

The Sermon on the Mount
Class Notes
Session 4

Matthew 5.13-16 Salt and Light. These verses discuss the Purpose of discipleship.

Salt functions as a...Seasoning...Preservative...Purifier

The disciples of Jesus are to the earth what salt is to everyday life.

The earth (*kosmos*) is the realm of human existence that stands under God's rule through the coming of Jesus. It is the universal scope of the church's mission.

What happens when the church (a Christian) ceases to be what we are called to be? We are Foolish!

"...Lost its taste"... μωραίνομαι (*mōrainomai*)..."Foolish" "Absurd" (i.e. "Tasteless")

(V 14) "Light"—a metaphor for God and God's people... As well as truth... (*Psalms 18.28; Micah 7.8*)

We are God's instruments created for a purpose.

To both Enhance the joy and meaning in our world and to Reveal the way to God!

(v.16): Our desire for "Salting" and "Shining"...Our "good works" are the Glorify the Father!

Luther: "What [Jesus] calls 'good works' here is the exercise, expression, and confession of the teaching about Christ and faith....Shining is the real job of believing or teaching, by which we also help others to believe" (*Luther's Works: American Edition*: 21:65).

Matthew 5.17-20 The Fulfillment of the Law (Torah). Three ways Jesus fulfilled the Law...

- The final and complete intention...*Galatians 5.14*...
- The Typological recurrence of a pattern...*James 2.23*...
- A previously promised occurrence...*Acts 7.17*

The focus now turns to the life one is to live before others and God...which "illuminates" those who sit in darkness.

Jesus' new teaching brings realization and fulfillment to that which the Torah pointed and prophesied.

Fulfillment confirms the Torah's truth. (However, there is a tension between Jesus and Moses).

Jesus came to fulfill the Law. Both in the Law's intentions and the Law's applications.

Scripture is about and was fulfilled by Jesus. Not an "iota" not a "dot" was missed!

"Jesus confirms the full authority of the Old Testament as Scripture for all ages (2 Tim. 3:15–16), even down to the smallest components of the written text. (1) The "smallest letter" (Gk. *iōta*; KJV "jot") of the Hebrew alphabet is the *yōd*. (2) "The least stroke of a pen" (Gk. *keraiā*; KJV "tittle") most likely refers to a *serif*, a small hook or projection that differentiates one Hebrew letter from a similar one (such as the letters כ *bêt*/ *ḵ* *kap*,

the letters ד dalet/ ד rêš, and the letters ה he/ ה-hêt).” (C.E. Arnold. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*).

(v.20): As Jesus will illustrate in this sermon...Kingdom righteousness flows from the *inside out*...not the *outside in*!

What more “righteousness” is required? To follow Jesus in discipleship and heart transformation.

“The scribes and Pharisees read and study the Law and the Prophets. They accept the fact that “Scripture cannot be broken” (Jn 10:35), but they do not believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Scriptures (cf Jn 5:39). They seek to achieve righteousness by keeping the Law, for which they have a high regard. But Jesus goes on to point out just how defective their righteousness really is (vv 21–48)....When judged by the true intent of God’s Law, our righteousness is likewise defective. Only in Christ do we have true righteousness.” (*The Lutheran Study Bible*, Concordia Publishing).

Matthew 5.21-26 “You have heard that it was said to those of old...”

Jesus is not criticizing the OT but the understanding of the OT many of his hearers adopted.

Jesus’ “I” is emphatic in each of His six antitheses...With each, Jesus contrasts what was said in the Torah and in its traditional interpretations with His *deeper* requirements.

This is the greater righteousness Jesus demands of His disciples. Jesus begins with Murder. Jesus wants to get to the Source of why people murder. Which is often Anger!

Reconciliation with others is paramount. No sense for religious rituals if we hate deep down... (*Genesis 4*, Cain and Able).

Problem...Is Jesus using hyperbole here? Was Jesus’ statement intended to cover all circumstances?

Ephesians 4.26

Christian tradition generally did not teach elimination of all anger. In the scripture we find that both views (anger/watch your anger) are held.

Again, the sermon inspires the moral imagination.

Anger is a part of us *and* it should not control us. Anger can be dangerous and harmful.

(vs.22): “Insults” ...ῥακά (*rhaka*) (Semitic idiom): “Worthless” “Empty Headed” (Idiot) “You fool” μωρός (*mōros*): “Dull” (Stupid/Foolish)

Jesus pictures the judgments in this case in the strongest terms! “Hell of fire” γέεννα (*geenna*)...A Greek transliteration of the Hebrew, “Hinnom Valley”.

What are the alternatives to being angry? (Look at *verses 23-24, 25-26*). Both illustrate the self-discipline of reconciliation. The prohibition in v.22 is overcome in vs. 23-26 by making peace.

The picture here is the disciple going about the awkward task of trying to right wrongs. In other words, the anger is dealt with!

Going Forward: “[Jesus] contravenes the letter of several of the Old Testament laws, not because he is abolishing them but because he is establishing a new covenant in which God’s law is internalized in a way that prevents it from being fully encapsulated in a list of rules and that precludes perfect obedience...” (Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*).