

# **GATECITY CHURCH**

## **THE CULTURE OF THE KINGDOM, PT. 3**

### **APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 – BILLY HUMPHREY**

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#### **I. Review**

- A. Last week we covered the beatitudes, which we consider to be the core values of the Kingdom. These are Jesus' own values and they are what He values.
- B. Blessed are ... the Poor in Spirit, those who Mourn, the Meek, those who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness, the Merciful, the Pure in Heart, the Peacemakers, those who are Persecuted for Righteousness sake.
- C. These are not values to graduate from, they are to be lived and leaned into throughout our whole lives.

#### **II. Salt and Light**

**Mat 5:13-16** "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. **14** "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. **16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

- A. These four verses are Jesus' commentary on the previous twelve. He's making a comment on the necessity of living the values of the kingdom and the impact that will have on the world. A key thought is that verses 13-16 are the summary of verses 1-12, while verses 17-20 are the introduction to verses 21-48.
- B. Jesus uses two key metaphors to speak of who we are to be in the world: Salt & Light
- C. Salt has several different distinctive qualities which speak of the impact that we as believers living the values of the Sermon on the Mount will have on the world:
  - 1. Salt is used as a seasoning to bring flavor (contrast of kingdoms)
  - 2. Salt causes people to be thirsty
  - 3. Salt is a fertilizer to aid water absorption
  - 4. Salt is used as a preservative to keep food from rotting
  - 5. Salt was used as a therapeutic to bring healing
  - 6. Salt was used as a detergent to cleanse and purify
- D. Each of these are the power of impact that believers can bring on those in their lives.

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E. He then goes on to warn us that if we lose our saltiness, i.e. we don't bring contrast, preservation, healing, and purification... we've become useless for kingdom impact. The question we must ask ourselves is are we bringing these impacts on the world or have we somehow lost our contrast and are no longer impacting the world?

F. The greatest impact the church has on the world is when the church looks least like the world but the most like Jesus.

**Mat 5:14-16** "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

G. Just like salt has distinct qualities that speak of our impact, so light has distinct qualities that speak of our impact:

1. Light enhances visibility bringing illumination allowing people to see
2. Light improves safety through identifying hazards and obstacles
3. Light enhances security through exposing dark places
4. Light helps navigation through showing the way
5. Light brings comfort through dispelling fear

H. It's important to note that Jesus called himself the light of the world in John 8:12 & John 9:5. The point He is making by calling us the light of the world calling Himself the light of the world is that if we live His values we will look like Him and have that same style of impact on a world that is languishing in darkness.

I. He gives us two different applications of light: a city and a lamp. We are a city, and we are a lamp.

1. The Bride of Christ is pictured as the New Jerusalem shining for all the world to see (Rev 21:9-11). Have you ever flown at night. No matter how dark it is a city that is illuminated stands out brilliantly on the horizon. This is who we are to be. A beautifully illuminated people standing out amidst the darkness of this age. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.
2. A lamp or a torch would never be lit to then be covered. You don't hide a torch you display it prominently for all so they can see.
3. You and I are called to be burning and shining lamps: burning with love for Jesus and shining as lights into a dark world.
4. Jesus admonishes us to let our light shine that men may see your good works and glorify God. How are you shining?

J. Additional Takeaways

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1. It's important to note the contrast between 5:16 and 6:1, "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven." – the difference is in your motive, you're either letting your light shine so that people will "glorify your Father in heaven" or you're doing your charitable deeds "before men to be seen by them".

2. The outcome of living the values of the kingdom is that either men will persecute you, vs. 10-12 or they will glorify God, vs. 16. The key takeaway for us is that we are never to exchange our values for the world's values as a measure to fit in or be more relatable. It doesn't mean that you should be obnoxious or intentionally unrelatable, it means that you should boldly and lovingly live the values and let men decide what they will do with your salty life.

### III. Fulfilling the Law and the Prophets

**Mat 5:17-20** "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. **18** For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. **19** Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20** For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

A. When Jesus said, "the Law and the Prophets" He was using a common phrase that refers to the whole of Old Testament Scripture.

B. It's important to note that He uses that phrase here in 5:17 but also in 7:12. This is a literary device called an inclusion. The repetition of the phrases form a beginning and end of a section and highlights themes within that portion of the discourse. This is important to note because what He says next is going to refer to His teaching and how it relates to the whole of Old Testament scripture.

C. His key point here is that the problem is not with the Law and the prophets, He wasn't coming to destroy it but to fulfill it. The reason He needed to make this distinction is because of what was coming next. He was about to give six areas where He was going to correct the teaching of the religious leaders from the law. He didn't want the masses believing the problem was with the law, instead the problem was with the rabbi's interpretations and traditions that they had added to the pure teachings of the word of God. Jesus would later say they had exalted their traditions above the word of God and thus making the word of God of no effect (Mat 15:3-6, Mark 7:8-13).

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D. The law is our tutor that leads us to Christ (Gal 3:24). But once we come to Christ the moral standards of the law do just disappear. He was saying not one part of the Word of God will fall away, it will all be fulfilled by Him and through Him.

E. When Jesus says whoever breaks one the least of these commandments He was correcting a fallacy by the teachers of the law who had divided the teaching into lesser and greater matters... He makes all the word of God equivalent.

F. Jesus then sets the stage for the next few chapters by stating that greatness in the kingdom is doing and teaching others to do the Sermon on the Mount.

1. It doesn't matter the impact of your life in terms of an earthly sphere. What matters is if you have embraced this value system and are you teaching others to do the same?

2. Too often we have made greatness in this life about possessions, platforms, privileges, and human positions of power. Greatness in this life is about none of these things. It is about whether you live and teach others to live Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

G. His final statement is that the righteousness of those who would live by the values of the kingdom must exceed the righteousness of the pharisees or there is no entrance to the kingdom. This was a towering statement. The religious leaders of His day were not living a righteousness that equated to entering the kingdom. (Undoubtedly they lacked poverty of spirit)

H. He describes the righteousness of the pharisees in detail in Matthew 23, with the summary being in vs. 3, "Whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say and do no do."