

Saturday, February 25, 2023 • Read Matthew 5:13–16

Questions from the Scripture text: What does Jesus call His disciples (v13)? Of what are they the salt? What can this salt lose? What question does He ask? What is the implied answer? What is it now good for? What will happen to it? What else does Jesus call them (v14a)? What is it that cannot be hidden if set where (v14b)? Where do they not put a lit lamp (v15)? Where do they put it instead? To whom does it give light? What does Jesus command them to do (v16)? What will men see, if they who are the light are consistently what they are? Whom will men glorify? Where is this Father?

What dangers accompany the blessing of persecution? Matthew 5:13–16 looks forward to the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **persecution presents us with the dangers of compromising or hiding our identity in Christ**.

The blessed are poor in spirit (v3); they mourn (v4); they are meek (v5); they hunger and thirst (v6); they are merciful (v7); they are pure in heart (v8); they are peacemakers (v9). All of these are things that they are. Even the "mourning" characteristic is as much a state as an action; and, "peacemaker" describes someone whose ordinary characteristic is the elimination of disturbance (cf. 1Cor 16:11).

So, Jesus's description of the blessed person overwhelmingly focuses on essence, not actions—on what he is more than what he does (though what he is produces what he does). This continues to be the emphasis, when He comes to explaining and applying the law in vv17–48. The great problem with sinning is that it has its roots in being a sinner.

What is the crowning characteristic, however? Not so much being persecuted—although that is the occasion of the blessing in v12. The *characteristic* of the blessed disciple is his identity with the master. "On account of me" translates the last two words in the original of 12. So it is the identity of the man that is the great issue through the whole chapter.

And that helps us to see that it is the issue in our four verses. Jesus doesn't tell them to do salty things or bright things so much as He tells them that they *are* salt and light and warns them against losing what they are. Jesus is warning against dangers that persecution presents: either losing what we are or hiding what we are.

Christian, do not lose what you are! (v13). Are you afraid of being seen as too odd, too fanatical? This often happens not just in the world, but in the church when someone is reforming back to Scripture. They stick out. They are not like everything else. But they may be persecuted for being different. So they are tempted to lose that flavor. But this is self-defeating! The implication here is that if we decide we'd rather lose our saltiness than be trampled by men, we will become as those who, *before God* are worthy only of being trampled!

Christian, do not hide what you are! (v14–16). The second illustration of the nature of a disciple is "light." Here, we can see even more clearly that this is his identity with Christ, Who called Himself "the light of the world" whose followers "have the light of life" (cf. Jn 8:12). We know that we can't entirely dissociate unbelievers without leaving the world (cf. 1Cor 5:10). God has put us on a hill (v14) and on a stand (v15) on purpose. This passage isn't saying to go to a hill or onto a stand. (That would be exactly opposite 6:1–18!)

Rather the issue is: what do we do when we are "in the presence of men"? Do we cease to shine at that point, in order not to be mocked, persecuted, or spoken ill of? Or do we continue to shine? "Keep shining, when you're in the presence of men" (v16)! The light didn't come from you; it's not yours to put out. And it isn't shame but glory. Will you cover up the Father's glory? Christ's glory? No! You mustn't! Men may persecute you, but even then their punishment will bring glory to the Father (cf. 1Pet 2:12). And He may even glorify Himself by saving them!

Be what you are, dear Christian. Do not let persecution tempt you to blend in when you are before men or even give it up altogether. It is what your Father sees that matters most!

In what situations are you tempted to "tone down" your Christianity or reformed-ness? In dependence upon the Spirit, how will you bring this passage to bear upon your heart and mind in preparation to obey it?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving Your Son, our Lord Jesus to be the Light of the world. And thank You for so identifying us with Him and uniting us to Him that we, too, may have in Him the high honor of being made to be salt and being made to be light. Grant that, by Your Spirit, we would neither give it up or shrink away from it, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP1 "How Blessed the Man" or TPH534 "Fill Thou My Life"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew 5 versus 13 through 16th. These are God's words. You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its flavor, How should it be seasoned? Because then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light to the world.

The city that is set on a hill, cannot be hidden. Nor do they like to lamp and put it under a basket. But on lamp stand, I think it was lights to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works.

And glorify your father in heaven. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent

Passage comes in the Midst of what is called the sermon on the Mount. A sermon on what it looks like from heaven's perspective. When someone is in the Lord Jesus Christ, there's a disciple. Of the Lord Jesus Christ and a sermon about. What then how then we should think and feel About our life.

Has believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus has begun in the first 12 verses. Of this chapter talking about the blessedness, the happiness. Of being. When whom the Lord looks at us, he sees certain things. He sees those who are poor and spirit and who mourn those who are meek.

For hungry and thirsty for righteousness. Those who are merciful those who are pure and heart. Those who Deescalate. Situation associated, do not produce. Or bring attention to themselves. But they what they make, what they do. Is peace. And the last thing, the last section in verses 10 through 12 of the Beatitudes.

Especially is, especially about The blessedness of those who are being persecuted for righteousness, sake. When will the blossomness of being persecuted and having them say? All kinds of evil against us falsely. For the Lord, Jesus is sake because we are identified with him, just as the prophets who were before For identified with him, just as he Himself suffered.

And then, after this passage, It's going to talk about how our obedience is obedience that must come from and be from the heart. But we don't just not murder or not commit adultery and so forth. I bet that we be those. Love and recognize the image of God and others.

Even from our heart, those who are pure. With our eyes and with our thoughts and with our desires, not just With our actions and then as we turn the page into chapter 6, it's going to be about how we do a religion that we not do our religion to be seen by men.

But that we do our religion in secret and our father, Who season secret and is our award. Well, reward us in secret. And so forth. So that's the context of these. For verses that are before us. And notice, these are not four verses That are telling us to be salt or to be light.

Rather, if you have been joined to Christ by faith, These are verses about what you are and how to respond to the fact of what you are. He says you are. The salt of the earth verse 13. He says you are The light of the world, verse 14. And that one in particular.

I should be. Significant to us because it is Jesus. Who is the light to the world? If you Have a Bible. You can turn it into John, chapter 8.

When did verse 12, Jesus says, I am the light of the world he who follows me shall not walk in darkness. But have the light of life. And so this is how we are the light of the world. Not by doing bright things, but being united to the Lord Jesus.

By abiding in him and having our life in him. And that life of faith in him, That just worked out more and more as the Holy spirit's conforms us to his image. That is what makes us light in the world. In particular, since the Lord Jesus has now ascended into glory And it is the one who is in Christ that is a new creation, that's one, who is in Christ.

Who has light and walks in the light? Does he is in the light? As that apostle also writes in his first letter, in first John, And so the question is, What do we do since we are before men?

Verse 13 says, you're the salt of the earth. Verse 14 says, you are the light of the world. And these things are things that we are before, God. Now, if the salt loses its flavor, Then we become like his people were in the Old Testament. And this is exactly what happened.

When Israel lost its distinctiveness from the nations and the people of God lost their distinctiveness from the nation's, what did God do? He threw them out. And caused them to be trampled upon by men. You see, he has given, he has given his people, a purpose in the world of being distinct before the face of God.

This applies, especially, I think to our worship since that was The primary way. That they were to be distinct and we are to be Distinct. And so, this isn't losing flavor to the world. Or. Preservative properties since that's not even. What's the Lord Jesus? This? How the Lord Jesus describes us all to hear.

Is talking about our distinctiveness from the world before the face of god. And what he will do to us. Sort of like, when he says in another place, don't fear them. Who can only kill the body? You really going to be afraid of men. Instead of being afraid of the living, god, And that's how verse 13.

Relates to verses, 10 through 12, first of all, you're blessed before God, when they persecute you for Jesus's sake. And second of all, You are cursed before God. If you stop being distinctive from the world, He is going to throw you out and let men trample upon you.

So that's the you are the salt of the earth first. In other words, If you are tempted. To be less distinctive because you get persecuted. For your love, for Christ, your devotion to Christ, you're dependence upon Christ, your delight and Christ. Your obedience to him. Then remember that you are the salt of the earth.

The Lord desires to see his son. When he looks down upon the Earth. From heaven. And he looks at you. You are to be a display of. The Lord Jesus Christ as the Holy spirit, conforms you more and more. To his image. Now in verse 14 and verse 15, it's explaining Where the Lord has put us, you are the light of the world.

A city that just sat on a hill, cannot be hidden. Nor do they like to land? And put it under a basket but on a lamp stand. And it gives light to all who are in the house. Now, this isn't saying put yourself on the hill. Or put yourself on the lamp stand.

Because, We are not the ones, the light doesn't put itself. On a lamp stand. A city. Well, I guess there are people in the city but the city is already on the saying That the Lord has put us on the hill. The Lord has put us on the lampstand.

The Lord has put us in the world. In 1st Corinthians. 5, he says. You would have to go out of the world in order to stop associating with the world and describes it as an impossibility. Not as an option. I'm so since you are before men, what should you do?

And the answer is fine. He says, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven. It actually just saying, shine your light before men. That men may see. Good works. Your good works and glorify your father in heaven.

It is not saying, Find where the men are and make sure you're bright there. No, it's it's since you are before men. What should you do? Well, the temptation is to hide what we are. The Temptation is to try to fit in. But no God, who put you before men has put you there to be what you are.

So, where is verse? 13 is telling us not to lose our saltiness. For 16 is telling us not to hide our brightness. Indeed, we should be willing that we would be persecuted. Thankfully, the Holy spirit has carried Peter. In 1st Peter, chapter 2. To say an almost identical thing that we might understand rightly.

I don't do Understand and apply. Matthew 5:16. 1st Peter 2. I'll read verse 11 as well, but it's versed 12. That is the primary parallel. Loved I beg you a soldiers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts. Which war against the soul. And here's verse 12. Having your conduct honorable, among the nations among the Gentiles.

Having your conduct honorable among the nations that when they speak against you as evildoers, They may buy your good works which they observe. Glorify God in the day of visitation. Okay. So Matthew 5:16 Shine your light before men. That they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.

This is not saying You by being a consistent Christian. By rejecting sin even from your heart. Will be so impressive to men that they'll say, oh, Jesus is so wonderful and god and his law are so good. We are so sufficiently impressed by you that we are tempted now to become Christians.

No, there may be those whom the Lord has. Regenerated to the Lord is bringing to himself. And he may do that in them. But the general rule is, They are going to persecute you and say evil things about you. For loving good and for doing good. But you don't be tempted to stop.

Loving good. Or stop doing good. Just because you hated for it. Because in the last day, when all things are revealed. God will be glorified by the fact that you were persecuted for doing. What's right? That you were punished for doing what is right? And that's how Peter goes on to.

To apply that in the rest of 1st, Peter chapter 2 using Jesus himself. As the great example, and that's our last point. Is that if our being the light of the world is, because Jesus is the light of the world and we are his followers and have his life in us.

Then we should look at. What happened to Jesus? What happened to Jesus for being the light of the world? He was persecuted even unto death. He was crucified. And we should be willing to Belated sheep as to the slaughter. To be killed all day long for his sake. So that when God takes vengeance.

Upon. Those who have done this in the last day, you will be glorified. Because they saw our good works. But they spoke evil of us. And they persecuted us. When so, the believer should. Love God and love God's law. From his heart. And not be tempted to tone it down.

Because the world that hates God. Hates his law.

Man, let's pray. Our Father in heaven. We pray that you would not allow us to Be discouraged by being persecuted or spoken evil. Love. Even in the church. Were those who love you and love your law. Are often spoken evil off. But Lord, we pray that we would care more about what you see when you see us.

That you would see those who are distinct from the world that you would see those. Who in your son? Our lord Jesus. Our light. Because we have his life by your spirit. And so we pray that you would grant to us, not to lose what we are or hide what we are.

For, we ask it in Jesus's name. Amen.