



The Fruit of the Spirit
Gentleness
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We are in our series on the Fruit of the Spirit... in fact, this is the second to last week of this series, next week we are going to close the whole thing out, and from there we will be spending the fall looking at “The Ten Commandments.”

One of the things that we are constantly trying to include in every message, is the concept that these things should become natural for you.

My kids love snacks... they love fruit snacks. They just love them. Milly just had to get a crown on her tooth, and the dentist said “no more sticky candy, EVER” for her... so she is holding back a little now, in fact she is more than willing to do that after the experience of that drill in her mouth... but Fruit is natural, and it is good for you. Even a fruit strip that is made only with 100% real fruit is going to have a different effect on your body than a processed, completely artificial pack of fruit snacks filled with processed sugar and red 40.

It just is. They are not the same thing, at all. One may taste just as good, but it will leave you feeling dumpy.

And just like that, you can have the appearance of fruit in your life, and it not be the real thing. But a person who is actually walking in the Spirit... who is actually growing in the Spirit, the evidence of their lives will be: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

All of those things will be there, and all of those things will be growing.

So today we are going to look at gentleness.

The Greek word that Paul uses in Galatians 5 is the word *praotēs* (*pra-o-tace*), and it is a rather complicated word. William Barclay, in his commentary, wrote on this passage about the Fruit of the Spirit, saying that *praotēs* (*pra-o-tace*) is the most untranslatable words of all nine of these. In fact, it is one of the most untranslatable words in all of the New Testament. But we are going to do our best today.

Open your bibles with me to Luke 22:24-30

Who Is the Greatest?

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵ And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ **But not so with you.** Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷ For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

²⁸ “You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Throughout this series, we have constantly gone back to the final moments of Jesus’ life. The garden of Gethsemane, the foot washing in John 13, and the last supper... the “eucharisteō” - a Thanksgiving meal filled with grace (*charis*) and joy (*chara*) - It was a meal that Luke records Jesus as saying that he “earnestly desired to partake of” with his friends. And after he explains to the disciples what the elements of our Holy communion mean, he says that his betrayer is sitting with him at that very table. Someone who should be the closest friend to Jesus was sharing this amazing meal with him knowing that he would then go and sell him out, and so the disciples start whispering among themselves, “who is it? who could it be?” But then look at how distracted they became.

Somehow, while trying to navigate through which one of them would betray Jesus, they suddenly started arguing about which of them would be the greatest. I imagine it going something like this... “which of us is going to betray Jesus? Which of us is the worst? Wait a second, even more importantly, I wonder who the best is going to be?” And that is where we pick up with what we just read in Luke 22:24-30. Look at what Jesus says to these guys in response to this prideful question:

“The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ **But not so with you.** (Luke 22:25)

The message bible puts it this way “Kings like to throw their weight around and people in authority like to give themselves fancy titles. Its not going to be that way with *you*.”

The American church seems to have this way about it, where they get very “up in arms” about things like politics... they get very vocal about our government, and *their opinions* which of course, they would never call them them opinions, many of them speak as if they are the literal voice of God representing a specific political candidate... in fact many Christians I know actually say things like “Jesus would vote this way...” as if to say that if Jesus were walking the earth today that he would spend his days at voting booths to cast his opinion on who the right person is to lead our nation farther from him.

I have just in the last couple of weeks read blogs from christian leaders, one saying “Its impossible to be a Christian and a republican” and another saying “its impossible to be a Christian and a democrat”

Christians tend to spend countless amounts of dollars working to get their political candidate into office, and then if the other side wins, whichever side that may be, its four more years of complaining... and of protesting... and of pointing fingers at the people not doing anything while we sit on our butts not doing anything.

Listen, I am not telling you not to vote. I am not telling you not to have an opinion... I am telling you to be gracious. Ann Lamott once said something along the lines of, "If God hates all the people that you hate,"... "it is safe to assume that you have created God in your image." Guy, if you are looking for a God who is just like you then you are in the wrong religion. His ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9) If you are looking for a social club where everybody looks like you and talks like you and thinks like you, that is *not* what we are working to create here.

Now, this message is not about politics, but the point is this: We seem to have adopted this model that the world is going to be changed from the top down. and we put ALL our eggs into that basket. We seem to think, if we can convert the people who have authority, who have the power to change things, that we will change the world that way. But that is not the Jesus model. In the moments when Jesus found himself face to face with the people who hold the "real power" he always told them that he is the King of a different kingdom. He spent his time with the people that merely by associating with them, he was distancing himself from the powerful. Like the Samaritan woman. How is the man who is supposed to be the King of the Jews, talking to a Samaritan woman? It was extremely bad politics, and that was the point.

Because people are more than their vote, their skin color or their abilities to produce or their status in society.

Jesus always went after the lowly, the down trodden, the broken... the ones that society had rejected. Did he attract powerful people? Yes, of course! And some, like Zacchaeus, and like Matthew, gave up everything and followed him But most of them wanted to kill him.

His disciples were no different!

In the book of Acts, it wasn't the powerful leaders who "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) it was the powerful ones who said that about Paul and Silas because they were freaking out that they had come to their town... because wherever they go, inevitably was changed... This underground, grass roots movement was turning the world on its head.

and it left governments stunned and confused and unsure what to do about these people.

You think of the movements today that have started that way... that have started so small and with just a few people rallying around a cause they believe in, and it spirals into something great...

The early church was like that, they were called "people of the Way" - Jesus said it this way, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) - This was a new way, its the Jesus Way, its a grace Way... and as this new way spread it infiltrated culture from the bottom - up, to the point where the government was arresting the people spreading it because they saw it as such a great and ever-growing threat.

Do you know what is crazy... the bible tells us to respect our governing officials (Romans 13), the ones who have the authority, *and* (in Matthew 10:5-20) it says to not be surprised when they throw you in prison for what you believe.

What kind of a life are you trying to give us here Jesus?
That is a new way. Its a backwards way.

When Paul addressed the governor in Acts 24, he introduces himself as a follower of the Way. He was basically on trial, and his accusers make all sort of accusations against Paul but essentially Paul says that "the only thing you guys actually have on me, is how much I love Jesus.

And they threw him in prison anyway!

Paul was not running for office... but even from a prison he had more influence than just about any official by the end of his life because he made himself a servant.

and that is the Jesus model.

Whoever is first will be last.
Whoever is last will be first.

but we think differently than Jesus don't we?

We think, if we can get to the top, we can change everything.
But it has never, ever worked.

That is NOT what Jesus modeled for us, and it is clearly the opposite of what Jesus tells us in Luke 22. Its also the opposite of what he tells us in the beatitudes (Matt. 5):

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ "Blessed are the **meek**, for they shall inherit the earth.

We westerners read this and we think Jesus just made all of this up as he was going along. Like he came with a brand new idea (things like the last shall be first)... and in some ways he did... Jesus came with a new way, a better way, to fix the sin problem. But in reality, in addition to being God, Jesus is the also greatest Rabbi that ever lived... He taught many old things, new. In new and relatable ways.

Psalm 37:1-13 says (this is king David):

¹ Fret not yourself because of evildoers;
be not envious of wrongdoers!

² For they will soon fade like the grass
and wither like the green herb.

³ Trust in the Lord, and do good;
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

⁴ Delight yourself in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.

⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,
and your justice as the noonday.

⁷ Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;

fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,
over the man who carries out evil devices!

- 8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.
- 9 For the evildoers shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.
- 10 In just a little while, the wicked will be no more;
though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.
- 11 **But the meek shall inherit the land**
and delight themselves in abundant peace.
- 12 The wicked plots against the righteous
and gnashes his teeth at him,
- 13 but **the Lord laughs at the wicked**,
for he sees that his day is coming.

Simon Tugwell in his book “The Beatitudes” says of this very scripture:

“There is no future for the wicked. Therefore there is no occasion for us to interfere, any more than we have to do anything to make the grass shrivel up in the heat of the sun. Indignation and officiousness are inappropriate reactions. What the Lord does is, simply, laugh. From this point of view, as the psalmist sees it, it is just silly to take the unrighteous seriously. For all their threats and pretensions, there is really nothing to them. To react to them with anger and outrage is to ascribe to them more substance than is their due; and it will achieve nothing but harm. Evil has only so much reality as we give it. We make it more real by reacting to it.

But this does not mean we can afford to be simplistic about it either. Evil is a part of our world as we know it, and a powerful part at that. It is not for nothing that there is a shift in the tenses in which these first two beatitudes declare their promises: blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs *is* the Kingdom of heaven; blessed are the meek, for they *will* inherit the earth.”

The poor in SPIRIT, theirs is the Kingdom of heaven... here and now, its theirs. If you want to have life, you must lose it... here and now... until you

can realize that you are NOTHING without Jesus, you will never experience what it is like to walk with him.

But the meek, the meek have something COMING... and we will get to that in a minute.

Do you know what sticks out to me most when I read that. It is this line right here:

“Evil has only so much reality as we give it. We make it more real by reacting to it.”

Now I showed you the second paragraph in the section of this book as well as the first, which I originally wasn't going to do but I didn't want to leave you thinking that we don't do anything about evil. We are not passive about blatant injustices that happen to others. Tolerating evil is indifference to it, and if we tolerate it we will never overcome it... The meek are not the ones who tolerate injustice the meek are the ones who don't let it get to them because when evil passes away they will still be around.

but the point here is not being passive. The point is to be careful not to exult the very thing we are trying to denounce. Sometimes a loud enough voice against evil will only further its cause.

I would put it this way...

We must not spend more time protesting evil than we do working for good.

Gentleness ushers people into a relationship with God.
Harsh words shut people out to it.

You have probably heard the phrase before, that the biggest turn off for most people to Jesus is his followers. I would argue that it is not necessarily his true disciples though, as much as it is His brash, bold, loud, in your face, condemning, sign holding, soapbox standing, highly opinionated, vocal, Facebook feed filling followers.

Whether the words are truth or not, a truthful word spoken at the wrong time and in the wrong way, will only further distance the person you are trying to connect with.

But our gentleness or lack thereof is demonstrated through the way we respond.

Proverbs 15:1 says that “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Paul says in Romans 12:19:

“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

He says never avenge YOURSELF. Yet not only do we avenge ourselves but how often do we find Christians thinking that it is their responsibility to avenge for God?

The God who holds the whole world in his hand says to his followers that it is the ones who are meek that will inherit the earth. Not the loud.

Long before any of the New Testament was written, David was telling us in this Psalm,

“Don’t fret when people do evil.” They are going to fade away.
You, do good. You, commit your ways to the Lord.
You, refrain from anger, and forsake wrath.

⁹ For the evildoers shall be cut off,
but those who **wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.**

¹⁰ In just a little while, the wicked will be no more;
though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.

¹¹ **But the meek shall inherit the land**
and delight themselves in abundant peace.

The meek, and the patient, are the ones who have the inheritance.

These are hard sayings to live by, but they are echo'd so clearly by Jesus and later by Paul.

So what is the meek? Or who is the meek?

The Hebrew word for "meek" is the word *anawin* - well, *anawin* is how we say it - in The Hebrew alphabet there is no "W" - so what we translate as W would in Hebrew be the letter "vav" so in reality it would be *anavin* - and here is the thing about this word that is so fascinating. Primarily, unlike the other words we have been studying, *anawin* is not a word used to describe a moral or even necessarily a character trait.

At least right here in Psalms, the Psalm that Jesus is quoting in "The Beatitudes," Its more to describe a group of people. The word I want to use is *counter culture* but that really doesn't do it justice... It is more like the voiceless. It is the people who lack the social status, the power, the money. Its the poor, the vulnerable, the outcast, the marginalized. They are the people with no voice. They don't control anything, they are not Caesar, and never in a million years would they even be able to gain the ear of Caesar for him to hear even their most valuable petition.

These are the people who are the least likely of everyone, to ever inherit any sort of kingdom, or any sort of authority, they are in no succession of royalty and will never have the throne and yet they are the ones who Jesus says, in quoting the Psalmist, will inherit the earth.

And that leads us to the New Testament, where we have Jesus quoting this amazing Psalm in Matthew 5, and in the Greek language that the New Testament is written in the word Matthew used there is the word *praÿs*

Blessed are the *praÿs* for they shall inherit the earth.

Which is the same word (different tense) that Paul uses when he is listing the fruit of the spirit, that modern bibles translate as gentleness, and The King James version translates it "meekness" it is the word *praotēs* - and

like I mentioned at the beginning, William Barclay's commentary says that *praotēs* is the most untranslatable words of all nine fruits.

It seems, by definition to be pretty self explanatory. If you were to search the meaning the words you would immediately find are: gentleness, mildness, or meekness, but where it comes from gives us a little different perspective.

The word comes from a wild animal, that has been tamed. (see Barclay commentary, Matthew 5:5) - For example, a couple of months ago we partnered with a great church from Down River and did "Bless Fest" in Patton Park, and it was awesome. And all of my children, including my one year old daughter, were able to ride on horses. They were thrilled, they absolutely loved it.



But how is it that both my three year old AND even my one year old, tiny daughter, could ride on a horse that weighed 50 times as much as she does, that was completely capable of at any moment throwing her off of its back and crushing her, yet it didn't, and we trusted it not to?

Because it had learned how to restrict its power.

But not only was it holding back on what it was capable of, but it had learned how to hold back so well, that it's first instinct was now nurturing. It's first instinct was to gently walk with the child on its back. It's first instinct was to be gentle even though it was the largest and strongest creature in whole the place.

And that concept is where we get the word gentleness from. What Paul is saying, essentially, is this: make yourself like the *anawin*.

Because it is the people who are broken for me that I can use. Maybe they are the strongest... maybe you are stronger than anybody you know... but

you still break for the people who are living this life apart from the kingdom. If you think you have the strength, if you rely on your strength, then you aren't relying on God's strength...

Moses the Meek

The bible gives us a great physical example of what it means to be meek. It gives us a clear, flesh and blood example.

And that is Moses.

Numbers 12:2 says "Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth."

But Moses fought injustice. He looked Pharaoh in the eyes and said "let my people go..." and if you don't, it is going to get ugly... it is becoming very obvious that the word "meek" and the "weak" are not the same.

Think about the life of Moses. As a tiny child, he was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. It was essentially the equivalent of being born into royalty. Acts 7 tells us that Moses was brought up and instructed with all of the wisdom of the Egyptians, mighty in words and deeds (Acts 7:22)

and when he was 40 years old, God put it in Moses' heart to visit the children of Israel... the people he would later free... and when he is there, he saw an Israelite being treated poorly by an Egyptian, so he struck down and killed the Egyptian... He thought the Israelites were going to see him as a hero... He thought, "I am defending my people." But the next day when he saw some of the Israelites arguing, he stepped in to try and break it up, he said to them "you are brothers, why do you do wrong to each other?" (Acts 7:26, Exodus 2:13) and they responded, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you going to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" (Acts 7:27-28)... and so Moses became terribly afraid. Suddenly, he didn't know how he was going to ever do what he was called to do. How was he going to free the people that he had now distanced?

So he went into exile. For 40 years he disappeared. He became a shepherd (Exodus 2:22)... And the Egyptians hated shepherds. Genesis 46:34 says that "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

From a Prince, to a Shepherd.

He was now leading sheep. That's it.

Yet he still believed He was the one who was going to rescue the Israelites.

40 years... and in that time, the bible says (Exodus 2:21) that he was content with this new, modest life.

A prince. Now content. Being a shepherd.

But he learned how to care for his flock. He learned how to be gentle... He knew how to *care for*. And Exodus 3 begins by telling us that Moses led his flock to the west side of the wilderness, and he came to the Mountain of God (Horeb) (Exodus 3:1) and there he saw a burning bush.

Now, this bush was on fire, but it wasn't actually burning... And God speaks to Moses in this moment, and he says, "take off your sandals, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

And then God begins to talk to Moses. He tells him, "I am the God of your father Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" and so Moses turns away... he hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. And God tells him, in a nutshell, "I am tired of the Egyptians persecuting my people. I have heard their cries, I am going to redeem them, and I am going to use you to do it."

God tells Moses, "I am going to use you. And the time is now. It's just like you always thought it would be."

But look at how Moses responds:

(Exodus 4:1-12) - He basically tells God, "They won't believe me. They won't believe that you sent me." So God gives him these amazing signs to prove that he had sent Moses, his staff turns into a snake, the leprous hand trick, the water into blood trick..

And even after all that, how does Moses respond?

Exodus 4:10 “Oh my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and tongue.”

But look what Acts 7:22 says, I mentioned it earlier.

Acts 7:22 tells us that Moses was mighty in his words and deeds. He was actually excellent at the things he said he wasn't good at. Yet he felt totally inadequate.

He was an 80 year old man going back to take on a King... a nation really.

He was an 80 year old man who once talked a big game, held a high chair, and resorted to killing a man and believed it would set off a revolution but instead it distanced him from the people he was trying to save.

He was an 80 year old man content taking care of sheep in a field the rest of his life.

and this is the big one.

He was an 80 year old man who once was a Prince... Who once HAD the authority, was at the very top, and yet was NOT able to free his people from that post.

But coming in at the bottom, he redeemed the Israelites.

And we will talk more about Moses and about the Exodus in two weeks when we start looking closely at the Ten Commandments, but I wanted to give you that brief framework on him because it actually gives us an example of what it means to be “meek.” The bible says that “Moses was more meek than anybody on the face of the earth. (Numbers 12:20) so when we read the red letters of Jesus saying “blessed are the meek” we can put a face to it. Blessed are the people who act like Moses acted.

Humbleness

Really, what it comes down to is pride and humility. Its not about being weak, its about being LAST.

Moses was not weak, but God had to turn him into a shepherd for 40 years to show him what true strength looks like.

The word pride in Hebrew it means “to lift up strength.”

What you are doing when pride enters your life, is you are are lifting up your own strength. If you think you can do it on your own, you are proud. But true meekness is rooted in humility.

But the bible tells us that God gives grace to the humble.... but he resists the proud (James 4:6)

He resists them.

He resists the one who sees someone who is weak, and thinks “I am stronger than them.” Thats not the gospel! We are called to be all things to all people if that is what it takes to meet them and to reach *some* of them (1 Corinthians 9:22. Have you ever read that? Paul, says, “I become all things to all people, that I might save *some*.”

Because if you save even one, it was worth whatever it cost you.

If it cost you your freedom, it was worth it.

If it cost you your bank account, it was worth it.

It it cost you the election, it was worth it.

Is the “Christian” political activist posting bold accusations accusing 50% of the population of not being a Christian because of the way that they vote, becoming “all things to all people?”

No.

The fastest way to alienate people is to belittle them.

(1 Corinthians 9) Paul says that to those who are weak, he became weak. It doesn't say to the weak he became strong... Or he became their strength. Or that he carried them... No. God does that... Paul, he made himself weak. He comforted them. He met them in their world.

When we see someone who is weak, we become weak. Not because we are physically ourselves weak... but because no words can possibly bring more healing than the genuine feeling that:

You. are. not. alone.

Two of the most "gentle" words in the English language are "me too."

Are you struggling with finances? Me too.

Do you feel like your life is a mess? Me too.

Are you unsure about the state of our nation, where we are going, and how on earth we will fix any of this? Me too.

We won't fix it. Only Jesus can fix it.

But most of us, we say we need Jesus, and we know we need Jesus, but we are too proud to admit that we *actually* need Jesus just as much as everyone else.

One of the most tragic things that I have ever witnessed is Christians not willing to extend the same grace that they have been given. Its like they have forgotten what they used to be... Even more so, its like they have forgotten who they are, even now, apart from the grace of God. Nothing will distance us from the love of God faster than pride. C.S. Lewis calls it "The Great Sin."

and in his book "Mere Christianity" he says "There is no fault that makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others. The vice I am talking about is Pride or Self-Conceit; and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called Humility. You may remember, when I was talking about sexual morality, I warned you that the centre of

Christian morals did not lie there. Well, now we have come to the centre. According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil; Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.”

He goes on to explain, that everything to do with pride has to do with competition. Its not that you are actually proud of being rich, its that you are proud of being *more* rich than others. It gets no pleasure in having something... only in having *more* than the next person. He says that pride “has become the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began.... Pride always means enmity.”

Do you struggle with pride? Me too.

And Solomon tells us that “pride comes before the fall.” (Proverbs 16:18)

But Isaiah 29:19 says “The MEEK (the anawin) shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

The one who makes himself like the ones who are nothing, will in the end, have everything.

Have you ever wondered why we call Jesus the *lion and the lamb*? Is it just one of those things that we sort of say, and we sing lovely songs about, but never really understand??? Or is there something to this? Something real?

It comes from Revelation 5, and I am going to read it to you out of the message bible today to keep it simple.

(Revelation 5:1-3) I saw a scroll in the right hand of the One Seated on the Throne. It was written on both sides, fastened with seven seals. I also saw a powerful Angel, calling out in a voice like thunder, “Is there anyone who can open the scroll, who can break its seals?” There was no one—no one in Heaven, no one

on earth, no one from the underworld—able to break open the scroll and read it.

The ESV says Who is worthy??? Who is worthy to open the scroll? Who is worthy? No-one.

(Revelation 5:4-5)

I wept and wept and wept that no one was found able to open the scroll, able to read it. One of the Elders said, “Don’t weep. Look—the Lion from Tribe Judah, the Root of David’s Tree, has conquered. He can open the scroll, can rip through the seven seals.”

Weep. No. More. The lion has come. Jesus has come in all his glory and he will open the scroll and its seven seals. For he is greater than any here. He has overcome sin. and death... He has overcome the cross, and the grave... and He is great, and mighty, and strong.

(Revelation 5:6)

So I looked, and there, surrounded by Throne, Animals, and Elders, was a Lamb, slaughtered but standing tall. Seven horns he had, and seven eyes, the Seven Spirits of God sent into all the earth.

Behold. The Lion. But he has come as a lamb. He has come as the least. As the weakest. And we killed him. Because he let us.

(Revelation 5:6-10)

He came to the One Seated on the Throne and took the scroll from his right hand. The moment he took the scroll, the Four Animals and Twenty-four Elders fell down and worshiped the Lamb. Each had a harp and each had a bowl, a gold bowl filled with incense, the prayers of God’s holy people. And they sang a new song:

Worthy.

They sang worthy....

Worthy is the *lamb*.

Worthy is the *lion*, who made himself a *lamb*.

Because though Jesus is a lion, he made himself like an *anawin*.

He had all the strength in the universe, but he didn't lift a finger to prevent what had come against him, instead he was meek.

He was self-restrained

He was humble.

He was gentle.

What an example of meekness. What an example of someone not using their power... when he could have.

He could have changed the world while staying on top, he could have sent another flood, or burned it all to ashes and started again with a new garden, he could have never left his throne.

But that is not the way of Jesus. It is never from the top down, its always from the bottom up.

So instead, He became the lowest. He was born to a lowly family, and he spent his life reaching the least of these.

and he taught things like the first shall be last...

and whatever you do unto the *least of these* you do unto me...

and the meek shall *inherit* the earth. But how do you inherit something?

You do nothing. Somebody else has to do it all for you. Somebody else has to die and needs to will you what they have.

It reminds me of what Jesus says in Matthew 18, that unless we turn and become like children, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:4) - and we always think that means that we have to be innocent, as if children are innocent... but I have three, and trust me, children are not innocent.

but what children really are is dependent. They haven't done anything to receive the love of their Father and their Mother, they just are there.

Jesus knows, the kids aren't perfect.

They just haven't gotten to the place yet where they think that they can earn it.

But they are always the ones who's names are on the will.
They are always the ones who are listed on the inheritance.