Sermon on the Mount

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Introduction:

1. The Lord is still in the introductory stages of this important sermon. He will begin the body of it at 5:21.
2. Having identified some of the principal character traits of His true followers, He exhorted them to public duty.
3. The poor, mourning, and meek disciples of Christ were to understand their great role and opportunity in life.
4. God has not saved us just for keeping us out of hell or giving personal spiritual joy. We are to glorify Him by being an adorning and becoming light for the gospel's sake as the sons of God in the midst of crooked men.
5. Having warned of persecution for righteousness' sake and for His sake, He exhorted them to public duty also.
6. The verses of this lesson should not be restricted to the ministry, as they apply to both ministers and disciples.
7. Other places in the Scriptures teach the same lesson to those that are definitely not ministers (I Pet 2:11-12).

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH (5:13)

A. This is a metaphor: a figure of speech of comparison, but lacking the indicators of the simile.

B. The Lord chose salt as a figurative illustration of His followers' effect in the earth.

C. The Lord expects His disciples to have an impact in the earth for righteousness, truth, and wisdom.

D. Salt is a purgative, in that it purges away decay, defilement, or disease (Ezekiel 16:4; wounds).
   1. Ministers perform the role of a purgative by perfecting (Eph 4:12; Col 1:28; I Thess 3:10).
   2. Disciples perform the role of a purgative by perfecting (Lev 19:17; I Thess 5:14; Heb 3:12-13).
   3. Saints are to live and speak in a way to manifest and reprove evil (Prov 28:4; Eph 5:11-12).
   4. The earth is a putrefying mess of sin and corruption, against which we should be a purgative.
   5. If it were not for the righteous opposing sin directly and indirectly, the world would collapse.

E. Salt is a preservative, in that its purgative traits preserve things (Num 18:19; salt pork, "salt away,").
   1. Ministers perform the role of preservative by teaching and warning (I Tim 4:16; I Cor 11:26-34).
   2. Ministers perform the role of preservative by example (Ezek 22:30; II Chron 32:26; I Tim 4:16).
   3. Disciples perform the role of preservative by righteousness (Gen 18:32; Jer 15:1; Ezek 14:14).
   4. The preserving effect of a godly Christian can influence his family or nation (I Cor 7:14).

F. Salt is a destroyer, in that its corrosive powers can destroy many things (Judges 9:45; roads, cars).

1. Ministers perform the role of a destroyer by judgment (II Cor 10:4-9; I Cor 5:1-4).
2. Disciples perform the role of a destroyer by judging (I Cor 5:12-13; II Thess 3:14-15).
3. The only true opposition to ignorance and sin is the hammer and fire of God's word and holiness.

G. Salt is a seasoner, in that it greatly alters and enhances the flavors of food that it contacts (Job 6:6).
   1. Ministers perform the role of a seasoner by preaching (II Cor 2:14-17; II Tim 1:8-11).
   2. Disciples perform the role of a seasoner by fellowship (Acts 2:46-47; Philippians 2:1-4).
   3. Disciples perform the role of a seasoner by their speech (Colossians 4:6; Eph 4:29).
   4. The only pleasant things of truth and good news in the earth are the doctrines of Jesus Christ!

H. If the salt loses its savor, its chemical properties of purging and preserving, it is merely gravel.
   1. Christianity without holy and righteous living opposed to the world is worthless Christianity.
   2. The excellency of a Christian is the glory He brings to God and the gospel by his conduct.
   3. If a minister loses his character or doctrine, he is worthless (I Cor 9:27; I Tim 4:16).
   4. If disciples lose their character or doctrine, they are worthless (II Pet 2:20-22; Heb 10:39).
   5. The carnal Christianity of today has lost the savour Christ spoke of and walks with the world.

YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (5:14)

A. John the Baptist, Paul, and ministers are light to the world by their preaching (Luke 1:79; John 5:35; Acts 13:47; 26:13-20; II Cor 4:4; II Tim 1:8-11).
B. The light spoken of here is the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth lived out by Christians.
C. Disciples are to be light through godly and holy conduct (Phil 2:12-16; Eph 5:7-16; I Thess 5:1-10).
D. The world lies in darkness without any light at all, but holy conduct shines forth light (I John 1:5-6).
E. For example, hating your brother for any reason turns your light into darkness (I John 2:9,11).
F. In general, a city set on a hill cannot be hid, for its light will be visible to travelers near and far.
G. In specific, Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem of our habitation should be visible to the world.
H. God has set Mount Zion to be the joy of the whole earth, which presses us with out duty to be light.

MEN DO NOT HIDE LIGHT FROM OTHERS (5:15)

A. Righteous men, when they light a candle, do not hide its influence and power, but raise it for others.
B. Jesus has already taught that we are light, so we should fulfill the figure and provide light for others.
C. Since God has filled you with the light of His gospel and a new holy nature, you should let it shine!
D. There is no place for hidden Christianity in your heart, in your home, in your church, or on Sunday.
E. God has given us good doctrine and commandments, and we should want to live and speak it boldly.
F. Here are the explanation and application of the figures of speech the Lord had used to begin.
G. The "so" here is important to grasp the connection, for it means in the way just specified.
H. Since men do not light a candle to hide its light, we should let our light shine to all around us.

I. Our public and outward Christianity should be like a city on a hill and a candle on a candlestick.
J. We want men to see our good works, though we do not do our good works only to be seen (Mat 6:1).
K. We want men to see our good works, and good works are only those defined by God's pure word.
L. We want men to see our good works, but the objective is our Father's glory and not our own glory.
M. God is glorified when we bear much fruit (John 15:8), and others will glorify God by us (Gal 1:24).
N. Sinners can be converted unto God by the holy lives of Christians (I Cor 7:16; I Pet 2:11-12; 3:1-2).
O. Even unconverted pagans can recognize the remarkable change that ought to be visible in believers' lives, which one pagan emperor was told that the Christians were the very best of citizens.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN (5:16)

1. Here are the explanation and application of the figures of speech the Lord had used to begin.
2. The "so" here is important to grasp the connection, for it means in the way just specified.
3. Since men do not light a candle to hide its light, we should let our light shine to all around us.
4. Our public and outward Christianity should be like a city on a hill and a candle on a candlestick.
5. We want men to see our good works, though we do not do our good works only to be seen (Mat 6:1).
6. We want men to see our good works, and good works are only those defined by God's pure word.
7. We want men to see our good works, but the objective is our Father's glory and not our own glory.
8. God is glorified when we bear much fruit (John 15:8), and others will glorify God by us (Gal 1:24).
9. Sinners can be converted unto God by the holy lives of Christians (I Cor 7:16; I Pet 2:11-12; 3:1-2).
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APPLICATION

A. It is valuable to consider how much of a testimony for the Lord and truth we can have by our lives.
    1. See the outline, "Actions Speak Louder than Words."
    2. The greatest complaint against Christianity is hypocrisy, and the complaint is generally justified.
    3. Do you show the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all areas of life, or do you merely call Him, "Lord"?
B. We must first remember all the specific commandments of God and do them for the glory of God.
    1. Peter listed two areas of trouble for all men … government and froward bosses (I Pet 2:13-23); we can practice this in areas like driving speed, tax compliance, obtaining permits, etc., etc.
    2. Paul listed two areas of trouble for all men … murmurings and disputings (Philippians 2:14-15).
    3. The love of one another, which is clearly emphasized most, shows Christianity (John 13:34-35).
    4. Child training is a commandment of our Father, and trained children should be visible (Eph 6:4).
    5. Christian women are to have meek and quiet spirits, and it should be obvious to all (I Pet 3:3-4).
    6. Modesty in apparel is not just a good idea or option; it is commanded good works (I Tim 2:9-10).
    7. While the world's marriages crumble, we have a duty to love and submission (Eph 5:22-33).

8. Pilfering time and materials from a job is common, but God demands total honesty (Tit 2:9-10).
9. A filthy or foolish mouth is condemned by the word of God, so we have our duty (Eph 5:3-5).

C. We must then remember all the fruit and traits of godliness and apply them to each part of our lives.
   1. Do you show GENTLENESS in dealings with your spouse, children, a careless employee, a slow waitress, an ignorant mechanic, and all others at all times?
   2. Do you show TEMPERANCE in bodyweight, appearance, cleanliness of car, punctuality to appointments, paying bills on time, cleanliness of house, ruling your speech, controlling anger?
   3. Do you show DILIGENCE in your job, your business, and in keeping all commitments to all?
   4. Do you show the fruit of JOY at all times, so that others know you are exceptionally happy?
   5. Is your life so full of PEACE, in spite of any circumstances, that others would ask of your hope?
   6. Are you so MEEK that you are not ruffled or revengeful, no matter the offences against you?
   7. Do you show sincere LOVE to your neighbor, which is anyone that God brings across your path?
   8. Are you able to LONGSUFFER those that offend, oppose, and violate you in minor matters?
   9. Is your reputation one of VIRTUE, or strength of goodness, or are you thought a little profane?
   10. GRACIOUSNESS is best shown by the tongue. Are you known by all for gracious speech?
   11. THANKFULNESS is God's will for our lives, at home, at work, at play, and at all times.

Conclusion:

1. What an incredible opportunity for your life! To influence the world for good and God's glory! Embrace it!
2. Is there any better reason to be alive? Is there any goal for living greater than these? Will you leverage them?
3. God has not saved us just to keep us out of hell or give personal spiritual joy. We are to glorify Him by being an adorning and warning light for the gospel's sake as sons of God in the midst of a crooked, perverse nation.
4. Having warned of persecution for righteousness' sake and His sake, He exhorted us to our public duty also.
5. The verses of this lesson should not be restricted to the ministry, as they apply to both ministers and disciples.
6. Other places in the Scriptures teach the same lesson to those that are definitely not ministers (I Pet 2:11-12).

For Further Study:

1. Sermon, ***Living Epistles,*** from II Cor 3:1-18 … Living Epistles.
2. Sermon, ***Actions Speak Louder*** … Actions Speak Louder than Words.
3. Sermon, For Love of a Soul.
4. Sermon, ***Evangelism One at a Time*** … Evangelism One Soul at a Time.