

2.14.21
Staying Salty in an Un-Salty World
Matthew 5-7

Today is Valentines Day. There are a lot of different beliefs and legends about the origins of Valentines Day. Most of them have in their story someone named Valentine. One of the main legends tells of a priest around 270 AD who defied the Emperor in Rome.

It seems that the Emperor decided that single males would make better soldiers so he outlawed marriage. A priest name Valentine defied the order by continuing to officiate marriages in secret. When he was found out he was beheaded for his crime.

Another story says different Valentine was in jail and he sent his love interest a note signed your valentine. Whatever the origins of Valentines Day was, we know it today as a day when people celebrate their love interest with notes of affection, chocolate and other gifts.

I want to begin this morning in that same vein, talking about Jesus and His love interest, you. The fact that Jesus died for your sins is without question. You are here this morning or watching because this is something that you have put your trust and faith in, Jesus' love and sacrifice for you.

But Jesus' love for you goes deeper and further than the cross for your eternal salvation. Yes, it is His great desire for you to live with Him in eternity but He also died on the cross so you could be the best you can be during your stay here on earth.

Last week we began the next section of Jesus' sermon on mount as I spoke about being the salt and light in the world. It is a great honor for us to represent the Creator and Savior of the world. In fact, we don't just represent Jesus and God, we actually can present God and Jesus to people as God and Jesus live in us.

In the first part of Jesus' sermon He introduced us to some of His attributes, attributes that if we are in tune with His presence inside of us we too, will be exhibiting as well.

Jesus goes on tell us that as we follow Him, living life as He does, then there will be times of trial and even persecution. The light of Christ in you will shine on the darkness in people's lives and they wont like it and they will persecute you in different ways.

Over the rest of His sermon, Jesus begins to cover a number of different behaviors and then He ends up His teaching with a strong finish that pins everything down.

Michal and I watched a movie last week that started at the end of the story and then went back to beginning, through the middle then to the end again. The ending at the beginning of the movie didn't give every detail but as you watched the story begin to unfold, lights starting coming on and it flowed perfectly.

That is what I want us to do today. Go to the end of Jesus' sermon to see how He sums up His teaching and then we will work our way through it.

So if you have your Bibles turn to the last six verses of Jesus' sermon and read it with me. It will be familiar to you but you will maybe see it in another light this morning.

Matthew 7:24-29, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on *the* rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on *the* rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell – and great was its fall. When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”

Several things in this passage jump out. First, look at what the wise man did. He built his house on the rock. It wasn't any old rock or some rock that someone looked at and thought, man, this is it. This is what life is all about. These are the principles I can build my life around.

No, it was a specific rock called *the* rock. It was the rock whose name is Jesus Christ and His teachings.

1. The wise person intentionally builds their life on Jesus Christ and His teachings

When Jesus says everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them, they are wise and the house that is built, their life, will stand through storms of this life.

The end of this passage also tells us how the crowd was amazed at Jesus' teaching. He taught them as one who has authority, not like the scribes. You will see that the scribes and the religious leaders of the Jews, when they taught it was more of a do as I say not as I do mentality. They were not living out the very things they were teaching and they were not entering into the depths of a pure relationship with God.

Jesus didn't wash any of the teachings of God down. He didn't lower the bar of what God expected of His people. In fact if Jesus did anything He raised the bar of expectation. He preached with conviction and it was that conviction of the truth that made people say He taught as one having authority.

I heard a story about a man who accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior at a Billy Graham crusade. In talking about his experience years later, the man said it wasn't so much the message that brought him to Christ but it was the conviction Billy Graham had in Jesus and His salvation that brought him to Christ.

This was Jesus. He knew the truth because He had lived with the truth and He was the truth so for Him to teach the truth in its fullness was no problem.

As we go back to where we left off, Jesus leads into the rest of His teaching Jesus saying the following.

Matthew 5:20, “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees (the religious leaders in Jesus’s day) you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Once again Jesus emphasizes the importance of going deeper into a relationship with God than what the Jewish religious leaders were doing at the time.

2. Something more needs to happen then just an acknowledgement of the truth, there should be some action involved

A striving of embracing certain behaviors and staying away from others.

In this way, a person will have the greatest opportunity to receive the fullness of what God has for them in heaven and in the here and now.

Let's read this passage again.

Matthew 5:20, “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees (the religious leaders in Jesus’s day) you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Two truths I believe Jesus is sharing here. First, there is a level of righteousness a person needs to attain before they are allowed to enter into heaven when this life is over. As disciples of Christ we have come to understand that no one is worthy and all of our best deeds are as dirty rags in comparison to the righteousness that Jesus is speaking about here. We can never reach a level of right living that will allow us to get into heaven. So we need help and we get it in the form of Jesus.

Look at what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31, “But by His (God’s) doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, holiness and redemption, so that, just as it is written, ‘Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”

2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ.”

Through our relationship with Christ we have been given as much righteousness, purity and holiness as we will ever get and it is Jesus’ presence in us. It is on His righteousness that carries us into heaven. Boy that is good news because I know that on my own I could never qualify.

But I also believe that when Jesus says that you will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven I believe He is saying that

- 3. Without embracing Jesus and His teachings a person will not experience all the blessings of being in God’s kingdom here on earth.**

There are things God wants to release to His children during their stay on earth. There is peace, joy, love, fulfillment and many, many other things. Things that originate with Him, in His kingdom, in His throne room in heaven. And as we come into a living, obedient relationship with Him through His Son Jesus, all these blessings of heaven begin to pour into our lives.

This is the beginning of the love affair I mentioned. Jesus has a love affair with all of humanity but to those who say yes to Him, yes I will live my life for you, it is like the man who just proposed to his love and his love said yes. Jesus' love expressed towards His new bride opens up a whole new beginning, a whole new life and a whole new journey of blessings that began to flow from heaven into their life.

So when Jesus begins His teaching it is an extension of His love affair. He knows storms are going to come. He knows the rains will happen, the water will rise, the winds will blow and they will slam against the walls of their lives.

We know this to be true don't we. We have all experienced the storms of this life in many ways. Some have more traumatic experiences than others but they are all hard. The world throws things at us, persecutes us and let's just be honest. Living in fallen, broken world is just hard.

Jesus knows this. He watched the world since creation began, He lived here for 33 ½ years and suffered and died because of the evil of this world. He knows what each of you face as you walk this earth. So Jesus, in His love for you and through His teachings, He is doing His best to prepare and protect you for the troubles and trials you will face.

Build your life on me. Build your life on my teachings. Take the time to hear my words, read My words and then put forth the effort to build your life on them. In this way I can help you stand strong in the midst of the storms of life. Not only will you stand strong but you will continue to be the strongest light and the saltiest salt you can be.

According to the insight of Urban Dictionary, "salty," when used as a slang term, can be used to describe someone who is "angry, agitated, or upset," as well as someone who is "mean, annoying, and repulsive."

When I think of someone being salty I think of a person who is gregarious, bigger than life. They are memorable. They know what they believe and they are not going to change for anyone. Now if what they believe is wrong, not changing is not a good thing. But if what they are is God-fearing, God serving that is what Jesus is talking about being salty. They stand for the truth and they will not waver and even be used by God to affect the world around them with their saltiness.

In the sermon last Jesus warned about the fate of becoming un-salty. Salt that is tasteless is useless and thrown out.

Where we find ourselves in Jesus' sermon is He begins with some things that will effect our godly saltiness. Things, behaviors, attitudes and your thought life, that if you allow them to take root in your life, they will undermine your ability to be the salt and the light for Jesus in this dark world.

Solomon, the son of David, says it this way.

Solomon 2:15, "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in blossom."

The vineyard has the capacity to produce great and wonderful fruit but the little foxes are creating havoc in the vineyard. They are running around and destroying any possibility of fruit.

The same can be true of our lives.

4. There are little behaviors, attitudes that a person can easily fall into that will destroy any possibility of producing great, spiritual fruit for the kingdom of God

Jesus doesn't want this for His children. Jesus doesn't want this so He says hear and act on these words of mine and it will protect and bless you.

Let's briefly look at the first couple of teachings Jesus gives us concerning this.

Matthew 5:21-22, "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 'But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing, shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell."

Now look at **Matthew 5:27-28, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."**

Where did Jesus get these two sayings, You shall not murder and you shall not commit adultery? From the Ten Commandments.

Here we have an example of what the scribes and Pharisees were doing. They had not killed anyone in the flesh or committed adultery with anyone in the flesh but their minds and hearts were a mess. They were corrupt, non-compassionate and possibly immoral in their thought life.

So Jesus dealt with it. He talks about these two issues of the heart then He is about to go through several other things that have to do with a Christian's heart, not the actual physical actions. And here is where Jesus takes it a little bit deeper.

The act of committing murder or adultery is not much different to God whether it happens in the flesh or in your mind. Sin is sin. Impurity in your life and heart is still impurity. Now we know the consequences of committing murder or adultery in the flesh is much more severe and damaging to those involved. But Jesus wants to get down into true heart, purity issues. The issues that can have an affect on our saltiness.

PAUSE...

This morning in closing, as we prepare to go through these teachings of Jesus, I think we can begin to pray about our own hearts to see if we are open to hear and take action to some of the things Jesus teaches us. I would encourage you to prayerfully read through Matthew 5-7 in the coming weeks, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus' truths to you. Asking if some of them apply in your life.

Remember the words of Jesus...

For POWERPOINT ONLY

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, they will be considered wise and have a house (a life) that is built upon the rock, Jesus Christ.

Let's pray