

Kingdom 101: Salt and Light

May 17, 2009

Matthew 5:13-16

Explain Crosley Tours
Pray for Dan, Jay, Tim & Emily

- Last week Tim took us into The Sermon on the Mount
- This entire teaching can be found in Matthew 5-7 and if you have a red letter bible which means the words in red are attributed directly to Jesus, His Words, this section is almost entirely in red.
- Jesus' ministry is just getting started and crowds have begun to follow him...wherever he went.
- Understand this, that these crowds are not christian, they are either Jewish or gentile (although very few gentiles would have followed at this point)
- The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is to express to them that they cannot fulfill their obligation to the law, that cannot and will not, be saved by the law.
- The very first beatitude expresses this very fact, that you are blessed if you are broken or poor in spirit and realize your need for Him!
- The hardest part about today...as we talk specifically about being the salt of the earth and the light of the world is the that entire Sermon on the Mount, rather than being encouraging, showing us how to live, more often than not, simply shows us how we've failed.
- After being told we are salt and light...
 - ...our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees
 - ...getting angry with someone is likened to murder
 - ...lusting is likened to adultery
 - ...divorce, breaking promises, revenge, loving our enemies
- This is a huge checklist for those who would choose to follow Him that confirms that we are failures
- The Sermon on the Mount does 2 things:
 - It tells us that we NEED JESUS!
 - It gives us our targets for life that will help us to be the salt of the earth and light of the world.

Let's begin today in 5:11,

11) "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers.

- He changes his teaching and directs it to them...
 - Blessed are *those*
 - God blesses *you!*
- Underline or circle "you"
- The result of living out the beatitudes isn't that the world will love you for what a good person you are...in fact...it's the opposite
- When you are meek, or humble, or choose to do right, when you are merciful or pure...the world sees it as weakness...our blessings don't come from this world...God blesses us!
- Our typical response to this is to become less meek, less humble and take matters into our own hands...Jesus isn't telling us to be the world's doormat, but how you deal with people will say something about who you are!

12) Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

- Be happy about it...Acts 5:38-42
- You are not alone...Jesus himself told the disciples...John 15:18-19

13) "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

- YOU are the Salt of the Earth:
- Salt penetrates, it is not something you see, but you can taste it, you can see the results of salt, but not necessarily the salt itself.
- Salt is more internal...
- These teachings throughout the SOTM that deal with your heart, spirit and soul. Who you are on the inside will make it's way to the external...to the outside...what you do and what you say.
- So much of what the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees and scribes, teachers of the law, so of what they did simply was outside show, lacking the inside presence.
- I struggle with this, putting on a good facade, when internally I'm struggling with sin, struggling with my faith...that fight that takes place between my spiritual nature and my sin nature. When we allow our "sin nature" to whoop us...we lose our flavor!
- The word for "lost it's flavor" is "mōrainō" (mo-rah'ee-no)...it is actually where we get our word "moron" from...it means simpleton, meaning nothing, having not affect on this life whatsoever!
- I have another phrase for it... "pew-warmer"
- If all you do is come to church, sit in a pew and then go back to your life, having no effect on the world around you, no input for your family, no flavor to your neighborhood, you are not distinct in how you live and who you are...you add nothing good to this world...what good are you!?

14) “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.

- Light of the World was a title that was given to the most eminent rabbis...whose teachings were enlightened, leading people down the proper paths

- Jesus declares this, and rightfully so, of himself.

- John 8:12, *“Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”*

- John 9:5, *“But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

- John 12:35-36, *“Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.”*

- “light of the world” - is external...it is what the world sees from you, hears from you!

- Many of the cities in Judea were built on top of hills (including Jerusalem), so that they would be seen by those coming to do business or to visit family...also so they could see others coming.

- The hard reality is that all of us can shine at times and all of us grow dim!

- Miss California, from the moment she took her stand...

- She hasn’t done everything right in her life (none of us have)

- The media and masses are on the prowl and attacking

- This goes for you and I! If we are going to shine...we will also have to deal with the truth that we have failed at times. We have to deal with those honestly.

- It’s not if you fail, when you fail or how you have failed...it’s simple...you have failed. Don’t hide that. Don’t deny it. Embrace it! Knowing that you NEED HIM!

15) No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16) In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

- Jesus teaches that your light must be used to give everyone light! For all to see!

- Your good deeds are to shine out for all to see...why?

- so people will pat you on the back and say “Great job!”

- so you will get a thank you card in the mail?

- so you will look good and people will say nice things about you?

NONE OF THESE!! We do good works, because it is God who is good, it is God who is the source of light, it is God, who our lives are reflecting and it is God who gets the Glory and the Praise!

What is Jesus saying...

#1) Christians are different from non-Christians

- This isn't a slam on those who don't have Jesus in their lives, this is an imperative on those who claim to have Jesus in their lives!
- Radically different - if you have co-workers or friends who you've known for months or even years come to you and say, "oh...I didn't know you were a Christian" something is very wrong with you and your faith, you have become unsalty, you've lost your flavor!

#2) Christians must impact the world around them

- We cannot hide in the church, we must impact the world around us.
- Last week we had a couple of our Pastors, several volunteers that took church to our community.
- It why we are seeking to streamline the ministries of our church...there are great ideas on what we can do here at church, this class, that class, this program, that program...there needs to be healthy times of worship, growing and being fed as Christians, then we must be integrated or we must penetrate the world around us!
- If you look throughout history, many of the greatest social reforms have taken place because Christians had a strong influence.
- This depends on #1...if you don't look and act different...
- At Catalyst last week... best worker, neighbor, coach, little league parent...
- We can't create a perfect society in a fallen world, but we can show what others can have in Christ and how Jesus has changed us!

#3) We must retain our flavor, we must continue to shine

- We do that by continually remember God in worship!
- Can YOU make it salty again...the question is, can God?
- The rest of the Sermon on the Mount is devoted to showing you how to keep your flavor, how to continue to shine for God
- As you go into this world...a word of caution: 1 John 5:21
- Here is your homework: Read 1 John, one more snippet 2:15-17

Jesus is telling his followers that life is different with him! Your life is different, so different that it must, IT MUST, have and effect and impact on the world around you! If we allow Jesus to change us inside and out, we will be the salt of the earth and the light of the world!