

Matthew 5

Being true to yourself

Outline

The Messiah defines the true nature of Kingdom life: The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)

- a. The character of Kingdom people (5:1-12)
 1. Attitude toward self: humble hunger for righteousness (5:1-6)
 2. Attitude toward others: passion for peace (5:7-9)
 3. Attitude toward enemies: joy in face of persecution (5:10-12)

b. The calling of Kingdom people (5:13-16)

1. Salt: Helping people experience the kingdom. (5:13)

13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty {again}? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

2. Light: Helping people see the kingdom (5:14-16)

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do {men} light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the 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 works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

A. Introduction

1. One of the core values of modern Western society is personal authenticity – “to yourself be true.”
 - Conforming to any external authority (church, state, parents, etc.) runs the risk of not being authentic or being hypocritical to your true inner self.
 - Doing what is right in your own eyes is equated with being authentic and real.
2. For a Christian, the question of authenticity and hypocrisy is framed by the bigger question of our true identity. Are we going to be true to our “old self” in Adam or our “new self” in Christ? Are we going to reflect God’s image in the earth or our own fallen nature?

B. Observations from the text

1. In this text we are not commanded to be “salt and light” but rather **declared** to be “salt and light.”
 - What kind of salt and light are we? Are we useful to effect taste and sight?
 - The implication is that we must **be true to ourselves** as salt and light.

2. Salt is associated with taste in this context. The word translated “tasteless” is a word that often translated “foolish” and probably has the sense of being a wasted resource.
3. We are salt and light in the world, not in private or in the church only.
4. We are commanded to “let it happen” and not hide it.
5. We are to let it happen in such a way that certain things result – God is glorified.

Psalm 34:8 “Taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”

C. Out calling is to show our true character (as children of the Kingdom).

1. Our character is seen in Matt.5:1-12.
2. These qualities are the salt and light that will enable others to taste and see God’s Kingdom.

D. Examples from Scripture

I Peter 3 “¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”

John 3 “¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

Ephesians 5 “⁸ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰ trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; ¹² for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things, which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴ For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.””

Acts 2 “⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ and they {began} selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. ⁴⁶ And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking

their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

James 2 “¹⁴ What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may well say, “You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

E. What about the warning in Matthew 6:1?

Matthew 6:1-2 “¹ Beware of practicing your righteousness **before men** to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. ² When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, **that they may be honored by men. Truly** I say to you, they have their reward in full.”

When our righteousness is displayed to draw attention to the glory of self or man it needs to be hidden. When it reflects the glory of God it needs to be seen.

Acts 3:12 “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?”

F. Conclusions

- **Christians’ security rests in whom they believe not in what they do.**
- **Christians’ significance rests in what they do.**
- **Christians are called to let their character come out as they live lives that are true to their identity in Christ.**