

The Rock: 06-26-2022

A year with the master

Title: Salt and light

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16

(Black bible Pg. 760 ESV)

Theme:

Coming out of the "blessed are" teachings of Jesus, and the reminder that persecution comes to those who do right, we are confronted with challenge to live in a contrary way.

Introduction:

We come to this short burst of words taught by Jesus and the first things that come to my mind are first the question asked by King David:

-Psalms 11:3 (ESV)

"...if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

A sincere question in our time, or in anytime really. David answers that question once again with the right focus, honest confession and proper placement before God. All of the things we learned a few weeks ago.

I leave the rest of the Psalm for you to look at but the beginning of verse four is helpful for us to remember as we begin to look at our text this morning:

-Psalms 11:4 (ESV)

"The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see..."

So very important for us to remember as we learn how to live in a world that has lost its way, in fact it seems to have lost its mind and soul.

While there are many times we would rather be taken to heaven and have all this be done with, God has given us a Jesus sized assignment.

He too, when faced with the evil in this world that was coming at Him in a heavy and dark way, understood His task in time.

Certainly not to be fatalistic here, but being very much a Christian who is a realist. Jesus said, "Not my will, but yours be done."

The task can at times seem so overwhelming, and so frustratingly agitating, as things go from bad to worse. Yet that is not the gospel hope,

and we are not to be like those who mourn or act that way:

-1 Thessalonians 4:13 (ESV)

"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope."

Paul, in this passage is talking about the promised second coming of Jesus. Until that day we are to live and work as His hands and feet in this, His world.

But how?

The Story:

How do we flavor the world around us? How do we shine? We have an either / or option actually, and the Bible drives us toward, rather commands us toward the positive:

We can flavor the world be being bitter, angry, and self-righteous OR we can be joyful, hopeful, salty -enhancing and preserving anything which is good.

We can shine dimly, harshly, and flickering about OR we can shine brightly, softly, steady in the storms. Being that safe harbor light, which is that steady and stable stream of light regardless of weather.

SO, for the balance of our time together this morning, let's look at that, because the assignment which Jesus gives His disciples here in Matthew is a privilege, not a burden.

We have spent the better part of the last two months looking at what Christians in this world "are" -poor in spirit, mournful, meek, hungry and thirsting, merciful, pure in heart.

Now, Jesus shifts gears here and in essence says because this is what you are, here is how that is to look, to work itself out in your day-to-day living.

It's not just any old way of living. He starts by telling us that:

-Matthew 5: 13a (ESV)

"You are the salt of the earth..."

-Matthew 5:14a (ESV)

"You are the light of the world..."

This is directed at you and me. In the grand scheme of God's plan to redeem humanity and this fallen world, do not miss that He has called ordinary, everyday people to fulfill His plan.

There is not a secret "Jesus club", where one needs a certain level of training or

education, or some secret knowledge given to only a select group.

No. God the Father, through Jesus the son, has empowered ordinary, everyday people from all walks of life and all kinds of backgrounds and empowered them (you and me) with His Holy Spirit, and says: Go into all the world and tell people about my Son Jesus.

Lloyd-Jones makes this clear too when he preached on this at the height of the cold-war and nuclear threat around the globe. He challenged his congregation to the same way of living:

"...let us remember that it is a statement concerning the ordinary, average Christian. Not certain Christians only. It is applicable to all who rightly claim that name...[for] The LORD who said, 'You are the light of the world,' also said, 'I am the light of the world.'"

-Studies in the Sermon on the Mount Pg. 142

This is something that we need to take together, because we cannot be salt, we cannot be light in this world if we are not in the light -who is Jesus.

All of the beatitudes, really are pulled together here, as this becomes a reflection of our heart and mind

attitude. It is the reflection of our intimate relationship with the one who is the light that shines in the darkness.

I am deeply encouraged by that, because John tells us in the opening verses of his gospel:

-John 1:1-5 (ESV)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.:

We are told that as Christian men and women in this world, that we are partakers of this divine nature -the light is Christ Himself, our hope of glory.

That is a joyful thing to me in this world of darkness. That in Christ, not only can we be light and shine, but He loves us that much that we get to be partners with Him in His glory -"the divine nature."

Being salt and being light then, is a privilege and a joy, even though it is challenging and difficult at times. Most

especially when the foundations are crumbling.

But God uses the simple to confound and confuse the wise, he uses the foolishness of "preaching and proclaiming" to save those who will believe.

-1 Corinthians 1:23-24 (ESV)

"...but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

So, contrary to all the worldly wisdom and philosophies of our time which claims such enlightenment. For all the high-minded thinkers and tinkers of our day are tripped up and confused by the simple "uneducated and unenlightened" believers in Jesus.

In a world of decay / rottenness and darkness, we have the privilege of being salt and light. This is not negative. This is not a complaint and railing against the darkness.

I have found that we like to use that excuse to avoid reality. That statement is a true statement and diagnosis actually. The only way we can find a cure, the only way we can fix a sickness is to properly call it what it is.

Decay and rot. That is what is happening in our world. Here stands the church (The People of God), seasoning and shining. Preserving against more rot and shining as a beacon in the harbor of rough water.

I love the Cape, and any chance I get, I love to go and spend time there. My Mom has a cottage Mid-Cape. I love all of the beaches and harbors and all the little inlets along the sandy shores.

Chatham and Monomoy point are probably my favorite.

There is a dangerous beauty there which you will discover each time you visit. The sand shifts so much from year to year, and sometimes even season to season, that if you aren't careful, you could shipwreck or just run aground.

Or, if you are beach walking and don't time things right, you could end up stuck somewhere when the tide comes in. Not realizing that what used to be a safe harbor, has not become a trap.

A fixed, unmoving point is essential, is critical to have if you want to navigate and journey safely. Chatham light, probably my favorite light house, sits, as always, pointing out into the sea, just off Monomoy point and Chatham inlet.

IF you've never seen it, my mom gave me a water color of it, and it hangs in my office. For me, it's a strong reminder that a fixed, anchored point of light is the most beautiful thing in the darkness of a Nor'Easter storm.

When everything is confused and tossing about, there it shines -simply calling you "home" to that safe harbor.

You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. What Jesus is giving us here, defines our calling and purpose in this world. In the moral decay and decline, in the ever-increasing darkness -season, preserve from rot and "putrefaction", shine!

You see the challenge of verses 15-16,

-Matthew 5:15-16 (ESV)

"Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Is often portrayed as negative toward the believer. What do I mean by that? Well, let's be honest, the brow-beating one gets when we are told: "You are not courageous enough to go about 'declaring

Jesus', yelling from some street corner and demanding that people turn or burn".

In other words, if you aren't running around acting and looking like a Billy Graham, if any of you young folks even know who he is, then somehow you are a failure and a disappointment to God.

That is wrong, that comes more from the insecurity of the preacher and pastor than it does from anywhere else.

In fact, Jesus here, is giving us a positive charge. You are my representatives in this world, which I have redeemed.

Let's remember what Jesus said, "I am the light of the world", and He is. But He has gone back into heaven, and until he comes back again (remember our text from 1 Thess.) He says to us: "YOU are the light of the world."

You are the only hope this world has as my people representing me in My redeemed world. Salt away! Because as much as salt enhances the flavor of the things it is put in, never forget too, that salt is a preservative.

It prevents rot, it prevents decay. As bad as our world is and is getting, it would be far worse were it not for the Church being salty. Holding fast to the

truths of the gospel message and the whole Bible.

Season away! Shine on! It is a privilege. It is not about being educated or uneducated. It's not about social status or standing, or about your background, your ethnicity or anything of the like.

It is about BEING - of being faithfully present within, and as the world laughs and mocks and persecutes, you shine, season and simply be like Jesus.

Being the best (you fill in the blank here) to the glory of God, that you can be. That will season those around you, will shine on those around you.

People will see that you are different, that you are faithful, that you are steady, even in the storms of life.

You see, because of Christ in you, the hope of glory, He works in and through you to accomplish His purposes. I love that!

I love what Paul says too when he is writing to the Corinthian church. In his second letter to them, chapters four and five are so powerful. Don't ever think perfection is your goal.

Jesus was perfect, we should strive for excellence and obedience in our day-to-day walk. Listen to what he says to us:

-2 Corinthians 4:5-7 (ESV)

"For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

Old broken clay pots. Does that sound like He is looking for us to be perfect? No, rather He is looking for each of us to be faithful, to be present, and to do everything in excellence because it is for His glory.

Yet, we are just a bunch of cracked pots who carry around the presence of Jesus Christ within us, the hope of the world.

Because of that, Paul tells us in chapter 5 -along with Psalm 11 perhaps this can be your homework, because I cannot read it all for you, but I encourage you to look here and make sure that what I am telling you is actually here in the

Scriptures and says what I am telling you:

-2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (ESV)

"From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

The Bible, the Christian in this world, the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth, The Christ, is not one way of many ways. We are not one "type of religious people amongst many".

It is not a philosophy of good teachings which challenge us to be better. Nor is it something we mess around with to make

it say or not say things so we can be comfortable with it and this world.

Rather, it is the only hope this fallen world has to save it from complete decay and collapse.

-Matthew 5:13-16 (ESV)

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Pray and make sure the team comes up.