

Matthew 5:13-20 NAS

Jesus Explains Good Works and the Law!

Sunday, February 9 at 8:00 & 10:45 † Monday, February 10 at 7 PM

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany – 2014

Ash Wednesday is on March 5; Join us at 11 AM or 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: The teaching on the next three Sundays will be in Matthew chapter 5 as follows:

- 13-20: Jesus explains good works and the law!
- 21-37: Jesus fully explains three of the commandments!
- 38-48: Jesus tells us how to love our enemies!

But WHO is Jesus talking to? Going back to the beginning of chapter 5, it says that Jesus' "disciples came to Him. ² And... He began to teach them..." Disciples are "learners," *they are like apprentices who are in the process of becoming journeymen!* So they are *learning, then putting that learning into practice.* "True learning means application to good deeds, genuinely following in the spirit of Christ." (TDNT, One Volume, 555) Paul wrote these words to Titus regarding believers: "And let our people also learn to engage in good deeds...that they may not be unfruitful." (Titus 3:14 NAS)

Therefore, let us, *as believers*, hear and do what Jesus says.

1. **Good Works:**

- a. Be salt: ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth..." Since salt prevents rapid decay of food, *so believers are called to prevent the rapid decay of the sinful world.* But how? To live every day and in every way as followers of Jesus! What's

included? ♦Trusting Jesus, ♦denying ourselves, ♦knowing the Bible, and ♦doing what it says!

- b. Remain salty: "...but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." // For salt to lose its saltiness, it must undergo a chemical process – *a definite change!* Dr. Kretzmann wrote: "Christians that have lost their distinctive properties have ceased to influence their surroundings for good, [they] have also lost their discipleship [in other words, they are no longer listening to the H.S. who was prompting them to follow Jesus]... So the Christians that have ceased to apply themselves to their business of acting as a moral power in the world will [be thrown out and trampled underfoot, thus will] partake of the judgment of the world." (NT 1:25) (also see John 15:6)
- c. Be light: ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ ~~Not~~ [Not even] do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house." // Jesus was preaching on a mountain, so His listeners – *right then* – could have seen many other cities which were built on higher elevations; *such cities could not be hidden!* In the same way, *those who know Jesus as Savior will not be hidden from others!* We are light; our purpose is to shine!
- d. Keep reflecting the light: ¹⁶ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your

good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." // So the light, *which disciples shine*, is in the form of good works. Dr. Kretzmann wrote: "All men that come in contact with their works shall be forced to draw conclusions as to the power that inspires them." (NT 1:26) As people witness what we do, *may they glorify our Father!*

2. **The Law:**

- a. What Jesus did with the Law: ¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."¹ // The Son of God came to do what no mere human could do; *He came to perfectly keep every OT Law*. Since Adam's failure brought sin to all, *Jesus success has provided righteousness for all*.
- b. Jesus' thorough fulfillment of the law: ¹⁸ "For [introducing an explanation] truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished." // Jesus, *who is God in the flesh*, fulfilled every aspect of the Law – *including the smallest details!* Then – *wanting us to know that the benefits of His work extend all the way forward* – Jesus used two phrases which point to the end of time. Therefore, *being confident in Him alone*, let us always have *much peace and great joy* in His finished work!

¹ With those words, "Jesus...most emphatically proclaims his full adherence to the whole Old Testament canon." (Lenski, 205)

- c. Our relationship with the law: ¹⁹ "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." // So what are "these commandments" Jesus spoke of? Lenski gave this answer: They include "all that God asks of us as disciples, in particular also repentance (3:2; 4:17) and faith in the Messiah, and then, of course, also newness of life." (210) Now consider this: The person who *annuls one of the least and teaches others* will be called least, so what about the person who annuls/cancels out even more! Therefore, *let us be serious in our ♦study, ♦living, and ♦teaching of God's Word!*
- d. Our keeping of the law cannot save us: ²⁰ "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." // The scribes and Pharisees were all about *keeping the rules*; they thought: If we do well, we will make ourselves righteous – *yet they were deceived!* Since no one can earn heaven, God is offering everyone the gift of heaven through Jesus!

Conclusion: Now, having been made righteous through Jesus, *let us be spiritual salt and light in this corrupt and dark world!* And all God's people said: **Amen!**

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