

SALT & LIGHT (Final Word)

by Pastor Dawn Beard



Jesus began His sermon on the mount listing the eight beatitudes that He wants to become the lifestyle principles of His disciples. These are the foundation needed to be salt and light.

Jesus makes a bold statement in Matthew 5:17 “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.” Jesus is about to bypass the expected and go straight to the heart. In fact, He focuses the rest of His sermon on emphasizing the importance of the heart and not just the outward appearance. The purpose was to make very clear that righteous acts and works alone do not qualify you for eternal life and right standing with God. In many respects, He was speaking to those who thought they were “good enough” already.

Immediately, He cuts to the heart and exposed the reality of the sinfulness of man. He quotes the law “Do not murder” but then takes it deeper and says if you hate your brother, or hold a grudge, or speak badly of him, you will be judged. (Matthew 5:21-24) He then quotes another law “Do not commit adultery” and says that if you have looked at someone lustfully, you are guilty of breaking that law, and are, in fact, an adulterer. He goes on to address divorce, oaths, revenge, and loving your enemy.

If this wasn't enough, Jesus goes deeper by addressing heart motives. Matthew 6:1 “Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.” Why you do what you do matters most to God. Jesus addresses “religious duties” such as giving to the needy, prayer and fasting. Who are you doing this for? What is your real motive?

Then Jesus takes it even deeper and addresses the trust issue. When it comes to your money and possessions, where is your trust? (Matthew 6:19-34) Do you hoard? Are you cheap? Do you worry constantly? Who do you really serve - God or money? He addresses this deep issue of trust with a promise, “Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” What an incredible promise that has the ability to keep your trust in God strong!

Next Jesus exposes a dangerous source of one's worthiness. “Do not judge. . . why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own?” (Matthew 7:1,3) In other words, mind your own business. Let God search your heart and deal with you, and let Him deal with others. You will have a wrong estimation of yourself when you compare with others. So don't. Let God be the judge.

Jesus warns that being His disciple will not be easy, for “not everyone who says to be ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father.” (Matthew 7:21) Religious works will not grant you eternal life. Only those who are willing to pay the price and take the narrow road will find life. “By their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:20)

Ask Him to search your heart, to expose those areas that need His addressing. Surrender to Him knowing that God is a loving Father, who knows how to give good gifts to His children (Matthew 7:11). Keep your heart and motives right before God. And remember this advice from Jesus “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Jesus isn't concerned with mere outward actions, He looks at the heart. He ends His sermon with an illustration of a house built on a foundation of solid rock versus sand. If you put into practice what Jesus taught, no matter what happens in life, you will stand firm upon the solid rock, Jesus Christ Himself.

He is the Rock Unshakable!