

THE RED LETTER LECTURES

NOTES

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT Jesus' Teaching on Salt and Light and A Higher Righteousness Matthew 5:13—20

I. Salt

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. — Mt. 5:13

A *the salt of the earth . . .*

1. The analogy of natural salt. What is it good for?
 - a. Purifies and cleanses. See *Jud. 9:45*.
 - b. Preserves from corruption. See *Lev. 2:13*.
 - c. Enhances taste to food. See *Job 6:6*.
 - d. A sign of a covenant. See *2 Chron. 13:5*.
2. What is the spiritual application?
 - a. Symbolic of that spiritual health and vitality essential to Christian virtue and counteractive of the corruption that is in the world.⁵
 - b. Applied spiritually to the disciples of Christ who were to circulate among and purify the corrupted masses of mankind with their heavenly doctrines and examples.⁶

B. *But if salt loses its saltiness . . .*

1. How is that possible? What would make salt lose its natural flavor and properties? Discuss.
2. How could this happen spiritually?
See *Rom. 12:2; 1 Jn. 2:15-16*.

Jud. 9:45: All that day Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it.

Lev. 2:13: Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.

Job 6:6: Is tasteless food eaten without salt, or is there flavor in the white of an egg? (Rhetorical questions).

2 Chron. 13:5: Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?

⁵ Vines, Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, *EDONW*, p. 544

⁶ Zodhaites, *WSDNT*, p.119

Rom. 12:2: Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 Jn. 2:15-16: Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

II. Light

*“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, **LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE*** before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. — Mt. 5:14-16*

A. *You are the light of the world.*

1. In the first chapter of John's gospel, he introduces Jesus (the Word) as "the light of men . . . that shines in the darkness" and "the true light that gives light to every man" (Jn. 1:4-5, 9).
2. Later Jesus refers to Himself in the same manner. See *Jn. 8:12*.
3. Isn't it interesting that Jesus would refer to His disciples also as "the light of the world"?
4. Does this teaching help explain our Lord's statement in John 9:4-5?
5. Does this embolden you to know that what our Lord did on earth He expects us to do as well? See *Jn. 14:12-14*.

B. *In the same way . . .*

1. Don't hide the light.
2. Put it out in the open where everyone can see it.
3. Don't limit the light to just a few but everyone who is in range of the light. The brighter the better.

C. *let your light shine before men.*

1. An Imperative Command—fulfilled by continually doing good deeds to others. By doing what is right in the sight of all, God will be praised. See *Mt. 7:12; Lk. 8:16-18*.
2. The disciple does not have inherent light; we have

NOTES

Jn. 8:12: When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Jn. 9:4-5: As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Jn. 14:12-14: I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Mt. 7:12: So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Lk. 8:16-18: "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

reflective light. As we behold the glory of the Lord, we reflect it. We must not let anything come between us and the Lord's light.

3. Analogy of the moon and the sun.

III. A Higher Righteousness

DO NOT THINK* that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. — Mt. 5:17

A. *Do not think . . . but to fulfill them.*

1. An Imperative Command. Literally, "do not misunderstand."
2. Jesus would satisfy the requirements of the Law by His obedience to the Law. See 2 Cor. 5:21.
3. He would fulfill the prophecies in regard to Him, which are in the hundreds.
4. The Old Testament includes about sixty different prophecies, with more than 300 references, of the coming of the Messiah. It was through the fulfillment of these prophecies that Israel was told she would be able to recognize the true Messiah when He came. The four gospels record several times when Jesus said that He was fulfilling a prophecy of the Old Testament. See Lk. 24:27.
5. Jesus was not nullifying the moral Law as the Pharisees would claim. As a set of moral and spiritual principles, it is eternal.
6. The Law as a covenantal system with Israel, would end at the cross. See Heb. 8:13.

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. — Mt. 5:18

A. *the smallest letter . . .*

1. Yod (Heb.), the smallest letter in the alphabet.

NOTES

"When we sum it all up, we find that Jesus Christ believed Scripture, that he submitted himself to Scripture, that he taught that a person would only believe on him as he believed Scripture."

—Boice, p.78

2 Cor. 5:21: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Lk. 24:27: And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Heb. 8:13: By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.



B. *the least stroke of a pen . . .*

1. Refers to a "serif" or a tiny protrusion on a letter that distinguishes it from another in Hebrew. See *Hebrew letters, bet and kaf*.
2. God's written word is true even to the smallest detail.

Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. — Mt. 5:19

A. *Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches . . .*

1. There are three divisions of the OT Law: Ceremonial, Civil and Moral. To which is Jesus referring and can you name some of them?
READ Exo. 20:1-21.

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. — Mt. 5:20

A. *that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees . . .*

1. How does one acquire that kind of righteousness? The Pharisees believed they could do it through "good works." What say you? *See Rom. 9:30-32.*
2. By what venue does righteousness come? *See 1 Ptr. 2:24; 2 Ptr. 1:1; Rom. 4:13*

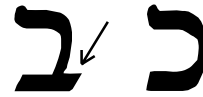
B. The righteousness of Abraham is our example.
See Rom. 4:13.

IV. Commandments in this section of study:

A. **LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE**

B. **DO NOT THINK (do not misunderstand)**

NOTES



Rom. 9:30-32: What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works.

1 Ptr. 2:24: He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

2 Ptr. 1:1: To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.

Rom. 4:13: It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

THE ANALOGIES OF SALT AND LIGHT

Study Assignment

Look up the different definitions for "salt" and "light." Find as many applications of those definitions to the believer as you can. www.Dictionary.com is a good resource.

- Salt

- Light

NOTES