

The Sermon on the Mount: Our Witness

Matthew 5:13-20

Being Salt (v. 13)

- Salt: Used to preserve, purify, & enhance the flavor of food
- The earth: The realm of humanity
- The call is for Jesus' disciples to impact others around them through their Christlike actions & attitudes
- However, Jesus warns that if salt loses its quality, it stops being able to do its job
 - *Morantbe* (μωρανθη): to make foolish, use foolishly
 - If we are not living as disciples, showing Jesus to others, we are ineffective at being the influence on others that we are meant to be

Being Light (v. 14-16)

- Like salt, Jesus calls His disciples to be light for the world
- Light drives out darkness & reveals truth
 - It illuminates & warms
- Real light cannot & should not be hidden
 - Like a city on a hilltop or a lamp in a room
 - We are to live out loud for Jesus, not in secret
 - This includes doing good to others
 - Not for men's praise
 - But for God's glory

The Fulfilled Law (v. 17-18)

- The Law & Prophets: A summative way of saying The Old Testament
 - The Law: The Torah (Gen-Deut)
 - The Prophets: The Nevi'im (Josh-2 Kings, Isa-Mal)⁶
- Not abolish, but fulfill
 - Abolish (*kataluo*): To destroy, demolish, dismantle
 - Fulfill (*plāroo*): To bring to completion or finish something's intended purpose
 - Jesus has come to accomplish what God intended in the OT
- The purpose of the Law was to set apart God's people from the world to live as an example to their neighbors (the Gentiles) (Ex 19:6)
 - This way of living reveals God to them and was meant to attract them to Him (Dt 4:5-8)

Real Righteousness (v. 19-20)

- Jesus states that we are to keep all of God's commands
 - He later clarifies that love for God & neighbor is how we do this (Mt 22:37-40)
- And this is repeated throughout the NT (Rom 13:8, 10; Gal 5:14; 6:2)
- Failure to perfectly keep all that God commands does not lose us a place in God's kingdom
 - However, it does determine what our place will be
- Jesus calls His disciples to be righteous in a way that exceeds the self-righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees⁹

- Imbued Righteousness: Right standing with God given through faith in Jesus that leads to right actions
- Self-righteousness: The false belief that right actions will earn one right standing with God
- Self-righteous legalism will not lead to any place in God's kingdom
 - Only Jesus' righteousness can do that

So What?

- Are we living as salt & light, positively impacting those around us with the love of Jesus?
- Are we trusting Jesus to do this work in and through us by His Spirit?
- Or are we relying on our own efforts alone?

Meditation Verse: *Matthew 5:16*