

You are listening to a sermon preached at University Presbyterian Church in Seattle Washington. For more information please visit our website upc.org

Last week I had the privilege of preaching on New Year's Day and we preached on four great words that describe our relationship with Jesus Christ. Faith, love, hope and joy, today two more words and they come from our lord Jesus Christ and we have the chance today to hear two more great words that describe our relationship to with Jesus Christ. Let's pray first.

Heavenly father may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, all our strengths and our redeemer. Amen.

In Mathew the 11th chapter Jesus gives an invitation to us and uh... is one of the very best from our Lord. "Come on to me all ye who are weary and our caring heavy burdens and I will give you..." now the word here is pause, they are seized a rest is actually a stopping place is the word stop actually in Greek and it's the stopping place I'll give you a space, a pause." "Take my yolk upon you and learn from me" he invites us in this pause to join with him and to walk with him, "To take my yolk upon you, learn from me for I am gentle" this word the word calm I am calm, I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. And then in the last line for my yolk is easy and my burden is light, take my yolk upon you. You know our Lord and telling these thirty years old was a carpenter and I've often wondered what sort of carpentry he did. I mean I've seen religious art that has Jesus making cabinets like the Amish or something like that and even in the original movie of Ben Hur when they had a scene of Jesus technically a carpenter in saffaro where he lived near the Parnian and they had the hammering and sawing and he was making a carpet, he was making cabinets. But the most important thing a carpenter would do is especially in saffaro where he lived which is animal country; its agricultural area is he would make yolks. A carpenter would make yolks, yolks for animals and that is a tremendously impressive skill to make a yolk that fits well, and especially if you're making two yolks for two animals that are going to pull load together they have to be perfectly balanced it's almost like having my ski boot it has to be perfectly fit to your foot, perfectly same thing in Mount Neri perfectly fit so you're not even aware that you're wearing it. And the yolk has got to be that way it's got the fit perfectly. I think Jesus as a carpenter made yolks and now we get his... our Lord actually bragging about it, he says "take my yolk upon you and re join with me with my yolk." And at the very end he puts in the P.S. "my yolk is smooth" the word is smooth there it fits well "my yolk fits well and it's like you won't even be aware you have it on, it's like its well made." And so our Lord makes this amazing promise to a commonly all you who labor, last week we looked at the labor of love the hard work of love. "Are you worn out? Come to me all you who labor with heavy burdens and worn out and I will give you pause I'll give you space "I like that it's not so much an evangelistic sentences it is a sentence before the evangelistic sentence. I'll give you space, pause. "Take my yolk upon you learn from me and then two words I am calm and I am humble". They're the two words two more words and he gives them they mean a great deal to our Lord and he advocates for us.

First the word "calm" this interesting word prows is used in claspell Greek almost exclusively with regard to animals is the word used for a wild animal that is strong maybe even fierce that

can be calm so that they can be trained. As you know horse is a fierce and wild animal and it can be calmed it can be calmed to the point where it becomes teachable where it becomes trainable and that is the word that is also translated in New Testament "meek". Here its translated gentle and the RSV means calm, meek is the word is used mostly in the new testament and that is a matter of fact our Lord loved this word "meek" he loved it doesn't mean weak it means trainable it means teachable that's not weak. A horse a very powerful wild or fierce horse when it's calmed to where it can be trained it becomes a stronger horse than it was before, if he becomes a greater horse because he's under training and knows how to handle various obstacles and that's how they're trained especially in the time of the new testament time before when Alexander the Great that they would have horses they would be trained for battle and trained for running and cross bridges or running over various barriers and not panicking. So they are trained horse teachable is the word. Did you know the third beatitude, Jesus has these amazing Bi-attitudes and the blessings and they each have a reward, "Blessed are the poor in spirit and blessed are the peace makers they should be called the children of God". The third beatitude "blessed are the meek" is his word "blessed are the teachable ones" and you know what the reward is for the teachable ones the third beatitude "blessed are the meek". Hold your breath now folks, they shall inherit the earth. You want to know about Global warming is the people who study about global warming who study about things and know they will conquer, we will be able to conquer by knowing and growing and learning . When I first came to Seattle in 1956 late Washington they called it a "Doomed lake" because cities around lake Washington were putting in treated sewage into this lake and creating its algae level. And students in the University of Washington the school of public health at the University of Washington all kinds of environmental groups worked at the lake Washington, and by that time I left in 1964 when I came back as Senior Pastor here in 1991 lake Washington the water was pure. You can take it with your hand and drink at lake Washington, you couldn't in 1956 you could see the algae in the lake they were comparing it to lake Erie and they said it would be a condemn lake but it wasn't because we learn how, we became teachable on how to clean up the lake. Wow! And that is the word that our Lord glistened to the third beatitude and he gives it down "come on to me all you who labor and your heavy laden your heavy burden, I'll give you pause. Yolk with me learn from me I am first teachable I am able to listen to you I'm able to auhh... I'm calm and I am humble." Humble is the same word as lowly, I'm humble. And Jesus uses that word and use it to deceitfully not only here but in other parts of the new testament as well. In Mathew 23 as a matter of fact, he says that in very amazing passage "the greatest among you will be your servant and all the who exalt themselves will be humbled and all who humble themselves will be exalted" he honors humility he practiced it himself. So these two great virtues are given to aspire Lord, humility and meekness. So never say meek and mild, say meek and strong and meek and humble, meek and lowly, lowly and meek. You have to be lowly you have to be humble along with teachable and those two great virtues are given by Christ to us. But you know like all virtues we tend to get restless and sometimes we tend to resist these very virtues that our Lord hear himself is ad equating to us and we resist them. And the sinner seem just a few chapters later in Mathew now move to Mathew 20, there is.. that is the eve of palm Sunday that is just before the entering to the city and there's already a steering among the people the popularity of Jesus is at peak it will be demonstrated on palm Sunday when people will crowd these how and will praise Christ as he enters the city but the very odd and awkward event happens on the eve of palm Sunday, and it's in Mathew 20. It says listen to it "the mother of the son's of Zebedee that would be Salome who is the sister of Mary the mother of our Lord which means this woman Salome the mother of James and John the

youngest of the disciples she is also the aunt of Jesus, so she is Jesus aunt she's also a very ambitious mother for her two boys. So every ambitious parent should listen to this text so the mother of the son's of Zebedee came to him with her sons and kneeling before Jesus she asked a favor of him and he said to her "what do you want" she said "declare" now it's interesting she has to say "I would like to consider my two are so marvelous" instead of appoint she uses strong word "declare that these two sons of mine will sit one at your right hand and the other at your left" in other words they will reign of course this is a little bit awkward because Peter is the one that has been served at the right hand of Jesus as his number one disciple but the mother is ambitious so she said ;I want you to declare that these two son's of mine will sit one at your right hand and the other in your left in your kingdom. Now it's interesting how our Lord handles it. Jesus answers "you do not know what you're asking, are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink" and they said to him "we are able" they're very brave young man, impetuous but brave. And he is or I think they are at that point and he said to them and its interesting he doesn't rebuke them like he did with Peter said before the cock froze you'll deny me three times, he doesn't say that. When Peter was so proud that the fact that he would never fail Jesus but it's strange is this is very tender he says "you will indeed drink my cup but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant but it is for those for whom it is been prepared by my father and after this you might expect the rest of the disciples were not happy here' listen to this when the ten heard it they were angry with the two brothers, actually its stronger word is used they were outraged at the two brothers but Jesus called them to him. And now listen to his teaching it's almost like the text in Mathew 11 "are you weary heavy heavy lately come to me I'll give you pause, learn from me I am calm I am teachable I am meek and I am lowly" and so he said to him " you know how the rulers the gentiles lorded over them and their great ones are tyrants" you know that is an interesting word as the word as the word "cata" down with the word curare means lord "to lord down" and then he use another one exclusive which a word for executive, cata exclusive down is the word for type tirody. And he says you know that they love to play the role of the tyrants, power downward so he says you know that and that way is in the Roman world and they're not surprised they've seen the Roman governor they've seen Herod whose the king and put him in place by the...by Julius Caesar actually the Romans put Herod in place. So you know that they love to lord it over you their great ones are tyrants over you. But it shall not be that way among you and now we can again teaching on a malice very strong from our l=Lord, it shall not be that way among you whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your servant and now used even the strongest word for servant "slave". Just as the son of man cannot to be served but to served and to give his life now we get servant hood at this most extreme level and can give his life a ransom for many. So Jesus then realizes that there is he's given his good word about humility and he's given the good word about teachableness but we don't always hear it, we don't always want it. And so the mother of James and John a wonderful lady Salome she was there at the cross when our Lord died at the cross, she's a brave woman but she had, she was ambitious and she wanted power for her sons and that's the occasion of this text and a wonderful teaching of our Lord comes out of that occasion. It won't be this way among you we're going to be a servant people, you are going to be a servant people and just as the son of man came not be served but served and the of lay his life down as a ransom for many.

In the book of James, James loves repeat Jesus' teachings especially teachings by the way that is not James the disciple, James the brother of Jesus is the writer of the book of James is the bishop of Jerusalem he is the brother of Jesus and he writes the book of James. And he repeats a great many of things that Jesus says in sermon on the mount and these kind of teaching and once again he picks up the same thing that Jesus gave about lowliness and meekness. But he also recognizes the same thing that happen when Salome came to our Lord and wanted her sons to be powerful and wanted power and James recognize that and in the first chapter of James he says "I knew about that and I know that you're tempted to want to be powerful". And listen to it James says "when and no one when tempted like this don't ever say that you are being tempted by God, God cannot be tempted and God tempts no one." But one is tempted, now listen to this analysis, we are tempted by our own desires. You know what's interesting he doesn't say that devil tempts you here, later in James he'll tell about the devil's temptation and says just flee from it. But here he is not talking about the devils temptation he's talking about your temptation, my temptation, Salome's temptation she wasn't the devil when she came to to Jesus, she was just an ambitious mother but what she said was wrong, she wanted her sons to be powerful. she didn't want her sons to be servants, she wanted them to be powerful sit at the right and the left side and so notice, now, James picked this up and he says, "when you're tempted, you're tempted by your own and uses the word for desire, but uses a strong form "epi sumo", "sumo" is the word for desire "epi" means run away desire, excessive desire, when its used in a sexual context is called "lust", but when its used in just an ordinary context it means "runaway", excessive desire. You're tempted by your own excessive desire, be lured and enticed by it" and he says that "when it was conceived it has a bad result", in fact he even said that it brings forth death it brings forth, little later he will say it brings forth wars and it causes the wars but it has a bad result and then he says this, "do not be deceived, my beloved by that desire for power, don't be deceived by it." You know the word deceive really fascinates me and that James would use that word right here. It's really what's happening with Salome, she's, there's the deception going on when she thinks that there is a kingdom here they, it's is right for the plucking and because of her special relationship as an aunt she can have the special place for her sons, that's, that's the deception is not going to be the way it is. The Father is the one who is gonna decide and Jesus has to correct her but he does it very tenderly and then uses that as a teaching time to teach about the fact were not going to be the people who are tyrants over, were going to be servants from underneath. You know, people are fascinated with greatness and so, sometimes you will hear someone say about a great person, "ah! That person, how he fills the room when he's in the room. You can't get your eyes off of him". What about a greatness that Jesus is describing now that would be descried this way, "not how does this man, how our Lord fills the room but how Jesus enlarges the room, he enlarges the room, he draws the people in to Him, He draws all you were laboring heavy lately, come to me. He doesn't fill the room with Himself, He enlarges the room an draws us in. so it's interesting isn't it, James says, "there's deception going on, i have to do what i promise the last word study, i have to do one more word study for you. from the ancient Greek, the word for deceive is used several times in the new testament is the word "exapatao" is the word for deceive and i have to give you a lesson in first century astronomy in order to explain that word, the first century astronomers had it wrong until they got it corrected when sir Edward was realized that the sun did not go around, it looks like it goes around the earth because it comes up in the morning and it goes down the evening and so we have it wrong and has it wrong all the way until Copernicus corrected that, that the sun is not going around the earth, we're going around the sun so that it's a minor difficulty, but at, you have to in for weeks tend to mock the early astronomers

because that have that bad information but they got some things right and that i when they look into the sky, they saw there where 2 kinds of celestial bodies, they where the bodies up there that twinkle, they called those a star and the word star comes to that twinklers, they twinkle. they stay put they never moved around, like the big dipper, when you look at the end of the big dipper you could find the north star and if you're above the equator where everyone above the equator you can find the north star with this extend and it'll, believe me it'll keep you on the right path if you're at sea or if you're in a desert trying to find your way between north, south, west and east. That's, they called those a star, the twinkling ones, but they saw that there were other stars that didn't twinkle and they moved all the time, and they named those, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, they gave them wonderful names, names of Greek gods. But they always moved and therefor they gave another word for them, planet, planet, they are the deceivers, they are deceiving stars they make you, they, you think they're stars but they don't twinkle because they are reflecting light from the sun. So they don't twinkle, they are planet, they are wonderful, they are marvelous, they write songs about them an you have a lot of fun with Venus and Mars and the way the move all over the place but don't set your sextant to Venus if you're at sea. They all say to set your sextant to Mars, the god of war, Venus the god of love, don't set your sextant to that. it will lead you astray, you know the word "plano" means literally "wanderers" they are wanderers and therefore deceivers, they're deceiving you they look like stars but they are not stars. And it's interesting that that's the word James uses here and its interesting isn't it that when we, when we choose a planet to live by, this moving planet Jupiter, you name it and moves around, it is very powerful, it's very contagious, it's very exciting, but it's not a star and listen to what James go on to say after he says, "don't be deceived, every generous act of giving of every perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of light!" not in all those twinkling light not reflected light, and with him there is no variations, see he knows, plano means that they're things that are moving around all the time so don't plant, don't when... Ralph Waldo Emerson said in a commencement address at Harvard, "hit your wagon to a star" he said to the graduates of Harvard and people have a lot of fun with that ever since, "be careful you don't hit your wagon to Venus, don't hit your wagon to Mars, hit your wagon, if your gonna hitch it to the north star, it will stay put. it is truth, the others are deceivers." so he says, "the father of light with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change in fulfillment of his own purpose that he gave us the birth, gave us birth by the word of truths so that we should become a kind of first fruits of his creatures, wonderful." that's from James and then he even goes on and gives an ethical, implication of this, "you should understand this my beloved let everyone be cryptalisted, slow to speak, slow to anger for your anger does not produce God's righteousness, therefore rid yourself of all sortedness and ranked growth of wickedness and welcome with, now here's the big word, meekness with teachableness the implanted word that has a power to save our souls. and by the way i love the King James bible, don't you? And every now and then the King James bible has the best translation of a text. I just read this rather grim translation of the text first 21 from the RSB this here, pew bible, is not wrong, believe me, it's not wrong but it's very grim listen to it. Therefore read yourself of all sortedness and ranks grows of wickedness and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save our souls, your souls. You know how the king James puts it, okay, get ready. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and super fluidly of naughtiness,I like that better I think kids like that better too. It's better to cope with naughtiness than sortedness". Okay I'll read it again, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and super fluidy of naughtiness and receive with meekness" there's the great word "the engrafted word which is able to save your soul. Jesus has two virtues for us folks and for our lives in 2017 I think they're good words, add them to the list

from last week, “the work of faith”, the labor of love”. The Uppomano the hanging in there of hope, and the surprising joy that turns up, often when you least expected and humility and meekness. Those are six words for us today.

Heavenly father thank you for these words, than you for humility, how we respected in others but how we resist it in for ourselves so Lord help us not to resist it but to welcome it and to welcome teachableness. Lord we thank you for that these words that Jesus gives us and faith, hope, love and best of all joy. In his name we pray. Amen.