

Matthew 5 (11-48)

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Salt as a witness to life as light

In the journey of the Christian life, the teachings of Jesus serve as a guide for our actions. The function of salt is to flavor and preservative. As Christians, we are called to play a positive role in society, bringing about a taste of life and moral perseverance. In our families, workplaces, and communities, we should be a force for change by influencing others with love, patience, and righteousness.

However, Jesus also warned that if salt loses its taste, it is no longer useful. This reminds us that we need to constantly renew our spiritual life and maintain our spiritual acumen through prayer, Bible reading, and intimacy with God in order to truly play a role in salt.

The essence of light is to dispel darkness and guide the way. When we live the life of Christ, our actions and testimonies are like light for others to see and glorify our Heavenly Father. This requires us to be honest, upright, and show love for others through our actions.

Being a light also means that we cannot hide our beliefs, but rather be brave enough to take a stand in public. Whether in the face of challenges or adversity, our faith should serve as an inspiration and example to others.

Making salt and light is not only a calling, but also a practice of life. When we rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to live out the teachings of Christ, we can be a blessing to this world. May we glorify God every day with the influence of salt and the testimony of light, and lead more people to the source of life.

Matthew 5 (11-48).

Jesus likened us to salt. Salt can be seasoned, cleansed and sterilized, but if it loses its taste, it is useless. Christians need to strive to fulfill their God-given mission and role to be the salt that makes people love one another, the salt that cleans others from sin, or the salt that kills sin. Christians who live on earth by virtue of the quality of their inner divine life will naturally be able to exert "salt"

Let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Light illuminates darkness. We need to walk like children of light, witnessing to the Lord. We need to hear the word and do the word, so that all people can see from us the attitude and style of the Christian life.

The "good works" of the people of heaven will give glory to our "heavenly Father" because God is the source of our heavenly life. "Good works" are "light," and the reason why people don't know God and refuse to believe in the Lord Jesus is often because we lack a testimony of good works. A disciple who is hidden and cannot shine is of no use. We are heavenly beings who shine on the whole world so that there will be no more darkness in the world.

Today God has put the perfect law of liberty in us and written on our hearts, that Christ lives in us, teaching us with anointing in all things; When we walk in Him, we fulfill the Law and the Prophets. Believers should be judged when they have sinned several of the laws of the kingdom. This judgment is not a decision on perdition or eternal life, but on punishment or a reward. The Lord has put the life-giving spirit in the spirit of those who believe in Him, and has become one with the human spirit. If we follow the Spirit and not the flesh, we can accomplish the righteousness of the law.

Jesus made it clear that Christians cannot swear. For the heavens are the seat of God, and the earth is the footstool of God. Christians are to be honest in speaking the truth of comfort and exhortation, and if it is true, there is no need to swear.

Jesus taught us not a-for-tat, but to love your neighbor and your enemies, and to love those around us as our Heavenly Father loves us, even those we don't like. When our hearts are angry, we give the devil a chance to work. There was anger in his heart, so he cursed out of his mouth. God delights in seeing us drop our will to love and pray for our persecutors as if our Heavenly Father loves us.

A man of God should show his noble identity in words. Our mouths should praise and speak edifying words. Divine duty, since we have a spiritual life, how can we say worldly and vulgar spells? The Lord Jesus is gentle and humble in heart, and He is our model for being human. We should not be angry, and we should not use swear words when we are angry. For anger is enough to hurt oneself and create disease, and scolding is enough to hurt the hearts of others, to shame, to cause resentment, and to produce a wrong attitude of-for-tat.

We prayed together

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for giving us the call to be salt and light so that we can witness Your glory in this world. Pray that You will give us the wisdom and strength to build harmony with love and patience in our families, to bear witness to Your name with integrity and professionalism in the workplace, and to care for others in our community and to be a conduit of Your love. Lord, help us to keep our spiritual salt awake so that we don't lose its flavor, so that we can hold fast to Your truth and be a beacon of light in the darkness that will lead more to Your light and salvation. May our words and deeds glorify Your name, be vessels of Your pleasure, and bring hope and blessings to the world.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

Matthew 5:11-48 –

¹¹ “Blessed [morally courageous and spiritually alive with life-joy in God’s goodness] are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil things against you because of [your association with] Me. ¹² Be glad and exceedingly joyful, for your reward in heaven is great [absolutely inexhaustible]; for in this same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Disciples and the World

¹³ “You are the [d]salt of the earth; but if the salt has [e]lost its taste (purpose), how can it be made salty? It is no longer good for anything, but to be thrown out and walked on by people [when the walkways are wet and slippery].

¹⁴ “You are the light of [Christ to] the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good deeds *and* moral excellence, and [recognize and honor and] glorify your Father who is in heaven.

¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to do away with *or* undo the [l]Law [of Moses] or the [writings of the] Prophets; I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke [of the pen] will pass from the Law until all things [which it foreshadows] are accomplished. ¹⁹ So whoever breaks one of the least [important] of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least [important] in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever practices and teaches them, he will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

²⁰ “For I say to you that unless your righteousness (uprightness, moral essence) is more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Personal Relationships

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not murder,’ and ‘Whoever murders shall be [g]guilty before the court.’ ²² But I say to you that everyone who continues to be angry with his brother *or* harbors malice against him shall be guilty before the court; and whoever speaks [contemptuously and insultingly] to his brother, [h]‘Raca (You empty-headed idiot)!’ shall be guilty before the supreme court (Sanhedrin); and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of the [i]fiery hell. ²³ So if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and *while* there you remember that your brother has something [such as a grievance or legitimate complaint] against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there at the altar and go. First make peace with your brother, and then come and present your offering. ²⁵ Come to terms quickly [at the earliest opportunity] with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way [to court], so that your opponent does not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you are thrown into prison. ²⁶ I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid the last [j]cent.

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; ²⁸ but I say to you that everyone who [so much as] looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye makes you stumble *and* leads you to sin, tear it out and throw it away [that is, remove yourself from the source of temptation]; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ If your right hand makes you stumble *and* leads you to sin, cut it off and throw it away [that is, remove yourself from the source of temptation]; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

³¹ “It has also been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife is to give her a certificate of divorce’; ³² but I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on grounds of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who has been divorced commits adultery.

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not make false vows, but you shall fulfill your vows to the Lord [as a religious duty].’ ³⁴ But I say to you, do not make an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶ Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you are not able to make a single hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’ [a firm yes or no]; anything more than that comes from the evil one.

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth [punishment that fits the offense].’ ³⁹ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person [who insults you or violates your rights]; but whoever ^[k]slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other toward him also [simply ignore insignificant insults or trivial losses and do not bother to retaliate—maintain your dignity, your self-respect, your poise]. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, ^[l]let him have your coat also [for the Lord repays the offender]. ⁴¹ And whoever ^[m]forces you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor (fellow man) and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, ^[n]love [that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good for] your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may [show yourselves to] be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on those who are evil and on those who are good, and makes the rain fall on the righteous [those who are morally upright] and the unrighteous [the unrepentant, those who oppose Him]. ⁴⁶ For if you love [only] those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers [wishing them God’s blessing and peace], what more [than others] are you doing? Do not even the Gentiles [who do not know the Lord] do that? ⁴⁸ You, therefore, will be perfect [growing into spiritual maturity both in mind and character, actively integrating godly values into your daily life], as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:11-48 Overview

This passage is part of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus teaches about the ethics of the Kingdom of Heaven. It moves beyond the surface of the Old Testament laws, focusing on the spirit and intent behind actions. The key themes are righteousness, love, and integrity, calling believers to a higher standard of living that reflects God’s character.

Full Description and Key Verses

1. The Blessing of Persecution (11-12)

- Jesus concludes the Beatitudes by pronouncing blessings on those who are persecuted for His sake.
- **Key Verse:**

- *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven..."* (Matthew 5:11-12)
- **Meaning:** Persecution for righteousness aligns believers with the prophets and secures heavenly rewards.

2. Salt and Light (13-16)

- Believers are called to influence the world as “salt” (preserving goodness) and “light” (guiding others to God).
- **Key Verse:**
 - *"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."* (Matthew 5:14)
- **Meaning:** Christians must actively demonstrate their faith through good deeds, glorifying God.

3. Fulfilling the Law (17-20)

- Jesus emphasizes that He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it, calling for righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees.
- **Key Verse:**
 - *"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."* (Matthew 5:17)
- **Meaning:** Jesus fulfills the law both in His life and teachings, shifting focus from external adherence to internal transformation.

4. Righteousness in Relationships (21-26)

- Jesus reinterprets the commandment against murder to include anger and contempt. Reconciliation is a priority.
- **Key Verse:**
 - *"Anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment."* (Matthew 5:22)
- **Meaning:** Internal attitudes like anger are as destructive as outward actions.

5. Purity in Thought (27-30)

- Lust is equated with adultery, highlighting the need for purity in thought.
- **Key Verse:**
 - *"Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."* (Matthew 5:28)
- **Meaning:** Sin originates in the heart, and drastic measures are sometimes needed to avoid it.

6. Faithfulness in Marriage (31-32)

- Jesus raises the bar for divorce, allowing it only in cases of sexual immorality.

- **Key Verse:**
 - *"Anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery." (Matthew 5:32)*
- **Meaning:** Marriage reflects God's covenant and must be treated as sacred.

7. Integrity in Speech (33-37)

- Jesus condemns the misuse of oaths and calls for simple honesty.
- **Key Verse:**
 - *"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." (Matthew 5:37)*
- **Meaning:** Believers should live with such integrity that oaths become unnecessary.

8. Radical Love and Forgiveness (38-48)

- Jesus redefines justice ("an eye for an eye") and teaches love for enemies, mirroring God's impartial love.
- **Key Verses:**
 - *"If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also." (Matthew 5:39)*
 - *"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)*
- **Meaning:** The Kingdom ethic demands radical, self-sacrificial love that transcends human standards.

Theological Thoughts

1. **Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Law**
 - Jesus fulfills the Mosaic Law by embodying its deepest intent and pointing to the heart transformation required by the Kingdom of God.
2. **Kingdom Righteousness**
 - True righteousness exceeds external observance, emphasizing inner purity, love, and humility.
3. **Imitating God's Perfection**
 - Believers are called to mirror God's character, especially His love and mercy, culminating in the call to "be perfect" (Matthew 5:48).
4. **Reversal of Human Expectations**
 - The teachings challenge cultural norms by prioritizing forgiveness over retaliation, love over hatred, and humility over self-assertion.

Spiritual Influence

1. A Call to Higher Living

- This passage inspires believers to transcend societal norms and live according to the radical ethics of the Kingdom.

2. The Challenge of Inner Transformation

- It emphasizes the need for the Holy Spirit to transform the heart, as the standards set by Jesus are impossible to achieve in human strength alone.

3. Living as Witnesses

- Being salt and light motivates Christians to actively influence their surroundings, pointing others to Christ.

4. Embodying Divine Love

- The call to love enemies encourages believers to rely on God's love and grace to live out this seemingly impossible command.

Conclusion

Matthew 5:11-48 presents a comprehensive vision of Kingdom living, emphasizing internal righteousness, selfless love, and unwavering integrity. It calls believers to reflect God's character in every aspect of life, influencing both personal relationships and the broader world.