

2.7.21
Matthew 5:13-16
God Shines Through You

So this morning we are going to move on from the Beatitudes which are verses 3-12 of Matthew 5.

Throughout out this teaching Jesus tells us how blessed we are as His disciples. Through your humility, hunger, mercy, purity and peacemaking, you have shown yourself to be a true discipleship. You have also experienced a certain amount of persecution but you are blessed by it. We know all the blessings and all the ability to function as His disciple comes from the power and His presence He places in us.

Now Jesus moves into a teachings where He tells His disciples that they are the salt and the light of the world. As you look at your Bibles you might see a heading that says something like this. Salt & Light, or Believers are salt and light. The heading in my Bible says Disciples and the world.

However your title is stated I believe Jesus is explaining to His disciples what their relationship to the world is to be like.

Here is where we find a question.

1. What effect do believers/disciples of Jesus have on the world around them?

Let's begin to answer that question by reading our passage this morning.

Matthew 5:13-16, "You are the salt of the earth but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Let's begin by looking at the first part of this verse. “You are the salt of the earth but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.”

We know Jesus is first referring to the disciples He was in front of but He is also talking about His disciples that come after and who are in the world today, meaning you and me.

We, as Jesus' disciples, are the salt of the world.

As we think about this

2. What are the two main functions of salt? Preservative Taste

I read this statement. **What is good in the world, Jesus' disciples seek to keep wholesome. What is corrupt in society, they oppose.**

In other words, disciples act as a preserving agent in the world. They act as a constraining agent on immorality. They speak against what is wrong and they champion the cause of what is right.

Can you imagine for a moment if there were no Christians in this nation today? The influence the church of Jesus Christ has had on this nation is tremendous. Even though we have seen the impact of the church begin to slide, we are still a lot, lot better off if there had been no church to stem the tide of immorality.

Like salt in food, you know if the church is there or not. The church, like salt, has a major impact and flavoring when it's there. It preserves Godly standards and flavors everything it touches. It is the restraining factor of sin. The church's saltiness bridles the flow of pure human nature which is bent on self destructive behavior.

John Macarthur said that God has placed three entities in the world to restrain sin. Law enforcement through the government, the family and the church.

Now, we know that there is great value for having our peacekeeping police officers in place. Pretty ridiculous to de-fund police in my thinking. I am glad they are there. We also recognize the value of the family. But the church, the church has the great opportunity and responsibility of influencing both the government and the family.

How does the church do this? How does the church become the greatest influencing agent? Some may say by our service. How we become involved in our communities. Some may say it is by making our message political. Some may say by protesting. We have seen all these things occur recently haven't we?

But Jesus didn't command any of these. How did He teach us to influence the world, to be the salt of the world?

Let's start by having an example. I am going to say a brand or popular trademark and I want you to answer the thing they are most known for. Starbucks...coffee

Toyota...cars

Rolex...watches

And my favorite...Krispy Kreme...doughnuts.

How about this one...The church. What is one word that describes the church? Doing what Jesus asked us to do right? Let's look at what Jesus commanded the church to do.

Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

In one word the church’s purpose can be described as disciples.

Krispy Kreme’s mission is to make the best doughnuts. Starbucks mission is to make the best coffee. The church’s mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. That is what the church does.

We can’t abandon this mission regardless of what is occurring around us. Salt is salty. The church makes disciples.

3. Making disciples is what increases the church of Jesus Christ’s saltiness and the influence it has on the world around them.

PAUSE

Here’s a question that Jesus asks in **Matthew 5:13**, “...if the salt has become tasteless (lost it’s saltiness) how can it be made salty again. It is not longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.”

When the church has abandoned its mission of making disciples for other missions or no mission at all, it is no longer any good. It has lost its ability to be an influencing factor. Jesus said you might as well throw it out.

When the church loses its focus and begins to look outward at all the issues and problems of the culture around them it can begin to blame the culture. But maybe the culture’s problem is the result of a church who has lost its mission and is no longer the salt of the world.

If we are going to see a change in the nation and world, it begins by the church getting back to what it is called to do and that is to make disciples.

Look at this familiar verse in Ephesians. **Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”**

The good works that we have been prepared before hand for us to do. You can plug in a lot of things, some of them good, but they all pale in power and comparison to the work of making disciples.

Our prayer is for us and all the churches of this great nation and world is to get back to its mission and that is making disciples of Jesus Christ. It is then we become once again the salt, the influencing agent of the world.

Now Jesus moves on from being the salt to another example of what His church is. Look back with me at verses 14-16.

Matthew 5:14-16, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand,, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine Let it
shine, Let it shine, Let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? No! I'm gonna let
it shine

Don't let Satan (whoof) it out, I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine.

Jesus is sending His disciples out to be the salt but He is also sending them out to be the light.

You are the light of the world and a city on a hill cannot be hidden Jesus says. When you think about this statement it is incredible to understand that due to following Jesus, He has lifted you up, placed you on a stand, a prominent position where the light of Christ in you can shine for all the world to see.

What a honor Amen? And also what a responsibility too amen?

By us being the light of the world this implies that the world is what? Dark right? The world is a dark meaning a sinful place. The world has some physically beautiful spots. In couple of weeks Michal and I are going to take a break and we are heading to Hawaii. We had a trip to Scotland planned last year but had to cancel it so we had tickets that had to be used. The cost of going to Hawaii is pretty low right now so we decided to go and check it out. I have heard that it is one of the most beautiful spots in the world. We are looking forward to it.

But scriptures teach us that

4. The world we live in is a dark place.

Let's look at a couple of scriptures.

Ephesians 2:1-3, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

1 John 5:19, “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one.*”

Ephesians 6:12-13, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”

This is the world we live in and it is becoming more and more evident each day.

5. The world is becoming darker but Jesus is telling His disciples to go and be the light in the world

To be the light in the world is not hard to figure out. It is challenging at times to be sure but the way of a light bearer is plain.

Jesus said this in **John 8:12, “Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the Light of the world; they who follow Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of Life.’”**

The Light of Life...that’s Jesus.

Jesus is the Light. His words are the Light. His works are the Light.

6. What makes Christians the lights of the world? It is having the words of Jesus in us and having the works of Jesus occur through us

Our words and our works make us stand out as the light in a dark world. You can't hide it when a Christian is operating in the light. The believer shines and it is evident to the world they are shining. God places them up on a pedestal. Let's read this passage again.

Matthew 5:14-15, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house."

I am sure you have noticed that in most room in a home the light is placed in the ceiling in the center of the room. Why is that? The light is placed there so it has the greatest opportunity to shine its light into every nook and cranny of the room, dispelling all the darkness.

The same is true of your life. You have been strategically placed within your family, your job, your neighborhood, your social media contacts so the light of Christ can shine and dispel the darkness around them and in them as much as possible.

God didn't place the light of His Son in you so you could be placed under a basket where no one could see the light, enjoy the light and be comforted by the light. And God didn't put a dimmer switch on you either did He?

Verse 16 says this. **"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."**

How is change going to happen in the world? How is the Kingdom of God going to permeate and influence the world for good? It is by each of us being the salt and light of the world and through this the world will be attracted to God and to the salvation He is offering through His Son

Jesus. When this occurs then you, and we, as the church, have the great opportunity to help these individuals become fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray

This morning, if you have not had the opportunity to come into a relationship with Jesus Christ or if you feel like you have drifted. Your saltiness has waned and your light has been put under a basket, we encourage you to stay after the service, come up here and either myself, my wife or another will take you aside and pray with you.

If you have any need for prayer we encourage you to stay after service and let us pray for you and with you.