

Our Part In The Sanctification Process (Part Nine): Cultivating The Fruit Of Gentleness

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Greetings Brothers and Sisters from Colton, California. We will turn to several related scriptures upon which I intend to weave a theme for this message. Most scriptural references will be taken either from the Lockman Foundation's *Amplified Bible* or the Lockman Foundation's *New American Standard Bible* or the *New American Standard Bible E-Prime*. All three of these versions are available in electronic format on the Church of the Great God website.

For the past several weeks, I felt God was speaking directly to me in these verses.

Psalm 37:8-11 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; fret not yourself—it tends only to evil doing. For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait *and* hope *and* look for the Lord [in the end] shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the evildoers will be no more; though you look with care where they used to be, they will not be found. But the meek [in the end] shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The Hebrew word for meek is transliterated “anavim,” which is translated “poor,” “afflicted,” or “humble.” In his sermon, “Blessings Which Come to the Meek,” F. E. Marsh points out that in addition to inheriting the earth the meek are promised: 1.) Satisfaction— “the meek (anavim) shall eat and be satisfied” (referencing Psalm 22:26); 2.) Instruction-“the meek (anavim) will He teach His way” (referencing Psalm 25:9); 3.) Salvation-“Save all the meek (anavim) of the earth (that’s Psalm 76:9); 4.) Exaltation-“The Lord lifts up the meek (Psalm 147:6) and 5.) Beautification-“He will beautify the meek” with salvation (Psalm 149:4).

Matthew 5:5 Blessed (happy, blithesome, joyous, spiritually prosperous—with life, joy, and satisfaction in God’s favor and salvation, regardless of

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their outward conditions) are the meek (the mild, patient, long-suffering), for they shall inherit the earth!

The Greek word is transliterated as Prah-oos or Pra-utes and translated as “subdued, or broken, or obedient, as a wild stallion trained for battle.” Greg Ebie, in his sermon-article “Gentleness,” explains that Aristotle described Prah-oos as a center between two extremes. For Aristotle, gentleness meant finding the proper balance in life, maintaining a good equilibrium, having a steadiness and stability that will not waver or be moved to extremes.

Ebie further clarifies that “without gentleness love does not touch others. Without meekness our touch is harmful instead of helpful, painful rather than pleasing, selfish instead of selfless. Only as our strength is submitted to God, only as power is brought under the control of God’s Holy Spirit through love, can we reach out and touch one another.” In short, gentleness is a balance between extremes; it is strength submitted to God—power under control. Gentleness can be described as love touching.

Gary Petty, in his sermon/article, “Fruits of the Spirit, Part 2, Gentleness and Faithfulness,” quotes Aristotle defining the meaning of Prah-oos or Pra-utes. Aristotle said, “The word means that you’re neither angry nor are you complacent.” In other words, we should be neither elated nor complacent with what happens, because we are not concerned with self *at all*.

According to *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, “The meaning is not expressed well in English. For the terms *meekness*, *mildness*, commonly used, suggests weakness. Described negatively, *meekness* (the word that is translated *meekness* here) is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest. It is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, because it is not occupied with self at all.

In his November 1998 “Personal” *The Fruit of the Spirit: Meekness*, John Ritenbaugh declared that “meekness is so important that it is the third characteristic Jesus mentions in His foundational teaching, the Sermon on the Mount.” Interestingly, Colin Smith, in his sermon-article “Cultivating Meekness,” makes a compelling case that poverty of spirit and the capacity to mourn are actually pre-requisites to meekness, and that meekness, in turn, is a pre-requisite to hungering and thirsting for righteousness, which is a pre-

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requisite to mercifulness, a composite structure of godly character, similar to the incremental ladder of virtues given by the apostle Peter in II Peter 1:5-9, leading to Godly character.”

John Ritenbaugh reminds us that Jesus Christ “was not the first to state the importance of meekness, but He was the first to collect, in what we call the Beatitudes, a God-authored, organized list of the characteristics of the perfect man. Others have made lists of outstanding virtues, but Jesus’ list is unique in that He relates them to the Kingdom of God and in the depth and breadth of what He meant.”

William Barclay has declared that “meekness is the most untranslatable of words in the New Testament.” John Ritenbaugh illustrates how the synonyms as listed in the *Reader’s Digest Oxford Complete Word Finder* horribly distort its meaning: retiring, weak, docile, acquiescent, repressed, spiritless, broken, and wimpish.” John thunders, “Not a single one of these words applies to Jesus Christ or even to Moses, who the Bible claims “was very meek, above all the men which were on the face of the earth” (referencing Numbers 12:3).

Moses, we remember, was part of the tribe of Levi, whom Jacob severely castigated along with Simeon, for their extreme cruelty, pronouncing a curse and uttering a prophecy (referencing Genesis 49:7) which reads, “Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.” God found it necessary not only to deny them their own real estate, but to put them on short leashes, where they could personally serve Him, having their trigger temper broken and thankfully gaining them a sense of proportion.

After Moses murdered the Egyptian (referencing Exodus 2: 11-15), God spent 40 years taming him by teaching him how to gently herd sheep. Even so, when it was incumbent to turn up God’s wrath, Moses had no difficulty ordering the execution of 3,000 idolaters who rebelled against God by worshipping the Golden Calf while God gave him the Ten Commandments on the Mountain (referencing Exodus 32:25-28). Moses may have been meek, but certainly not timid or weak.

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John Ritenbaugh, in his November 1998 Personal, explains that “how a meek man reacts depends upon what he discerns God’s will is for him within the circumstance. Because the meek man sets his mind on God’s purpose and not his own comfort, ambition, or reputation, he will offer implacable resistance to evil in defense of God yet react with patience, kindness and gentleness when others attack him.” John continues to ask, “do the terms [weakness or timidity] describe the warrior-king David, a man greatly beloved by God? Or to Paul, the fearless and tireless apostle, who courageously faced his share and more of dangerous, painful persecutions? [Absolutely not] yet once we understand what biblical meekness is, we can easily see that these men were indeed meek.”

Sadly, Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic tradition has contributed to the distortion of the term meekness, with its relentless, calculated effeminization of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. John Ritenbaugh referred to a popular hymn composed by Charles Wesley, “Gentle Jesus Meek and Mild,” instilling a distorted characteristic of weakness, timidity, diffidence, and docility, characteristics utterly despised in a rugged self-reliant culture such as ancient Greece or Modern America—that is up until a couple of decades ago (or should I say up until several weeks ago).

Most of us have had etched deeply in our nervous systems the bogus images of our Lord and Savior promulgated by Roman Catholic statues and Eastern Orthodox icons and accepted by most Protestant and evangelical churches, portraying Him as a pusillanimous, long-haired hippie on the way to Haight-Ashbury or Woodstock. The other Orthodox icons portray or fixate Jesus Christ as a helpless baby in the arms of the Virgin Mary, whom they declare to be the Queen of Heaven. If these images are an actual portrayal of meekness, then I am totally repulsed as I am equally repulsed by the timorous, wishy-washy spirit of most of main-stream, nominal Christianity.

Don Hooser, in his article “Meekness and Gentleness: Strength with a Tender Touch,” makes the compelling case that it is impossible to have meekness without strength, explaining that too “many people confuse “meek” with “weak,” adding that “it’s regrettable that they rhyme because godly meekness *requires strength!*” He then provides us with this physical comparison: If we were severely injured and needed someone to *gently* carry

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us, wouldn't we want someone who was *really strong*? We certainly would not want a person who might stumble or clumsily struggle with us!"

Meekness requires an intricate balance of strength or power channeled into Godly purposes, sometimes requiring utmost intensity, and sometimes requiring a soft gentle touch, both administered with absolute control. We recall the etymology of the Greek word—Prah-oos - or Pra-utes, subdued—or broken-or obedient—as a wild stallion trained for battle.

Colin Smith, in his article “Cultivating Meekness,” emphatically reminds us that wild horses never win races until they submit to the bit and bridle. Likewise, meekness brings God’s called-out ones under control, making us ultimately more useful in God’s capable hands. Wild horses and carnal human nature may exhibit strength, but that strength is not focused and is too scattered to be useful. It is meekness which brings strength under control, enabling God’s called-out ones to tame the temper, calm the passions, managing the unruly impulses of the heart, and bring order out the chaos to the human spirit. The more we grow in meekness, the more useful we become to Almighty God.

The SPS of this message is that the godly quality of meekness, gentleness, or humility, the penultimate fruit of God’s Holy Spirit (listed in Galatians 5:23) consists of submitting to God Almighty, enabling Him to carefully couple maximum spiritual strength with maximum spiritual control. The title of this message is: “Our Part in the Sanctification Process: Part Nine: Cultivating the Fruit of Meekness or Gentleness.”

Don Hooser offers this instructive illustration of the value of meekness in his article, “Meekness and Gentleness: Strength with a Tender Touch,” maintaining that “The elephant’s trunk in particular is an example of strength coupled with precise control. Its trunk, with more than 40,000 individual muscles, is strong enough to rip branches from trees but sensitive to pick up a single blade of grass! The trained elephant illustrates the great value of having both strength and careful gentleness—unlike the proverbial ‘bull in a china shop’.”

Another insightful aspect of meekness was provided by Christian Cheong in his article “Be Gentle,” in which he describes a giant steam hammer used for

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flattening cars to be recycled into steel: “A guide was taking a group of visitors through a factory. One of the things he showed them was a giant steam hammer capable of flattening a scrap car.” He continues, “Then the guide put down a walnut and had the hammer break the shell without flattening the nut. That’s gentleness—great power under perfect control!”

When we consider the force of water, we realize that out of control, it can be frightening and can raise havoc and consternation, but when brought under control it can be a tremendous blessing. Back in 1965, I watched the Minnesota River, gorged by 60 inches of melting snow and seemingly endless untimely spring rains, flooding over its banks— one of the worst floods ever recorded in Minnesota. The administration at Mankato State College promptly excused classes, allowing us to assist filling sandbags to keep the city of North Mankato from being inundated with turbulent, swirling flood water.

In 1974, a dam up in the Black Hills of South Dakota above Rapid City burst, displacing large rocks, trees, vehicles, homes, carrying them away in a merciless, devastating torrent. Tragically, 238 people were killed, including 14 trained first responders. 3,000 people were injured, 1,335 homes were totally destroyed, 2,830 homes were severely damaged, 200 businesses were annihilated, and 5,000 automobiles were demolished. The damage to Rapid City from that single episode exceeded \$66 million dollars.

But water can be brought under control as we have witnessed from the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority or the Hoover Dam harnessing the once turbulent, unruly Colorado River, providing hydro-electric power for Arizona, Nevada, and California. Thankfully, engineers have learned to bring the power and force of water under control, turning a waterwheel or a mill to grind wheat as well as causing it to flow through a dam turning turbines to produce electricity for a city or multi-state region.

The effects of fire we could similarly calculate whether we focus and control it or let it wantonly cause carnage and property damage, as some of the incompetent politicians on the left coast have done. When I lived in East Texas, I would watch the forest rangers every spring start proactive fires in Tyler State Park to clear out accumulation of dead brush and combustible tinder. Having lived out here in California since 2013, I have observed how

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two successive governors, beholden to the far-left, progressive environmental wackos, adamantly refused to clear away brush and dry tinder, allowing devastating yearly wildfires to destroy lives and property, and then having the unmitigated gall to blame it on climate change.

When God commanded our Mom and Dad in Genesis 2:15 to “tend and keep” the garden, I am sure that He did not intend Adam and Eve’s descendants—namely us—to ignore dead branches and brush in order to provide a habitat for the spotted owl. Psalm 8:6 promises that God will eventually appoint His called ones custodians of Creation—providing they learn to self-govern themselves with meekness and gentleness.

Christian Cheong defines gentleness as “having the right, the power and authority to do something but choosing to bring it under control to fulfill a higher good.” Don Hooser asks us to consider God! “God is *all*-powerful, but God never misuses His power. God is the perfect Father who never overreacts, is gentle with His often-unruly children, and always does what is best for us.” Eddie Foster, in his sermon-article “Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness,” also reminds us that God has all the power in the universe, yet He is gentle with us, and He wants us to learn to be like Him. Then, when He gives us power, He will know that we will not use it cruelly or rashly.

Psalm 103:8-14 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger *and* abounding with loving-kindness. He will not always contend, neither will He keep His anger *or* hold a grudge. He has not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great are His mercy *and* loving-kindness toward those who reverently *and* worshipfully fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father loves *and* pities his children, so the Lord loves *and* pities those who fear Him [with reverence, worship, and awe]. For He knows our frame, He [earnestly] remembers *and* imprints [on His heart] they we are dust.

We need to realize that not only we ourselves are dust, but our spouse, our children, and siblings are also dust. Consequently, we need to express the same tender compassion to them as Our Heavenly Father has expressed and continues to express toward us.

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Psalm 145:8 The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in mercy *and* loving-kindness. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works [the entirety of things created].

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, when He was arrested in Gethsemane, ordered Peter to cease and desist when he drew a sword in defense, telling him in Matthew 26:53-54, “Do you suppose that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will immediately provide Me with more than twelve legions [more than 80,000] of angels. But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must come about this way?” (referring to Isaiah 53:7).

Nevertheless, Jesus was never a doormat or helpless victim, as we learn from his proclamation in John 10:17-18, “For this [reason] the Father loves Me, because I lay down My [own] life to take it back again. No one takes it away from Me. On the contrary, I lay it down voluntarily. [I put it from Myself.] I am authorized *and* have power to lay it down (to resign it) and I am authorized *and* have power to take it back again. These are the instructions (orders) which I have received [as My charge] from My Father.”

John Ritenbaugh, in his November 1998 “Personal” described meekness as a “specific virtue, tool, way, or fruit that is excellent in dealing with conflict or potential conflict within relationships.” If one were confined to a monastery or cloister, perhaps the stark isolation would render this important spiritual tool less important. But because we are ushered by Almighty God into the arena of life, it would behoove us to learn how to use it not only for diplomacy and human relationships, but for spiritual growth and leadership techniques in the Kingdom of God.

Let us go over to Hebrews 5, the chapter in which Our Lord and Savior is appointed High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. We must remember that our calling also is to serve as a holy (dedicated, consecrated) priesthood [mediating between God and man] to offer up [those] spiritual sacrifices [that are] acceptable *and* pleasing to God through Jesus Christ (referencing I Peter 2:5).

Hebrews 5:1-2 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of people in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; He is able to exercise gentleness *and* forbearance toward

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the ignorant and erring, since he is liable to moral weakness *and* physical infirmity.

A priest, a judge, or a king must demonstrate that he has empathy toward his clients. Few things are more terrifying than a judge or magistrate without sensitivity or empathy.

Hebrews 5:5-10 So too Christ (the Messiah) did not exalt Himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed *and* exalted by Him Who said to Him, You are My Son: today I have begotten You; As He says also in another place, You are a Priest [appointed] forever after the order of Melchizedek. [We now learn some insights of how Christ qualified for this role beginning with verse 7.] In the days of His flesh [Jesus] offered up definite, special petitions [for that which He not only wanted but needed] and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was [always] able to save Him [out] from death, and He was heard because of His reverence toward God [His godly fear, His piety, in that He shrank from the horrors of separation from the bright presence of the Father]. Although He was a Son, He learned [active, special] obedience through what He suffered. [Could the same thing be said by Our Heavenly Father about us as we are qualifying for our leadership roles in the Kingdom of God?] And [His completed experience] making Him perfectly [equipped], He became the Author *and* Source of eternal salvation to all those who give heed *and* obey Him, being designated *and* recognized *and* saluted by God as High Priest after the order (with the rank) of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand *and* sympathize *and* have a shared feeling with our weaknesses *and* infirmities *and* liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning.

What about us? Do we, as we are being groomed as priests and kings in God's kingdom, do we have empathy to have a shared feeling with other people's weaknesses, infirmities, and temptations.

Last week, Richard Ritenbaugh reminded us that our human nature has a way of sanitizing our past sins, making them seem like trivial silly mistakes, when in essence they are gruesome and vicious assaults on the body of

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Christ, every bit as hideous as the sins we are quick to condemn in others, including the vile corrupt evil career politicians which we cannot seem to help loathing.

A major key to attaining meekness is to recognize our intense spiritual poverty-realizing our own culpability in the savage murder of Our Lord and Savior. Colin Smith, in his article “Cultivating Meekness,” insists that awareness of our faults leads to meekness, claiming “the man who knows how often he is mistaken, will not insist on his own way. He will express his opinion, and then he will listen carefully to the wisdom of others and give weight to them. [In short], he will be meek.”

Scottish Clergyman Alexander Maclaren once declared: “How different our claims upon other men would be if we possessed this sober, sadder estimate of what we really are! How our petulance, and arrogance, and insisting upon what is due to us... would all disappear.” Matthew Henry insists that we ask this poignant question every time our annoyance or anger with others erupts out of control: **If God should be as angry with me for every provocation as I am with those about me, what would become of me?**

Those who have been forgiven much (that would include all of us) and know it, are (or indeed should be) inclined to love much. If we remember how much we have been forgiven, we will grow in meekness. John Ritenbaugh adds another dimension to this insight insisting that awareness of our past can tame the beast of self-will, asserting that meekness is the by-product of a number of elements, not the least of which are deep, thorough humility and an awareness of the seriousness of what our past conduct produced, especially toward Jesus Christ. These things have (or at least should have) tamed the beast, broken our self-will, and made our minds receptive to the pure influences of God’s Spirit. John concludes, “This is not natural but supernatural, the product of God’s grace toward us and His Spirit working and growing in us. It very deeply, sometimes radically, alters our perspective of God, His purpose, the trials of life, the self and other people.”

Awareness of the devastating effects of our past sins also keeps pride (the biggest enemy to meekness) in check. John Ritenbaugh declares

that “an awareness of sin—as long as it is not obsessive—will help us to continue in a humble frame of mind by keeping pride in check, tempering our judgments and allowing us to accept the events of life in a spirit that produces great contentment.” To aid us in achieving the necessary humility or poverty of spirit required for meekness it helps to review the description of our calling in I Corinthians 1:26-27.

I Corinthians 1:26-27 For [simply] consider your own call brethren; not many [of you were considered to be] wise according to human estimates *and* standards, not many of high *and* noble birth. [No] for God selected (deliberately chose) what in the world is foolish to put the wise to shame, and what the world calls weak to put the strong to shame. As one minister in our previous fellowship once stated: “God did not choose the cream of the crud, just the plain crud.”

If we experience godly sorrow for our sins, our hearts will become receptive to the workings fulfilling the purpose of Our Creator to produce His Image in us. Meekness enables us to be submissive, malleable, pliable, and teachable.

Eddie Foster, in his sermon-article *Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness* reminds us that “God is overwhelmingly gentle with us when we sin and need correction, and He expects us to be the same way with others. Also, gentleness shows the world that the way of violent encounters and situations ruled by emotion is not the better way. And God wants us to demonstrate gentleness because human beings require a gentle touch (as all of us certainly did) in order to profoundly change their lives and come to Him.” Gary Petty, in his sermon article “Gentleness /Faithfulness (Part 2),” excerpts a working definition of meekness from William Barclay, the same one who complained that meekness was perhaps the most untranslatable word in the New Testament. Barclay suggests that three factors or aspects are involved, including:

(1) Being submissive to the will of God. As a matter of fact, the word itself has more to do with our relationship with God than our relationship with other people.

(2) Secondly, it means being teachable. In other words, we are so submissive to the will of God that we are teachable, moldable, pliable, responsive clay on the potter's table (Isaiah 64:8).

(3) Thirdly, after we have demonstrated our unconditional surrender to Almighty God, we consider other people, how they feel, and what they are going through. Our actions toward others are based on a consideration of that person.

Our motivation to be meek should stem from practicing the Golden Rule as taught by Our Savior in Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31, encompassing the *empathetic* essence of morality. Let us review that principle in Matthew 7:12.

Matthew 7:12 So then, whatever you desire that others would do to *and* for you, even so do also to *and* for them, for this is (sums up) the Law *and* the Prophets.

Luke 6:31 And as you would like *and* desire that men would do to you, do exactly so to them.

Back in the Fall of 1962, when I was a Freshman in College, our Literature class was assigned to read "The Definition of a Gentleman" by Victorian Philosopher and Clergyman John Henry Newman, a work I considered at that time to be one of the most foolish things I had read, but now at the age of 76 (or 27,512 days) I consider it loaded with wisdom and profundity. Here are a few excerpts of that essay:

Hence it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who never inflicts pain. This description is both refined, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature; like an

easy chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them.

The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make everyone at his ease at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unreasonable allusions or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort; he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves toward our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend.

Could we ever envision ourselves speaking the words of Our Lord and Savior and of the martyr Stephen, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do;” or “Lord, fix not this sin upon them” [lay it not to their charge] (Luke 23:34, Acts 7:60). The apostle Paul makes this poignant observation in Romans 5:7-8.

Romans 5:7-8 For one will hardly die for a righteous person; through perhaps for the good person someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my countrymen, my kinsmen according to the flesh

How many of us, safely ensconced in the Greater Church of God, have as much compassion for our fallen kinsmen in physical Israel, deceived by Satan into accepting infanticide, sodomy, and other disgusting moral perversions, a nation currently torn apart by political hatred and scandalous corruption unparalleled in the entire history of the republic?

Our Lord and Savior, as well as the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter, are not asking us to die for physical Israel, but they are asking that we develop the same patient, forbearing mindset of our Heavenly Father who “is longsuffering (extraordinarily patient) toward all of us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). Remembering that God called us when we were hopelessly in ignorance, deceived by Satan, we need to afford that same opportunity to others who are still trapped in Satan’s poisonous web. Some of us have a way to go before we attain the forbearance, gentleness, and meekness of Christ.

Sadly, I find more in common with James and John, the sons of Thunder, who in Luke 9:54-56, when the Samaritans treated them rudely, asked Jesus, “Lord, do You wish us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, *even as Elijah did?*” But He turned and rebuked *and* severely censured them. *He said, “You do not know of what sort of spirit you are, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy lives, but to save them [from the penalty of eternal death].”*

Hollywood locates 34.4 miles from my home. Over the past seven years, I have desired to rain 100 million times the fire and brimstone originally rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah reserving enough firepower to annihilate CNN and MSNBC. The late Jerry Falwell predicted there could come a time when America (with all of its hideous sins) may need to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah because her perverted sins—

especially as promulgated by Hollywood, systematically destroying our culture and morality through its powerful media presence—have outstripped Sodom’s hideous perverted reputation. To which Almighty God puts me and Jerry in our places by warning in Romans 12:19, “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave the way open for [God’s] wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay (requite), says the Lord.”

As Paul grieved for his kinsmen, we also sigh and cry for the abominations taking place in our republic, feeling repulsed that the Leftist Progressives, if they succeed in their blatant voter fraud, will ensure a massive crop of poisonous, bitter fruit and curses for rejecting God’s Law protecting human life and condemning sexual perversion of all kinds.

Back on November 6th, the former governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich, pardoned earlier by President Trump, was asked, “Are Democrats stealing votes in Philadelphia?” Blagojevich replied “Is the Pope Catholic? It’s a time-honored tradition in big, Democrat-controlled cities like Chicago, my hometown” [whose Cook County cemeteries were instrumental in electing several United States Presidents]. Philadelphia, Atlanta, Detroit, and Milwaukee know precisely what they are doing. I personally found it refreshing that one formerly mired in political chicanery and corruption finally saw the light-as I pray for millions of individuals who are still mired in deception and infectious hatred.

During the last three weeks, with the turmoil still brewing in this nation, I have found intense comfort in Psalm 37, describing the brief tenure of the ungodly and the permanent tenure of the godly (whose principal quality is their meekness). For our concluding scripture, please turn over to Psalm 37:1.

Psalm 37:1-7 Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be envious against those who work unrighteousness (that which is not upright or in right standing with God). For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,

and wither as the green herb. Trust (lean on, rely on, and be confident) in the Lord and do good; so shall you dwell in the land and feed surely on His faithfulness, *and* truly you shall be fed. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord [roll and repose each care of your load on Him]; trust (lean on, and be confident) also in Him and He will bring it to pass. And He will make your uprightness *and* right as [the shining sun of] the noonday. Be still *and* rest in the Lord; wait for Him and patiently lean yourself upon Him; fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass.

This brings us full circle back to our lead-off scriptures:

Psalm 37:8-11 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; fret not yourself—it tends only to evildoing. For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait *and* hope for the Lord [in the end] shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the evildoers will be no more; though you look with care where they used to be, they will not be found. But the meek [in the end] shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

As we maximally submit ourselves to God, He will in turn bestow upon us maximum spiritual power, knowing that we will use it responsibly with the motivation of love and service rather than tyrannical control and domination.

DFM/jjm