**“The Meek Inherit”**

Micah 6:1-8

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:1-12

Epiphany 4

“He has told you, O man, what is Good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Blessed **ARE** the meek, for they shall **inherit** the earth.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

My 6-year-old grandson, Jettson (all 49 pounds of him), came down last weekend from Indiana to northern Alabama with a possible **AWARD IN SIGHT** of a **wooden hammer modeled after Thor’s hammer in the Avengers movies**. With **wrestling** pins of every one of his opponents and the fastest pins in that of everyone also doing it in this tournament, he **had to gain** this **desired trophy** as the **overall victor** over maybe a couple-of-hundred other kids.

Actually what he came to do was **practice God’s gifts to him of strength and focus, learning, and concentrating on the techniques of wrestling**. He **practiced all of that, then,** on a a mat of competition … and **had been practicing it** for awhile (since he was 3 years old), discovering then that he **enjoyed its practice** … and was **good and GIFTED at it,** so **EXERCISED THAT GIFT** and **tried in it deliberately wherever the opportunity for it was available**.

**Text**

“Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His **disciples came to Him**. And He **opened His mouth and taught them** of **GIFTS FREELY THEIRS TO BE ENJOYED AND PRACTICED / EXERCISED**.” In all of it, Jesus announced the “blessed” news of a heavenly inheritance … even on earth. He encouraged **ENJOYING THAT GIFT** … and **practicing it**, **BEING** inheritors of even this “earth” with all eternity along with it, **EXERCISING AND EXPRESSING** (among other descriptors for it) “**meekness**”.

The **TROPHY IN SIGHT** was **salvation**, and also everything salvation garnered even in this life preparing for the next, an **AWARD** that is mistaken if it’s seen as **effort we have to work for**. But it was worked for by the only **Person who COULD: (the One)** **INDEED AND** **REALLY** **fully-exercising** “**meekness**” and, **Himself, really** “**pure in heart**”, and “**persecuted for righteousness sake**” and “**merciful**” and “**doing justice**” and “**loving kindness**”, and “**walking humbly with His Father**”. Salvation through Him **GIFTED TO PEOPLE** **preceded** expectations to **reflect those humble characteristics**. **ENJOYING a salvation earned for us by God** and **EXERCISING OURSELVES AT BEING GOOD AT IT (BEING GIFTED AN EXPRESSION OF THAT SALVATION)**, we joyfully **try in the humility of repentance and obedience** wherever there’s an opportunity-for-that. We **want** **further to be taught by Jesus of the GIFTS OF HIS FATHER, and how to EXERCISE DISCIPLESHIP IN THAT**.

**In Micah**, God taught first (reminded) of the **GIFTS PEOPLE HAD BEEN GIVEN BY HIM**, then **what a Good response is to that in** **ENJOYING AND EXERCISING IT**. “**I brought you up from the land of Egypt** and **redeemed you from the house of slavery**, **sending before you** Moses and Aaron and Miriam. Remember what Balak, king of Moab, devised for you, and what Balaam the son of Beor **answered him** and **what happened** from shittim to Gilgal, (and here’s the important summary): that **YOU MAY KNOW** **the saving acts of the Lord**.” Their response to it, that they still needed instruction on: “**with WHAT** shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall **I give my firstborn** **for my transgression**, the **fruit of my body** **for the sin of my soul?** He has told you, o man, what is Good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? And there’s a **question mark at the end of all that like it’s a joke of expectation that no one can live up to but the One to one-day come and do that upon this earth**.

And God’s **pointing, in Micah, to the One who did come … and lived up to the expectation and SAVED by the “meakness” of self-sacrifice (giving up His life as the Person Who is Pure of Spirit).** Jesus “opened His mouth and taught disciples” **of** **Himself / God’s Son and Lamb for slaughter as the price for sin**. **GIFTED THAT DEATH AS FOR DISCIPLES OF HIS not worthy of the GIFT but wanting it**, He **THEN describes humble disciples’ GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS: HUMILITY (WITH A REPENTANT SPIRIT) ENJOYED AND EXERCISABLE by those baptized and faithfully in Him**.

In Micah, attempted worshipers got directed to the **Deliverer who’d “GIVE HIS OWN firstborn for all transgressions, the FRUIT OF HIS OWN BODY for the sins of every soul”**.

See, Jesus isn’t teaching of the **expectations** for the exercise of faith without

the **“blessedness” of an identity with Him who FULFILLS** **the “expectations”**.

**“Blessed** **IS THE ONE (JESUS)** **Who’s Poor in Spirit, Mourns, Hungers and Thirsts for Righteousness, is Merciful, is Pure in Heart, is the Peacemaker, Persecuted for Righteousness’ Sake, the Reviled One”** (the **“Firstborn of God the Father, the Fruit of His Own Body”**). **HE was sent / given-over to love and save us and baptize Himself into all of us so that we could be baptized into all of Him**. He’s the **One “Meek”**, **serving all the way to a death on the cross, saving humanity by it**. **He took what humanity can’t … and offered its reward / trophy / GIFT to all**.

The **benefits** are listed in the “teaching of Jesus on the mountain where He said down and spoke: Heaven’s Kingdom, comfort, being filled to satisfaction, having mercy to continue in, seeing God, being called sons of God, rejoicing / being even glad in persecution … with an **inheritance** of the Kingdom of Heaven and, even, the earth”.

**Application**

**Humility** and **appreciation** is, then, our **only Good response** to this **GIFTING BY GOD IN CHRIST JESUS**. **We could never beneficially offer even** our own firstborn for our sins, but **God has done that EFFECTIELY for us**. **We can’t even be** those Beatitude-standards that **the Son of God said were The Standards**. So, as Paul put it: “Let the one who boasts, boast in **the Lord**” and **glory** **in Him** because **He is the Standards for us**. **Humility with thanksgiving, then,** is the only worship acceptable to God, and its (both humility and thanksgiving **directed at God**) is of a heart and soul that acknowledges God as **FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION**. We **confess it** so as to **appreciate it**. And **one can’t APPRECIATE what’s not CONFESSED**. ……

My grandson came down to **participate** in a wrestling endeavor that **he knows he’s been** **GIFTED FOR**. He works hard at it of course, but only trying deliberately so as to **EXERCISE** what he **ENJOYS** and is **GIFTED FOR**. We all have that kind of similar analogy **with us to recognize** (sometimes it just needs to be **pointed out by someone else for what it is**). Matthew 5’s Beatitudes (but also Micah 6’s reminder) **teaches the same** (not in analogy, but straight-forward **directness**). God has **GIFTED US BY THE MEEKNESS OF CHRIST JESUS** with what we could **never do for ourselves / SALVATION BY THE SUFFICIENT SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF FOR US**. **How else** could we ever honestly respond to that any other way than with **repentant humility** and **thanksgiving**. Thanks be to God for **GRACE**. In the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.