Paul’s logic in our text verses, and to help us understand Paul’s logical reasons for *meekness* in all Christians, we will divide these verses and the remainder of our exposition into Paul’s reasons for Christian *meekness*, thusly:

- Reason #1** We should be meek, considering
What was true about our adamic Spirits, *v. 3*.
- Reason #2** We should be meek, considering
What was revealed to us about our Savior, *v. 4*.
- Reason #3** We should be meek, considering
What is true about our Salvation, *vs. 5-7*.

Reason #1

We should be meek toward God and others, considering what was formerly true about our own ADAMIC SPIRITS.

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. Titus 3:3

When Jesus said, *They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick,*¹ He was referencing the ignorance of the Pharisees, as representative of the masses of mankind, concerning their spiritual sickness. The Lord cannot be a healing physician for anyone who fails to realize that he is sick, else the sinner will never come to Jesus, The Great Physician, for spiritual healing. Too many folks never have come to grips with the facts of this verse. All genuine Christians became “sin-sick”; that is, at some time in their lives they had to have been made very much aware of their lost and wicked spiritual condition. The conviction of the Holy Spirit accompanies every conversion, and makes a person know the depth of one’s depravity. Paul reminds Christians, and includes himself as well as Titus, what we all were before we were saved. That, to Paul, is a motivation to be meek and submissive to all other humans. “Reflecting upon our own former condition makes it easier for us to be mild and kind toward others”² who are still in that same condition.

¹ *Luke 5:31*

² Hendriksen, I-II Timothy and Titus (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), p. 387.

The Catalogue of Depravity

Paul's Catalogue of Depravity in this verse includes all Christians; none are exempt. *For we ourselves also were sometimes....* *Sometimes* is an ambiguous translation. The Greek word translated *sometimes* is *poτε*, meaning "then, at that time." Paul is taking all Christians to a former time back "then, at that time" when we were lost. Immediately following Paul's reference to "then, at that time" is an inspired list of the prominent depraved features of every man without exception, even every Christian before salvation. This list is a compendium of total human depravity.

Paul provides a rather complete list of the works of all naturally born sons of Adam, who have dead spirits. This universal condition of soul embodies a dominion of wickedness in every area of life, and constitutes failure to produce any acceptable conduct in the sight of God.

First, *showing all meekness unto all men* is urged because we were at one time **foolish** as they are now. This refers to the spiritual ignorance of all naturally born men. No Christian was naturally born with any spiritual understanding of God's grace and forgiveness in Jesus. The word, *foolish*, means "not understanding," and is the doom of all men from physical birth,

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto them; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

I Corinthians 2:14

This *foolishness* is not just spiritual ignorance, but refers to man's naturally inherited absolute and unmitigated inability to discern, understand, rightly evaluate, or appreciate spiritual things. Men are born blind to the gospel and to the Word which brings it because their spiritual eyes—their spirits—are dead to, separated from, and impenetrable as far as real spiritual truth is concerned. They are helplessly without spiritual sight to distinguish between what they are without Christ, and what their position before God could be in Him. That was our former condition also, says Paul, and that is reason for us to be *meek unto all men*.

We were “then, at that time” *disobedient*. That is, we were unpersuadable and in compliant to our inner conscience and to the outer laws of God and man. We did not break every individual law, but one violation breaches the system, and brings guilt of offending all.¹ This defiance lay not only in the scope of the Law of God but also involved the Gospel of Christ. We were as all natural men are, who *obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*.² We hated the gospel as well as the Law. Our former in compliant way should make us placid toward those who are still held in this sin.

We were *deceived*, meaning we were led astray and directed by the Evil One. We were unable to be compliant because of our inner sinfulness which allowed the Devil's blindfold to conceal and to deceive.³ We were as they are now, led astray into the “Great Broad Way” which ends in destruction, and are led away from the narrow way which ends in life eternal.⁴

¹ *James 2:10*

² *II Thessalonians 1:8*

³ *II Corinthians 4:4*

⁴ *Matthew 7:13-14*

Serving divers lusts and pleasures cites our former abject slavery to all kinds of lusts and pleasures under which we were before trapped. We allowed strong bodily desires to dominate our lives and conduct. We were slaves to our own several and everyday common appetites. *Divers lusts and pleasures* cover them all. “Some serve one master, some another, but by nature all are slaves to those terrible ‘drives’ which they have never learned to control,”¹ and which they will never be able to subdue until they are born anew. Slaves to sin cannot suddenly free themselves and begin to serve Jesus, but only when given new spirits through regeneration will they then receive Jesus and His narrow way for themselves.

Living in malice and envy refers to a former life which cultivated all kinds of evil, perversity, wickedness; especially the evil disposition of the mind that nurtures displeasure at the happiness and prosperity of others. *Envy* always feels displeasure at what another has. This most certainly should be an ancient condition for Christians. Now, having become the recipients of God’s grace in Christ Jesus, and having become the beneficiaries of unsurpassed gifts of enormous value at no cost to ourselves but at the supreme cost to God, we rejoice in the prosperity and accomplishment of others.

Hateful and hating one another is to be odious, detestable, offensive, disgusting and repulsive, and from within ourselves actually hating one another. This was Jesus’ similar reference to the hatred and hate toward others which comes forth *out of the heart*,

¹ Hendriksen, loc. cit.

*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,
murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false
witness, blasphemies. Matthew 15:19*

Paul and Jesus described our former lives as loving self and hating others, and as also provoking the hatred of others by our own detestable conduct. We *hated one another* through our disgusting actions of self-love. Through despicable misuse of others, we actually provoked more hate toward ourselves from others, which in turn resulted in the cycle of hate reoccurring out of us.

This list may seem too severe to some. It may be thought not to be representative of them during any former time of their lives. If that is your case, then I suggest that you have never confronted the magnitude of your own wickedness. For the Christian, who has been brought through the conviction of the blessed Holy Spirit, and made to see his vileness before God, no corrupt description is more than is true of himself. The converted sinner was all that the “Catalogue of Depravity” enumerates, and his sin is never adequately inventoried.¹ He realizes that he is a sinner of the deepest dye.² This cataloging of our former wickedness is Paul’s first carefully itemized reason why Christians are to possess *meekness*, gentleness, and compliance toward even the basest of men. We understand their condition because we were there once. But now we have been given knowledge of it, which understanding they will never have in this life, unless God chooses to reveal it to them as He did to us.

We will now explore Paul’s second argument promoting *meekness* in Christians.

¹ Compare Paul’s own description of himself as the *chief of sinners*, *1 Tim. 1:15*; *less than the least of all saints*, *Eph. 3:8*; *the least of the apostles*, *1 Cor. 15:9*; truly obeying his own Word in *Rom. 12:10*, *in honour, preferring one another*; and in *Phil. 2:3*, *in lowliness of mind let each esteem other greater than themselves*. Paul was certainly meek.

² *Isaiah 1:18*

Reason #2

We should be meek toward God and others, considering what was revealed to us about our SAVIOR.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Titus 3:4

There were two things about our Savior that were revealed to us that ought to make us meek, His *kindness* and His *love*. *Kindness* is God's easiness to do good to men. It does not tax or strain God to be disposed to save men who are sinners. Certainly, it did strain God to die on the cross; that was a terrible burden and anguish for Father and Son. But *kindness and love* are a part of God's nature; or better, He is *kindness* and He is *love*. But since the cross is an eternal work, now completed and finished,¹ God can with ease deal with sinners and save them; His *kindness and love* made it so.

Paul wrote that this *kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared*. This "appearing" could be said to be twofold. First, there was the appearing of God's *kindness and love* toward men of all kinds, the men of all nations as well as the Jews.² The condescension of Jesus' coming from heaven to become a Man was an "appearing" of the *kindness and love of God* toward the human race. That is meant here by Paul.

The second and primary appearing referenced by Paul is Jesus' personal manifestation in the Holy Spirit through the Word of the Gospel at the conversion of every Christian. Each

¹ *Rev. 13:8; John 19:30*

² *John 3:16*

child of God had a personal appearance of *the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man* in His dealings with him or her for salvation. The heart was made to know Jesus as *God our Savior* when He brought the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* before the enlightened and renewed inner spirit of the Christian.¹ The Greek word translated *appeared*, epiphaino, is sparsely used just four times in the New Testament. Its most denotative usage is in *Luke 1:79*, when Zechariah prophesied concerning the Baby Jesus. He said of Jesus that He had come ***to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*** That is how Paul used the word in our text: *to give light*. It refers to the special calling unto salvation, which every Christian received when he or she believed on Jesus as Savior. This Greek word is the combination of two Greek words, epi and phaino, “upon” and “to shine,” being a strengthened form of the simple verb. It means “to become plainly and unmistakably visible.” That is how God saves His elect, through an effective calling which plainly reveals Jesus’ glory and beauty as God our special Savior. *Jesus gave light to us who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and guided our feet into the way of peace.*

In the Book of Acts Paul himself was saved in the same way as are all men, except Paul’s vision included both a physical appearance and a spiritual appearance of the Lord Jesus as Savior. The physical appearance was necessary because a physical knowledge of Jesus was a requirement for the apostleship to which Paul was also called.² But Jesus’ appearance to Paul was not in the least any more sovereign or any more excessively lopsided than it is for any other Christian,

¹ *II Corinthians 4:6*

² *Acts 1:22 with Romans 1:1*

***And as he journeyed, he [Paul] came near
Damascus: and suddenly there shined round
about him a light from heaven;***

***And he heard a voice saying unto him, Saul,
Saul, why persecutest thou me?***

***And he said, Who art thou, Lord? and the Lord
said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is
hard for thee to kick against the pricks. Acts 9:3-5***

When the Lord manifested Himself in this miraculous vision and said *I am Jesus* to Paul, a Jew, He was saying in effect, “I am God your Savior,” for that was the significance to a Jew of the name and title to which Jesus had laid claim. This “shining upon” Paul was for the purpose of saving him, and at the same time and with the same calling, appointing him to the apostleship. There was not in Paul, or in any one of us, anything good or worthy of such an appearing. The reason for Jesus’ spiritual appearance in especial revelation to any one of us “sons of Adam” concerning His saviorhood and our wickedness is known only to God, and is solely in accord with *the good pleasure of His will*.¹ In view of such a similar, but spiritual only, “appearing” of Jesus to the inner soul of every Christian, and because our salvation absolutely depended upon His similarly “appearing” to us in the inner soul, could any one of us think ourselves as above any other person not so chosen and not so enlightened? That is the question raised and answered by Paul in *Titus 3:4*. He raised it also for the prideful and inflated Corinthians, but put it more bluntly,

***For who maketh thee to differ from another? and
what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if
thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou
hadst not received it? I Corinthians 4:7***

The manifestation of God’s humanity-wide *kindness and love*, and the special, personal, and effectual “appearances” of

¹ *Ephesians 1:5*

the *kindness and love of God our Savior* to us Christians inhibits pride, and promotes all manner of *meekness*, submission, and subservience from Christians to all men. How could any man of any nationality boast in God's *kindness and love* toward men of all nations and families of the earth? In what could Paul boast in his salvation experience when Jesus "appeared" to him and saved him? And in what could we Christians boast as setting us apart from the remainder of sinners, except the love and kindness of God shown us? The reality of this personal and effectual call produces in all comparably God-called, Christ-enlightened, and grace-engrossed sinners, *all meekness unto all men*.

We will now consider Paul's concluding argument why *meekness* is to be a prevailing trait in all Christians. That argument, or reasoning, has to do with the way we were saved in the past, are being saved presently, and will be comprehensively saved in the future. He will now show that God's grace cannot fail to accomplish *meekness* in Christians, when they have a proper perspective of salvation's free and unconditional features, and its ultimate goal.

Reason #3

We should be meek toward others, considering
what is true about our
SALVATION

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:5-7

Paul's final argument for *showing all meekness unto all men* concerns the details of salvation itself. Salvation is so completely by the mercy and grace of God that no one who understands it could have pride, haughtiness, or feelings of conceit toward any man. Our salvation is so much one-sided as to remove all possible arrogance for those who have experienced it and have been given understanding of it. In order to make clear our salvation, and thereby establish *meekness* in his readers,

First, Paul clarifies

God's Sovereign Method of Salvation, *verse 5a*.

Second, Paul clarifies

God's Sovereign Means of Salvation, *verses 5b-7*.

God's Sovereign Method of Salvation
Removes Arrogance and Promotes Meekness in Christians.

*Not by works of righteousness which we have done,
but according to his mercy he saved us. Titus 3:5a*

This verse contains both a negative and a positive method concerning salvation, what is not the method of salvation, and what is the method of salvation.

First, The Negative, He saved us, *Not by works of righteousness.* The Greek text literally reads, “Not out of works within the realm of righteousness which we did.” There was lacking in us any element of righteousness, without which acceptable works are impossible to perform. We had no works of righteousness; therefore we were not saved in consequence of them.

Second, The Positive contrast by Paul, *but according to his mercy he saved us.* *Mercy* is the utmost antithesis to the previous allusion to *works of righteousness.* This use of *mercy* is in direct contradistinction to justice and merit. The prompting cause of our salvation individually is *mercy*, compassion, and pure feelings of pity toward us by God. “Saving *mercy*” begins with God’s concern for a hurting and suffering sinner. When we were hurting in sin and facing an eternity of increased and greater hurting for sin, God moved in *mercy* and saved us. It was only because God took *mercy* upon us that any are saved. This leaves no room for self-esteem in a Christian’s attitude toward others, who are lost simply because He did not show *mercy* to them.¹ In view of this truth, how could we have feelings other than self-effacement when dealing with others? An understanding of *mercy* brings *meekness* to the heart and soul of all its

¹ *Romans 9:14-18*

recipients. This compassion or *mercy* of God toward us produced two distinctly God-orchestrated undertakings within us sinners, namely, *regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit*, Whose work is the man-humbling means or agency of our salvation.

God's Sovereign Means of Salvation
Removes Arrogance and Promotes Meekness in Christians.

*...he saved¹ us, by the washing of
regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;
Which he shed on us abundantly through
Jesus Christ our Saviour;
That being justified by his grace, we should be
made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*
Titus 3:5b-7

The Holy Spirit is the means or Agent of our salvation, Who produces life in the place of death in our spirits and lives through two separate vehicles. Both are the products of His work in our inner beings. They are *regeneration* and *renewing*; the former, a one-time and initial work in a Christian's spirit, and the latter, an inaugural and then a continual and continuous work of fulfillment in one's life, or experience.

Understanding the washing of regeneration
Stimulates Meekness

The washing of regeneration. The word, *regeneration*, is used only here in the New Testament in the sense of personal salvation. The Greek word is paliggenesias, made up of two words, palin and genesis, meaning "again" and "birth or successive generation" respectively. Together they mean "to come into existence again through creation." *Washing* is the

¹ This past tense is "the eternal aorist," as *Romans 8:30*; q.v. p. 28.

word for “bath.” The phrase could be rendered, “the bath of new birth.” This washing is entirely spiritual, as in *John 1:13; 3:3, 5*. The dead spirit in the natural man is given second life, so to speak, because Adam lost it for us in the garden. This regeneration experience is based solely upon God’s pouring forth His Holy Spirit upon dead sinners’ spirits to make them alive to Himself again. This work of the life-giving Spirit of God’s resurrected Son smothered the dead and darkened spirit of the sinner by imparting fresh life, thereby making what was formerly a dead spirit an alive spirit. God’s life is implanted in the governing disposition of man’s life and makes it holy, and makes possible that soul’s first contact with his God. In accordance with the etymology of the Greek word, paliggenesias, a new spirit is created again within the person; that is what “re-generation” is. The reference to *washing* emphasizes the now clean and pure spirit and soul of the saved; the old is washed clean figuratively through the new life given in regeneration.¹

Paul described this newly bestowed regenerated life as a *law*, or regulative principle, at work to free its recipients from the Law’s effect of pronouncing death upon sinners,

***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ
Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and
death. Romans 8:2***

This is the cleansing of the Holy Spirit through “the bath of the new birth,” which makes the sinner a believer and

¹ I say, “figuratively,” because the old, impure, dead adamic spirit is not cleaned up at all, but an altogether new spirit is created within the new Christian. The result is certainly a “washing clean,” but the spirit is fresh from God.

produces repentance in the life. While this regeneration is very precise and thorough, it is just the initial and inaugural work of the Holy Spirit. He then begins what will be a continual and continuous renewing work in the life, or experience, of the new believer.

Understanding the renewing of the Holy Ghost **Stimulates Meekness**

And renewing of the Holy Ghost. The remainder of our text deals with this *renewing of the Holy Spirit*. The Greek word translated *renewing* is anakainosis, meaning “renovation, renewal.” It refers to the constant adjustment of the Christian into the likeness of Christ, which will indeed be a “restoration” back to what man was originally created to be. This adjustment begins simultaneously with regeneration, and then continues throughout the Christian’s life to alter the Christian’s thinking and living through the development provided by the Holy Spirit.

However, while the Holy Spirit is indeed its author and must be recognized as its principal originator and activator, He also is its motivator. The Christian cooperates with the Holy Spirit’s renewing through study and meditation upon the Word of God. Note the New Testament’s only other usage of anakainosis, rendered *renewing* as in our text,

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. [Added emp.] ***Romans 12:2***

Paul’s use of anakainosis in Romans emphasizes the Christian’s cooperation with the Holy Spirit’s work of spiritual restoration. Through the Christians’ use of his new *mind*, the *good*,

and acceptable, and perfect will of God may be “tested by actual experience.”¹ The Christian’s *mind* can be qualified to “test” God’s will in an acceptable, God-pleasing, manner only by means of innate propensities acquired from the Word of God. When a Christian is thus inherently attracted to additional spiritual restoration through the Word, it is always *God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*² Every Christian is challenged with a never ending, constant inner call through the Word of God to sanctification of the life until its realization in glory.³ Then, the believer will be made into the likeness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit’s *renewing* will ultimately restore what Adam lost as He transforms our minds, emotions, and wills into man’s original purity and singleness toward God.⁴ He uses the Word, working with prayer and distressful providences, to effect this restoration, which is always *the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God*, realized in every decision.

A Secured Renewing

Note Paul’s reference to this *renewing* as a certain work of the Lord in all His children:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Romans 8:11

This *renewing* consists of a continuous *quickenning* [i.e. livening, making alive] *your mortal bodies*. The Holy Spirit Who *raised up*

¹ That is the meaning of *ye may prove*, and also of *Romans 12:2*, according to Meyer, Deweete, Alford, et al.

² *Philippians 2:13*

³ *Luke 8:15*

⁴ *Colossians 3:10*

Christ from the dead also makes *your mortal bodies* sensitive, alert, and responsive to God and His ways. God effects this constant *renewing* through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit “by which He delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works.”¹ That work will take place in the Christian’s life through the power of the Holy Spirit, Whom *he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*. He is *shed*, or “poured out,” into the heart and life of each individual believer through the mediation of Jesus Christ, without whose blessed atonement this effusion of the Holy Spirit would never have taken place. But because of the intercession of Jesus’ blood in heaven for us, this *renewing* cannot fail of its foreordained conclusion,

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
Romans 8:29-30

God *foreknew* His elect, that is, He knew them intimately and familiarly ahead of time as He saw them already *conformed to the image of His Son*. Paul used the past tense with reference to predestination, calling, justification, and glorification, because God decreed them all in eternity. The calling, justification, and glorification were predestined in one eternal proclamation; therefore this *renewing of the Holy Spirit* is sure for every person who has been saved, and will have its inception at being *called*, its vindication in being *justified*, and its completion in being *glorified* in body, soul, and spirit. It continues throughout

¹ Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids:Eerdmans, 1949), p.469.

the Christian's life until in glory it results in final conformity *to the image of His Son*, to the honor and glory of God.

An Extensive Renewing

This *renewing of the Holy Ghost* is not confined to any certain group of Christians, because Paul wrote in *verse 6* of our text that He was *shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior*. Spiritual restoration is conditioned only upon knowing Him as *Savior*. Also, Paul included himself, Titus, and the Cretian Christians when he allude to us, referring to the personalized pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon every believer throughout the age, beginning at one's regeneration, continuing in one's sanctification, and climaxing at one's glorification. It is *abundantly* or richly effectual as a supply always to all His people in order to create Christ [i.e. His *meekness*, et al.] in them.

A Gracious Renewing

The ultimate purpose behind *the renewing of the Holy Spirit* is, in order *that¹ being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*. This renewing will eventually result in the realization of our heirship because of the eternal life that is promised all believers at the point of faith.² It is because of our position as justified before God by grace that we are guaranteed the ultimate reward of heirship in heaven. The *being justified by his grace* seems to be introduced as the guaranteeing position of the saved person, which assures that he or she will indeed be brought to the place of completed heirship and eternal life's expectation of bliss and

¹ Greek hina, meaning "in order that."

² *John 6:47; 5:24.*

complete sharing in the fruits of Christ's eternal kingdom. The righteous standing that the Christian has before God *by His grace*, secures every possible additional requirement upon God to effect finally what actually amounts to the *hope*, or expectation, of *eternal life*.¹

An Interdependent Renewing

Being justified is the result of *the washing of regeneration*, while being *made heirs according to the hope of eternal life* is the result of *the renewing of the Holy Spirit*. One must be regenerated in order that justification may be provided through faith; and similarly, one must be completely renewed in order that heirship—eternal life, with all that God has—may be provided through His promise. We are regenerated, and then by faith are justified and treated as if we were as righteous as Christ. Justification depends upon *the washing of regeneration* because justification comes only through faith,² and faith comes only through regeneration.³ At our future reception into His spiritual and eternal kingdom, we will have been renewed by the Holy Spirit and only then are able to be recipients of His kingdom as heirs of eternal life. The heirship depends upon this renewing because glorification with Christ depends upon suffering perseveringly with Him,

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:17

¹ *Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:32*

² *Romans 3:22, 26, 28; 5:1*

³ *John 1:12-13; Ephesians 1:19*

This *renewing of the Holy Spirit* includes much suffering throughout every Christian's life.¹ It makes us fit for His holy kingdom, and prepared for its glories.² That is the reason why *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*³ Indeed, this *meekness*—this Christ-likeness which comes only by way of this sometimes grievous *renewing*—is an important and appropriate trait for making us fit for His kingdom.⁴ And suffering, with all its cognate elements of abuse, pain, and sorrow, is the only discipline that creates likeness to Jesus in us sons of Adam. The Holy Spirit will renew us Christians *through much tribulation*. And as the Word of God renews our minds and lives, we will be readied to *enter the kingdom of God*. Our likeness to His *meekness* will prompt Jesus to say to us, who were *foreknown* and are finally extensively renewed, and thereby fitted exclusively for His Kingdom,

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
Matthew 25:34

¹ See also *I Thessalonians 1:5*; *Philippians 1:29*.

² And so the reason for Paul's remarkable longing, *Philippians 3:10-11*.

³ *Acts 14:22*

⁴ *I Pet. 5:10 & Lu. 20:35* with *I Cor. 6:6-10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21*

To Summarize

Paul has described our formerly depraved spirits in order to demonstrate *meekness* as the only disposition that suits such previously wicked persons as all Christians were *then, at that time* previously. He then made clear that it was Christ's choosing to appear to us, and not our decision suddenly to see Him, that determined our salvation. We were once blind and dead to things spiritual—*foolish*—, but now, because of His new life granted us, we praise Him that He *appeared* to us particularly as the kind and loving God our Savior, which appearance worked our understanding of Him as Savior and our salvation. Convincingly, Paul makes our salvation clearly the work of the Holy Spirit from beginning to end, from regeneration to renewing, from justification by grace to glorification and heirship and eternal life in the kingdom. It is all of God in Jesus Christ.

The True Meekness

Since we have no boast in any part of our exalted position as saved, sanctified, and sure-to-be-glorified elect, we surely must be very submissive to God's acts of Providence, God's blessedly inspired Word, God's promptings through the Holy Spirit, and yes, even be affable, good-natured, and obliging to the evil and imperfect persons in the world around us. And could we be anything but meek to other Christians who have been saved by grace as we? In light of our justified position *by His grace*, we must seek to be *meek* and *gentle* unto all men. As Jesus lived while on earth, so also must we set aside our venerated heavenly station and accept with consenting acquiescence all persons, circumstances, and insults with all quietness and peaceful submission.

Meek Offspring of Sovereign Grace

To the inspired Apostle, sovereign grace has a host of offspring, who have likeness to Jesus—their Progenitor—the Meek and Lowly One while here on earth. At the marriage supper of the Lamb, the Bride will be attired in the white robes of Christ’s righteousness and radically changed into His altogether lovely *meekness*.¹ When singing, *Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*, could any bear any arrogance or haughtiness, or feel any pride in their venerated heavenly position? Their Christ-likeness is the explicit opposite of such demeanor. It will be so in that day, and must be so in this day...for those who know that His sovereign grace makes them thus. His free salvation wholly by grace produces a posterity of *meek* and self-effacing children, who will eventually become like their Father in heaven. Meanwhile today, the details and doctrines of grace produce an offspring of *meek* Christians here and now on earth.

Meekness in Prayer

Meekness requires us to pray for Christians who are ignorant of their salvation by free grace, that they might understand God’s salvation wholly by His grace, and thereby become meek, and by displaying this Christ-likeness, become more glorifying to God. And to pray especially for any who abuse and defame us, that they too might come to the station of Christ-likeness in prospect, to the elevated rank of sons of God and brethren to Christ, and eventually to the maturation of full-aged sons of God, who now bring glory to our Father in heaven by duplicating in this life the *meekness* of our Head and Supreme Goal, our matchless Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

¹ Revelation 19:7-8

ADDENDA

In our text of Scripture, *Titus 3:1-7*, Paul makes no direct reference to *meekness* toward God. However, in making allusion to *showing all meekness to all men*, there is intrinsically included within that command his assumption that the Doctrines of Grace will also produce a change from pride to *meekness* toward God in us sons of Adam. That is, knowing better the free salvation wrought so incredibly for and in us will make us Christians meek in our relations with God. In His Sermon on His kingdom's designs and intentions, Jesus spoke the same while limiting His kingdom for only the meek,

*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit
the earth. Matthew 5:5*

When Jesus first spoke these words, they were contextually spoken concerning salvation by grace. Arthur Pink best related this connection as follows,

It is to be kept steadily in mind that in those Beatitudes our Lord is describing the orderly development of God's work of grace as it is experientially realized in the soul. First, there is a poverty of spirit: a sense of our insufficiency and nothingness, a realization of our unworthiness and unprofitableness [*Mt. 5:3*]. Next, there is a mourning over our lost condition, sorrowing for the awfulness of our sins against God [*Mt. 5:4*]. And now [*in Mt. 5:5*] we have meekness as a by-product of self-emptying and self-humiliation; or, in other words, there is a broken will and a receptive heart before God. Meekness is...the antithesis of pride....¹

¹ Arthur Pink, An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), p.22.

Meekness: The Qualifying Metamorphosis for Inheriting the Earth

Consequently, Jesus' reference to the *meek* in *Matthew 5:5* refers first to the meek before God, as regards man's relations with God. Yet, Jesus refers secondarily to the *meek* before other men, as regards man's relations with man. He meant the *meek*, that is, persons who were *meek* in character and disposition. Therefore, in His allusion to the *meek*, Jesus meant men who were *meek* before all persons, whether divine or human. His subjects will have become *meek* innately *by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, and subsequently made *worthy of*—fitted for and prepared to inhabit—the *kingdom of God*.¹ Hence, His promise that *they shall inherit the earth*.

Love and Meekness: The Interrelation

Love and meekness are very much alike. They are interrelated in themselves from each of their exceptional qualities. If one loves, he will be meek; if one is meek, he will love; they are thus interrelated. But they are both similarly interrelated in another way. Just as love to man must include love to God, so also must meekness toward man include meekness toward God. As Christians (and only as Christians), when we love man, we are loving God, because man is made in God's image. When we really love man, we will have already become lovers of God. When we are meek in our relations with man, we are also meek in our relations with God; or better, when genuine meekness is in our relations with men, we will have already become meek in our relations with God. The two go absolutely together as mutually inclusive, the one with the

¹ *Revelation 3:4; Luke 20:35; II Thessalonians 1:5.*

other. As true love for man goes intrinsically with love for God,¹ so the true spirit of meekness before other men goes intrinsically with meekness before God.

Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering.

Forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye

*And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.*² [Added emp.]

Colossians 3:12-14 ASV

Amen!

Meekness and love are the “end accomplishment” from eternity past when he chose us, and then effectually called us Christians unto salvation.³ He continues with that certain “actual accomplishment” as His “end in view” throughout this life of affliction and suffering. Christ-likeness is the result of the *renewing of the Holy Ghost* in us Christians—His gracious “actual accomplishment.” *Meekness and love* arrayed in us by His grace will have made us more exemplary to be included in Jesus’ holy kingdom forever and forever. Amen.

¹ *1 John 4:20*

² Gk. *teleiotos*, from *teleiosis*, “denotes a fulfillment, completion, perfection, an end accomplishment as the effect of a process..., stressing perhaps the actual accomplishment of the end in view...” [Added emp.] W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Revell Company: Westwood, 1966), p. 175.

³ *Ephesians 1:4, 11, 14, 18.*