

"The Sermon on the Mount"

Salt and Light

Part 2

Matthew 5:13-16

Introduction: Last week in our study of the Sermon on the Mount we started to look at verse 13-16 where Jesus applied 2 titles to His disciples. In this text He called them "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world". Both titles have very important meanings and within the titles there is placed upon the disciples a great accountability.

Now we also looked last week about how Jesus changed the pronouns in the sermon from "they" to "ye". The wording in verses 13-16 seems to be directed specifically at His disciples but we must at the same time remember that the titles given to those men also apply to every one of us that know Jesus as our Savior.

Last week we looked only at the first title given to His disciples and that is found in verse 13 where He told them they were the "salt of the earth". Salt was used in Jesus' day for many purposes but I believe there are 3 main ideas that Jesus had in mind here.

1. **Salt preserves** - In Jesus' day there were no refrigerators or freezers therefore the people had to use salt to keep food from spoiling. Salt will actually stop the growth of bacteria. In the same way the disciples were to allow themselves to be used by God as a preservative. Where ever God would place them they were to stand true to the doctrines of the Word of God. By doing this they would be used by God as a preservative.

Application: The same thought applies to our lives as well. Where ever God places you and me we must never cease to speak the Truth of God's Word. We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God and when we do He is then able to pour us out like salt in the areas that are in danger of being overcome with spiritual bacteria.

2. **Salt creates a thirst** - We all know that when salt is applied to our food that it causes us to be thirsty. When Jesus disciples were given the title of the "salt of the earth" they were given the responsibility of living their lives in a way that God could use them to create a thirst for the "Living Water" in the lives of those they came in contact with.

Application: The same applies to you and me as we pass through this world. We are to live our lives in a way that others see Christ within us. They are to see the hope we have within our hearts and that will put within them a thirst for the "Living Water" that is within us.

1 Peter 3:14-16

¹⁴ But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

¹⁶ Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

Colossians 4:6

Wednesday September 26, 2012

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Jesus went on in Matthew 5:13 and told His disciples that if the salt has lost its savour it is good for nothing. The idea is that is the disciples stopped being "salt" and if we stop being "salt" then our lives will not count for eternity.

Before we leave the statement Jesus made about the salt there is something else that I think is worthy of mention. Keep in mind that Jesus was speaking to men that would suffer greatly for His name. Therefore the title of "salt of the earth" would give to them much needed encouragement when the suffering came. Let me give to you 2 points of encouragement for these men:

- a. These men would be treated with great contempt in the world and would be viewed as worthless in the eyes of many people. But when these treatments came they could cling to the Words of Jesus and know that they had a great purpose no matter what the world said about them.
- b. Salt is crushed and often scattered about and the same would true of these men. They also would be crushed and ground as fine as salt under the persecution and they would be scattered far from one another at times but they could never forget they were of great value and usefulness no matter where they found themselves to be scattered. Without salt life cannot be sustained. They needed to remember they were a great blessing to the rest of the world no matter how small they seemed to be. Salt is such a small mineral when crushed but the world cannot live without it.

I. Believers as the light of the world.

Notice Matthew 5:14a

When I read this verse the first thing I notice is that the world we live in is in darkness. Jesus does not say His disciples are the light of the darkness He tells them they are the light of the world. Therefore we can conclude that the world we are in is deep into darkness.

Ephesians 6:12

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Now when used in a physical darkness a light does 3 things.

1. It exposes that which lives in the darkness.
2. It lights the way out of the darkness.
3. It gives hope to those who are lost in the darkness.

These were the very things that Jesus disciples were to be doing while they were in the world and these are the very things we are to be doing while we are in this world.

Ephesians 5:8

⁸ For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Philippians 2:15

Wednesday September 26, 2012

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

We also are to:

- 1. Live so that our lives are used by God to expose the deeds that are done in darkness.**

When we go out into the world we are to live separate from the world.

2 Corinthians 6:14

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

As we live in the world and we live in obedience to God's Word then our lifestyles are used by God to expose the deeds of darkness in the lives of others.

- 2. Live so that our light will guide others from the darkness of this world.**

This is done as we live to glorify God with our lives and others are then able to see Christ in our lives. This is a life lived so that others can see the joy that is within our hearts. When they see our joy it grasps their attention and causes them to desire to possess what we have. This light is seen in what we say and how we live.

- 3. Live in a way that we give hope to others.**

How can we live in a way that others can get hope from us? This is done by staying in touch with those we have contact with. We live in a world

Wednesday September 26, 2012

where people have many questions and they are looking for answers. We live in a world of people that are hurting. When we stay sensitive to their needs and we are willing to take the time to listen to them and share with them the Gospel we are then giving to them hope in the midst of a dark world. We are actually allowing them to see Jesus in us. We need to be reminded that there is nothing in this world as important as souls. There should be nothing that takes the place of time with a person that is hurting and looking for answers.

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Notice Matthew 5:14b-15

Here in these verses Jesus used 2 practical pictures to show the significance of these men that would be His disciples and at the same time these practical pictures show us the seriousness of our service here on this earth.

1. City on a Hill (5:14a)

Jesus here makes a reference to a city that is built on a hill and how it cannot be hidden. Now I believe that Jesus had far more in mind than just a city on a hill.

In the Old Testament there was what was known as "Cities of Refuge". There were six of these cities and they were for the purpose of saving the lives of those who had accidentally taken someone's life. If you lived back then and you were working with an axe and the axe head came off

and hit someone next to you and killed them you would need to flee to one of the 6 cities. The reason you would need to flee was because someone in the family of the person you killed would take on the position as the "avenger of blood" and he had the right to hunt you down. But once you entered into the City of Refuge you were safe. These cities were established in Joshua.

Joshua 20:1-9

The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying,

² Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses:

³ That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

⁴ And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

⁵ And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

⁶ And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

⁷ And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

Wednesday September 26, 2012

⁸ *And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.*

⁹ *These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.*

I want you to notice that every one of these cities was built on a hill.

I believe this was in the mind of Jesus when He spoke the words of Matthew 5:14a-15. The "Cities of Refuge" were able to be seen far off and they contained the way of escape for the person facing death.

Jesus disciples were like the "Cities of Refuge" in that they carried the message within them that could free people from the one who sought to take their lives (Satan). Just as those cities were so important to the Old Testament people so were the disciples to the people of their day and so are we to the people of our day. There are people today that are only a step away from death and we have the message of salvation within our hearts. We are to be people they can come to and hear that message.

2. A Candle in a House (5:15)

Here Jesus uses the picture of a candle in a house. The candle was not to be covered but it was to be set in the open where it could give light to all that were in the house.

Wednesday September 26, 2012

This was a picture of how Jesus disciples were to be a light to all they came in contact with. The idea is that there would not be a time when they could blend in with the darkness.

Consider what Peter said to the believers under the persecution of Nero:

1 Peter 4:14-16

¹⁴ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

¹⁶ Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

In our walk there should never be a time when we blend into the darkness either. Regardless of how we are treated we are to shine as God's lights in this dark world.

Conclusion:

Notice Matthew 5:16

We see 2 main points here:

- 1. We see how our light must shine. - It is through our good works.**

Ephesians 2:10

Wednesday September 26, 2012

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

2. We see that which should be the end of our works. - That God would be glorified.