



MONDAY 07 MAR 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 5:13-14

Plug In...

There are some deep things going on in Matthew 5:13-16. So this week we will traverse these verses more than once.

Like the Beatitudes, Jesus is pronouncing again something about the disciples. It is not "you ought to...", or "you should be..." Remarkably, it is: "you are..."

Chew It Over...

Ponder how these few verses are doing the same thing as the Beatitudes.

The NIV11 renders the words of Jesus from Matt. 4:19 "Come follow me and *I will send you out to fish for people*". The former NIV84 kept the more literal wording: "Come follow me and *I will make you fish for people*".

Given that, think through how this section of "you are..." needs to be related to Jesus' words as he called his first disciples in 4:19?

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God for the grand status and functions He has given us in the world. Ask Jesus to never stop *making* us into people whom fulfil this function. Ask also for The Lakes as a church, may this be evident to our community.



TUESDAY 08 MAR 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 5:13

Plug In...

This verse indicates there is the possibility that people known as Jesus' disciples, or as Christians, can lose their saltiness.

Chew It Over...

What from the preceding couple of verses (vv.11-12) could be a context for us to dampen our saltiness?

Right now, what current pressures force us to not live as Christians?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray for resilience to speak openly and candidly about your attachment to Jesus and the difference he makes for you and for the world. Especially ask that Australian Christians will not go silent, even in the face of contemporary hot issues discussed in public media, politics, and social conversations. As topics like sex & gender, marriage, freedom of religious speech, all pressure the Christian witness, please pray for wisdom and courage to do this in a visible, yet 'tasty' manner before others.



WEDNESDAY 09 MAR 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 5:13-14 & Isaiah 63:1-6

Plug In...

There is a warning here. The language of “thrown out” and “trampled underfoot” is language Jesus keeps using to speak of the rejection some will experience at the Final Judgement (see: Matt. 8:11-12; 22:13; 25:30 – imagery taken from Old Testament passages such as Isa. 63:1-3).

A warning with threat can seem at odds with the grace-pronouncements we’ve seen in the phrases “blessed...” and “you are...” Subsequently, it is possible to take an “either”-“or” approach. Either, this is a word of grace and the warning is no real warning at all. Or, we have a real warning, and there is something God requires us to avoid, which if so, potentially puts us into salvation-by-works territory.

The two are not mutually exclusive. God’s word for the Christian, the true disciple, works in such a way that His warning by His Word is the *means* by which His Spirit activates us to changed behaviour. God gives a warning, His Spirit within us causes us to heed the warning, and we obey. It is a real warning to be heeded, but God *makes* us obedient disciples (Matt. 4:19, *cf.* 28:10). There is wonderful security in His warnings for Christians.

We’ve stopped down here to explore this dynamic at length, for it plays out throughout the entire Sermon on the Mount.

Chew It Over...

Look across your life currently. Are you salty? Visibly attached to Jesus that others are aware and curious? After scrutinising our life in this way, the rubber of this warning hits the road when we ask the probing question of this verse: would we be considered useful or useless to Jesus? Today as you hear Jesus' voice, how is he shaking you up so you be what you are?

Prayer Suggestion

Lord you have blessed us, and made us your disciples, not just for our own benefit and salvation, but as part of your way to draw others from the world to yourself. May we heed this warning. By your Holy Spirit make us useful to you in this world.



THURSDAY 10 MAR 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 5:14-15

Plug In...

After the warning given in v. 13, Jesus gives a guarantee. Disciples of Jesus *are* the light of the world. He has made them so, therefore it *cannot* be hidden. Jesus' power and authority is such, that what he makes works – comes to fruition. Verse 15's metaphor extends the guarantee: Jesus has lit the light and he's putting it out on the table for all to see.

Chew It Over...

Identify your dark patch of the world. After reflecting that Jesus has lit your light and put you out on the table right there on location, ask how you can give wattage today where you find yourself. Light to your family, work, sports club, and community today and tomorrow?

Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to help you walk into your patch of the dark world in a way you can tune in to the lay of the land. Pray before each entry, who does He want you to love and speak with today? Ask Him to make you attentive as to who can be moved a step further away from the darkness and towards the light through what you do and say today.



FRIDAY 11 MAR 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Mathew 5:16

Plug In...

Earlier, Matthew said Jesus was the light (quoting Isaiah 9:1-2). Remembering this sets the context, reminds us that we are not the light *source*. Any 'light'-work (not lite-work) we do originates from Jesus and is exactly what he is *making* us to do (Matt. 4:19).

Chew It Over...

Again, consider how visible you are as a Christian? Challenge one another at The Lakes, as a church how visible are we? Jesus has made us very bright lights for the world. Are you/we catching people's attention in such a way they go, "who are you?" "What kind of person are you?" Do we have regular opportunity to point out that we are one of the Father in Heaven's children?

Prayer Suggestion

Lord increase our luminosity. May it be demonstrative that we belong to the Father! Please give us regular opportunity to say that Jesus has made us like this. Keep us humble to point back to you alone.



WEEKEND 12-13 MAR 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: I Peter 2:11-12 & Titus 2

Plug In...

Israel was called to be a light to the nations, and the other nations would find blessing. The Old Testament plays out that they did the complete opposite. Other nations scorned Israel in the end. Read Ezekiel 5:5-10, words given just before Israel's exile.

What Matthew has shown us in the past few chapters is that Jesus and the people he gathers are a new Israel. They have a similar role and responsibility in the world. The major difference this time is that Jesus *makes* them a 'nation' that *does* shine brightly and conveys blessing to the world through Jesus' gospel.

The New Testament sees this work of Jesus making light-shining-disciples so guaranteed, that there is a tight connection between the gospel and changed life. A changed life that it is on view right now in Christians! Actions, behaviours, thoughts, and feelings are transformed and on view in such a way that they adorn the gospel and point people back to God.

Chew It Over...

These New Testament passages read today, encourage us to be strategic, intentional, and deliberate. It is a valuable question to ask, how are we strategically doing good works before men so they stand up and notice our God?

Prayer Suggestion

Much wisdom, humility, and courage is needed to do this. Pray for this today.

We still battle sin. Ask God to remove our pride and give glory to Him alone.