

Note: The Rev. Caleb Kim will deliver the sermon below on Sunday, March 15, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls and via Zoom.

Title: Beatitude 3 – Letting God (The Commitment Choice)

–The Road to Recovery Sermon Series

We have been exploring our sermon series, “The Road to Recovery,” based on two primary resources: Alcoholics Anonymous’ Twelve-Step program and Jesus’s Eight Beatitudes. In the last two sessions, I discussed the first two principles from both AA’s Twelve Steps and Jesus’ Beatitudes. In the first Life’s Healing Choice, called the Reality Choice, we reflected on Jesus’ first Beatitude: “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Matthew 5:3). In the journey toward recovery and freedom, being poor in spirit means admitting that we are powerless over alcohol or spiritual bondage—that our lives have become unmanageable. This is the reality of who we are: hopeless and helpless to “control our tendency to do the wrong thing.” In the second Life’s Healing Choice, called the Hope Choice, we discovered the importance of mourning through Jesus’ second Beatitude: “Blessed are those who mourn” (Matthew 5:4). In AA’s program of restoration, we need to “come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” From a Christian’s perspective, that Power is God—who has the supreme ability to help us recover. This truth gives us hope, because each one of us truly matters to God who is both mighty and merciful.

Today, I want us to examine the third step on the Road to Recovery, or the third Life’s Healing Choice. This step is critical, because the remaining five principles in this recovery journey will build upon whether you and I fully commit to it. That is why we call it the Commitment Choice. AA’s third step states this choice as follows: “Made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.” Jesus’ third Beatitudes echoes this truth: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). Both statements encourage us—and those seeking recovery—to let go of our egos and the egos of others, placing ourselves and them in the mercy and might of a Higher Power, which is God. Embracing this principle allows us to rely on Someone greater than ourselves as we journey toward freedom.

While reflecting on this step, I was reminded of a biblical story that Jesus told in Luke 15. As many of us know, the story features two sons of a man. Sometimes, it is considered that the younger son represents non-believers, while the older son symbolizes believers. The first part of the story can especially serve as an invitation for non-believers to come to God just as they are. At the same time, we need to remember that this lesson also applies to all of us who are called to follow Christ, especially those who may have been distant from the Lord for a while. As I mentioned earlier, we all can be “the lost one” in this story from time to time. Sometimes, we only turn to God when we need something urgent from Him. We tend to live independently, pursuing our own desires, and on many occasions, we may squander the resources God has given us by doing what is wrong in His eyes.

With this context in mind, let us revisit some of the descriptions of the prodigal son: “... [he] got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth

in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need... but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death' (Luke 15:13-17). Does the prodigal son's desperation sound familiar? We can imagine that fortunately, the younger son was invited to a program of recovery and encouraged to take steps of spiritual restoration. By the grace of God, he began to realize how hopeless and powerless he had become. He came to believe in his father's steadfast love and accepted that his father would restore him as his son, despite the painful consequences of his actions.

Now, let us reflect in detail on how the younger son followed the first two steps. He said: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants" (Luke 15:18-19). Do you remember what he said at the beginning of this account? He asked, "Father, give me my share of the estate" (Luke 15:12). By the end, he said, "Father, make me like one of your hired servants" (Luke 15:19). Did we notice the difference? The arrogant "give me" became the humble "make me." The son turned his will and his life over to the care of his father. He could do this because he realized the unchanging love of his father. Full of compassion, the father "ran into his son, threw his arms around him, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20). He instructed the servants to "bring the best robe and put it on him," "put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet" (Luke 15:22), and he prepared a feast to celebrate his son's restoration. Does this scene sound familiar? What an amazing illustration of spiritual recovery!

Once again, however, we must remember that surrendering ourselves to God is not always easy. It can be challenging to turn our wills and our lives over to His care if we do not understand the first two principles of recovery. Without admitting our helplessness and hopelessness, and without believing in a supreme power, we cannot "consciously choose to commit all our lives and wills to Christ's care and control." So the question for us this morning is: How can we make this committed decision? Today, Jesus says in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). In the original language of the Bible, the word translated as meekness does not simply mean "mildness, gentleness, or humility." It also carries the idea of "strength under control." The phrase "inherit the earth" refers to receiving blessings both on earth and in heaven.

To understand this Beatitude more fully, we need to consider the context of the people of Israel in Jesus' day. They were expecting a Messiah with strong, militaristic, political power, someone who could deliver them from the Roman Empire. So when Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek," they were likely confused or even disappointed. They did not want a meek savior. In the same way, this sacred principle often contrasts sharply with the value of our world today. Society rarely calls us to desire meekness. Instead, we are encouraged to be aggressive or competitive in pursuit of what we want—whether it be possessions, pleasure, popularity, or power. But this morning, Jesus calls us, His followers, to a different lifestyle: meekness. And as I mentioned earlier, meekness is not something that comes naturally to most of us. So how do we attain it?

The spirit of meekness is embodied in Jesus Himself, the pioneer and author of our faith. We must learn it from Him. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus invites us: "Come to me, all

of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart..." (Matthew 11:28-30). In a way, this is a call to recovery—a call for those of us who need freedom from strongholds or spiritual bondage. What is our impression of this invitation? When we hear the word "yoke," some of us, myself included, might think of it negatively, as if we are being forced under someone's control and losing our freedom. When I first encountered this invitation as a university student, I worried that submitting my will and my life to Jesus would mean I could no longer do what I wanted.

But in Jesus' time, a yoke was a carefully carved wooden crossbar placed over the necks of oxen. It was designed to link two animals together so they could carry a burden in partnership. A yoke also symbolized guidance under a master's care. Typically, a strong, experienced ox would work alongside a younger, inexperienced one. I believe the yoke in this passage symbolizes our relationship with Jesus. Jesus, the master carpenter, made a yoke that is gentle and light. He wants us to take His yoke and learn from Him while continually submitting all aspects of our lives to the care of God, who is in control every day.

Here is how meekness fits with our third choice on the Road to Recovery. First of all, if we are not meek, we cannot recognize our brokenness. If we do not humble ourselves, once again, we cannot fully commit our wills to Jesus Christ. Meekness means acknowledging God's Holiness. When we look at ourselves in light of who God is, we are humbled by His righteousness. This takes us back to the first beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." So I ask myself a question: "Who am I?" One answer I might give is this: "I am Caleb Kim. As a sinner, I am not perfect. I experience a constant inward battle—the pull toward good and the pull toward evil. At times, I am fearful. As the apostle Paul writes, 'I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing' (Romans 7:19)." Humility, or meekness, means recognizing ourselves for who we really are. And who we really are is sinners saved by the grace of God. We are no better than anyone else, but we are also no worse than anyone else. So again, I ask myself the same question: "Who am I?" This time, my answer is different: "I am a child of God. I have been adopted and welcomed into His Royal Family because Jesus died for me and rescued me from spiritual bondage." Once we enter a right relationship with God through repentance and faith, we must remember our true identity in Him. Yes, there is a broken side to who we are. But there is also a wonderful and redeemed side.

So as we remind ourselves who we are—both sinners and God's children—we must "consciously choose to commit" all of our lives to His care and control again and again. This is a choice we must make every single day. Sometimes we hear people say, "I chose God at a certain time in my life." In one sense, that is true. There may be moments—powerful "aha" moments—when we encounter God and accept Him as our Lord and Master. At the same time, however, we must remember that this decision is not a one-time event. It is a continuing determination. That is why our walk with God is often described as a divine journey. Every moment, we face choices. We must choose God's agenda over our own sinful agenda. The Bible says: "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to

righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). In other words, whatever we choose to obey becomes our master. Whenever we choose our own way instead of God’s way, we become enslaved to sin. That is why the Bible clearly says: “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other” (Matthew 6:24). In other words, we cannot love both God and something else at the same time.

God calls us to total commitment. Jesus emphasized this in the Greatest Commandment when He said: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Did you notice the key word in that verse? The word is “all.” And “all” means “everything.” This is one of the most critical aspects of the choice we must make—as followers of Christ and as people seeking recovery. Choosing commitment to Jesus means loving our Master with our whole being. The Lord our God wants everything. One reason many of us remain stuck in our hurts, habits, and hang-ups is that Jesus occupies only one part of our lives. We might say things like.. But as followers of Christ, we are called to live one united life for God. It is not enough to give Christ just a place in our hearts. Every part of our hearts must belong to Him. God calls us to love Him with our whole being—with all our emotions, all our passion, all our understanding, and all our strength. He calls us to give not ninety-nine percent, but one hundred percent. Why? Because God first loved us. While we were still sinners, He sent His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross for us. He accepted us just as we are. This is the third choice we are talking about today: to commit all our lives and our wills to Christ’s care and control. This commitment is a crucial part of the Road to Recovery. We must make this decision daily—twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, twelve months a year. Every day. All the time. Over and over again, we must make the choice. It is our choice. And this choice is central to Life’s Healing Choices.

Perhaps some of us may ask, “Does Jesus really understand the trials and temptations we are going through?” We need to remember that Jesus was no stranger to the struggles of life. According to the Bible, “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin (Hebrews 4:14-15). That is why we can “approach God’s throne of grace with confidence,” at any time, “so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). In one way or another, we are all burdened every day by spiritual struggles or weaknesses of the flesh that we cannot control with our own willpower. Jesus knows all about our frustrations because He “took up our pain and bore our suffering” on the cross (Isaiah 53:4). Today, Jesus wants each of us to have a more intimate, authentic, and real relationship with Him. He wants us to submit everything under Christ’s care and control. When we surrender all our wills and lives to Jesus, we can rest and receive His blessings: “Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Some of us may say, “Caleb, I have done that before. However, it didn’t last. I’ve experienced the same struggles over and over again.” To those of us, including myself, I would say: “That is okay. You have made a good decision, and you have done a great job in your efforts to overcome your strongholds—again and again.” I am reminded of an

inspirational quotation from Michael Jordan, one of the greatest basketball players of all time. He achieved six NBA championships with the Chicago Bulls and received six Finals MVP awards. He said... Michael did not consider those missing shots, lost opportunities, and defeated games as failures. Instead, he turned all of these experiences into steppingstones for his success. I would confidently say to us, myself included, that the efforts and determination we have put into addressing the broken areas of our lives—or even the brokenness in the lives of our loved ones—have already laid a foundation for spiritual recovery, whether we realize it or not. Right now, some of us may have gone little sideways in our relationship with God... Once again, our merciful and mighty Lord understands us.

This morning, God is asking all of us to recommit our wills and our lives to His care and control. But to make this commitment, we must be meek. We must be humble. We must humble ourselves, drop our pride, and say, “Lord, my way is not working.” When we humbly repent of our mistakes, failures, and shortcomings, God not only forgives us but also reveals Himself through His presence, protection, and provision in our ongoing spiritual recovery. God delights in our sincere effort to journey with Him. He is also pleased to provide His blessings—not only here on earth but also in His presence in Heaven—when we are called to be with Him.

So the final questions for us this morning are these: Will we follow our own way or God’s holy way? Will we commit all of our lives and wills to the care and control of Christ? Will we choose to give everything to the Might and Merciful God who not only created us but who loves us enough to transform us, guiding us with the Holy Spirit through our continued spiritual recovery?

**In preparing this sermon series, I have drawn on materials and insights from various ministers, particularly those related to the Twelve Steps of A.A. as well as the “Life’s Healing Choices” series prepared by Rick Warren and his team.*