

Live Like Christ: The Sermon on the Mount
Session 2: Visible Righteousness (Matthew 5:13-20)

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

- Salt was very precious, essential for life, added flavor, and was critical for preventing decay – that is the public role of the disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Bonhoeffer, “The call of Jesus Christ means either that we are the salt of the earth, or else we are annihilated; either we follow the call or we are crushed beneath it.”
- Jesus doesn’t present a choice, He states a fact: we ARE the salt of the earth. The question is whether we are flavorful or worthless!
- We are salt when we live the Beatitudes – this is absolutely critical in our present cultural moment!

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

- Jesus doesn’t say “Be the light” – we ARE the light. The question is whether or not we’re visible.
- We must fulfill our purpose – to glorify God by our ACTIONS
- We are to be a visible community unlike any other!
- Bonhoeffer, “All these good works are a bearing of the cross of Jesus Christ...only the Father which is in heaven can be praised for the ‘good works.’”
- How visible are your good works? How visible is GOD in your good works? How visible are you?

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

- To fulfill means to complete and perfect. Jesus is what all of the Old Testament (holiness, sacrifices, wisdom, and prophecies) points to.
- Bonhoeffer, “Only the doer of the law can remain in communion with Jesus.”

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

- How can our righteousness exceed that of the most righteous people imaginable??? By being truly righteous inside, not merely in outside appearances.
- That is only possible through the cross of Jesus Christ, our new birth in Him, and the indwelling of His Spirit in us.
- Bonhoeffer, “This is where the righteousness of the disciple exceeds that of the Pharisees: it is grounded solely upon the call to fellowship with him who alone fulfills the law.”
- Bonhoeffer, “That is to say, Jesus Christ and he alone fulfills the law, because He alone lives in perfect communion with God. It is Jesus himself who comes between the disciples and the law, not the law which comes between Jesus and the disciples. They find their way to the law through the cross of Christ.”

Bonhoeffer resources:

Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, A Biography

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers From Prison

Other challenging but readable works by Bonhoeffer, including shorter books