

Last week we discussed **Matthew 5:13-16**: “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” What does this mean to you?

Col 4:6: Paul wrote-“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Salt is a preservative and is tasty. Similarly, the Christian’s conversation is to be wholesome. What does this mean to you? “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

What does Jesus mean when he says we are the light of the world?

Charles E. Moore (1956 -) says “His concern is not that his followers get more involved in the world, but that they don’t become like the world and lose their true identity. What is Moore telling us about what Jesus is concerned about?

Jane Tyson Clement (1917-2000) says “My sins are inward and refined, my friends the gentle friends of God; I must go seek the publicans, the wild companions of my Lord.” What is Clement telling us?

John R. W. Stott (1921-2011) says “The world is evidently a dark place, with little or no light of its own, since external sources of light is needed to illuminate it.” “The world also manifest a constant tendency to deteriorate.” “It cannot stop itself from going bad. Only salt introduced from outside can do this.” What is he telling us about the difference between the world and God?

“Jesus is not issuing new rules or a new moral code but establishing a new relationship between God and his people, and among people.” What does this mean and how does this change our relationship with God and each other?

Matthew 5:17 -19 – Jesus said “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

What does this mean to you?

Barbara Brown Taylor (1951 -) is an American Episcopal priest, professor, and author. “Jesus was a Jew, for whom good works were not optional.” What is Taylor telling us and how does that effect how we are to live?

“God expects us to step up. Righteousness is a good thing. Exceeding righteousness is even better. Knowing God’s word is no substitute for doing it. Good works count.” What is she saying here?

Jen Wilkin (1969 -) is an American Evangelical author and Bible teacher.

Celebratory Failurism – believers cannot obey the Law and will fail at every attempt. What does this mean?

“Rather than tossing out the Law or devaluing obedience to it, Jesus called his followers to a deeper obedience than the behavior modification the Pharisees prized. He called for obedience in motive as well as in deed.” Jesus wants us to obey the Law not because we feel obligated to as a Christian, but rather because we want to and even take joy in it because we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Wilkin is trying to explain how our motives are different now than then when the Law was kept and enforced by the Pharisees.

Can you see the difference between the Law of the old and the Law of the new after Christ?

Addison Hodges Hart (1956 -) is a pastor, college chaplain, and spiritual director. “Jesus goes beneath the surface and forces us to examine our secret thoughts and scrutinize the unpleasant drives, passions, inward suggestions, and numerous unclean spirits that move us to malevolent behaviors, he is reinforcing the most pure objective of the Law...”

Hart is saying Jesus is not abandoning the Law but going deeper to our thoughts and motives for abandoning the Law. For example, it is against the Law to murder, but Jesus is telling us it is wrong to hate and declare malice. What are some other examples?

Jurgen Moltmann (1926 -) is a German Protestant theologian. “Anyone who considers the Sermon on the Mount to be in principle impossible of fulfillment mocks God; for God is the creator and lover of life, and he gives no commandments that cannot be fulfilled.” Moltmann is saying that some believe the teachings of Jesus cannot be actually lived. That a human cannot actual live the way Jesus teaches us to. But he is saying that it is possible to live this way through the power of the Holy Spirit. And what kind of heart is necessary for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us?

Gal. 6:2 - Paul says: “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” What is the law of Christ? How are we to live?