

Sermon on the Mount Part VII

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[0 : 00] Well, let's pray together. Loving Father, you have already blessed us with all spiritual blessings and heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

We are so grateful to be members of the body of Christ, which we entered by simple faith and trust in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in this new capacity, you have assigned to us responsibilities. They've been true of your people from time immemorial. How that we who are believers in the Lord are to be salt and light.

We are to be a preservation for the world. We are to be illumination for the world. And yet, we must each confess that there are times in our flesh and in our frailty when we fail to be either.

We look to you this morning for the kind of encouragement that will stir us up and enable us to be what we already are, to simply act out what you have placed within us.

[1 : 11] It's an enormous privilege to be able to reflect the character and qualities of the Son of God himself, because Christ is in us.

We take this to be an awesome responsibility as well as a great privilege. We ask that you will give us insight and understanding as we explore the concept this morning, so that we can go forth from here as vessels pleasing in your sight.

Thank you for time that is set before us. And we pray now for setting aside of the cares and problems of the world to focus upon what you've provided.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. I've got some propositions that I want you to consider.

Some we've already touched on and others will be somewhat new, but they are foundational to the content that is going to follow. And we are in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5, where the past few months we have engaged the Sermon on the Mount.

[2 : 17] We have described it as one of our Lord's most popular teachings and a most popular portion of Christendom throughout the world.

At the same time, we further describe the Sermon on the Mount as one of the most misunderstood. Why is this? It is because most Christians try to Christianize the Sermon on the Mount.

And immediately someone might say, Well, what else? Why not? Why shouldn't we? Isn't that our responsibility? No, it is not.

Because most Christians try to Christianize it, whereas it must be Judaized with interpretations and Christianized by way of application.

Now, if you make that distinction, you'll have come a long way in being able to really understand the content in the Sermon on the Mount. It is not to be interpreted by Christians.

[3 : 23] Yes, you heard me right. The Sermon on the Mount is not to be interpreted by Christians. It is not to be Christianized in that way.

It is to be applied by Christians, as we are called upon to apply many portions of Scripture in the Old Testament, for instance.

Whereas they are not to be interpreted of us, they are to be applied by us. There is a huge distinction. If you do not make a distinction between interpretation and application, then you can read the story about Abraham and Sarah being childless, and God appearing to them and promising them that they would have a child.

And as a result, they had a child. And we know that Isaac was born. That's the interpretation of the passage. Now, if you try to Christianize that, you will do what many do today, and they look at that passage and they say, Now, wait a minute.

They obviously prayed for a child that they had been lacking for their entire life, and they trusted in the Lord, and God made good on his promise, so he gave them a baby.

[4 : 37] And if you want to interpret that and make that a direct interpretation, as some do, because they say God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and he's never changed.

So if you and your mate happen to be childless, you just pray like Abraham and Sarah did, and God will answer. You know, this goes along a lot with the charismatic teaching, the name it, claim it, blab it, grab it, whatever it is you want to call it, and they will, it will work for you.

And they do that based on the premise that God is the same. God hasn't changed. He's just as powerful today as he was then. And yet, when you make application of the passage, rather than interpretation of the passage, you will understand that the abiding truth that is to be taught in this incident regarding Abraham and Sarah, and they're having a child, and how we are to apply it is this.

God is faithful. That's what it's teaching by way of application. God can be trusted. God can be counted on to keep his word. But don't expect God to keep his word regarding promises that he has made to other people, because that's like reading somebody else's mail.

It doesn't apply to you. And as we have often said, everything in the Bible, everything in the Bible, from cover to cover, is for us, but it's not all to us.

[6 : 03] Much of it was addressed to the Jewish people in a Jewish context. And it has to be understood in light of that. And when you try to, as I say, baptize it or Christianize it and drag it into our present dispensation and try to make it work, where do you stop at that?

What's the cutoff point? If you're going to do that, then why aren't you sacrificing animals? But right away, most people will say, oh, now, wait a minute.

That's not for us. That was back then. My point exactly. It's just that we aren't very consistent in applying these things. And one of the reasons is because we like to fall in line with that little Sunday school ditty, every promise in the book is mine, every word, every line.

No, it isn't. No, it isn't. There are all kinds of promises that God does make to us in the body of Christ.

And there are all kinds of promises that God makes to the seed of Israel. And some even have commonalities. Some apply to both groups, but some apply only to one. Paul said in Romans 15, I think it's verse 4, whatsoever things were written aforetime.

[7 : 20] And when Paul said that in Romans 15, he had to have been talking about the Old Testament. The new wasn't even complete. Scarcely underway.

So when he said, whatsoever things were written aforetime, meaning the Old Testament, particularly Moses and the prophets, etc., were written for our learning, not for our go and do thou likewise.

Because if you do that, you're going to be keeping the Sabbath, you're going to be eating kosher food, you're going to be sacrificing animals, you're going to be doing all kinds of things. But they are not for us. We are not under law.

We are under grace. So Paul says, whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

And when we try to take something that is specifically addressed to someone else or to another group and apply it to ourselves and expect God to make good on it and make it work, and it doesn't work, then we say, what's wrong?

[8 : 24] Has God let me down? Or maybe I don't have enough faith. I guess I'm a second-class Christian. Maybe there's sin in my life and God isn't answering. Because if you believe something and have faith and blah, blah, blah, and whatever God did for them, He'll do for you.

And you can extend that to putting out a fleece like Gideon did. He really wanted to know if that was God's will. So God says, I'm going to call you, Gideon, to lead this army and to engage in this attack.

And Gideon says, boy, I don't know if this is going to work or not. I don't know if God is really behind this. I'll tell you what. Here, God, is how you can prove yourself to me.

I'm going to take a fleece, lamb's wool, a skin of lamb's animal, and I'm going to lay the fleece out on the ground.

And tomorrow morning, when we ordinarily expect dew on the ground, if you're really behind this and you're really going to back me up, like you say, I want you to give me a sign.

[9 : 36] And the sign I want you to give me is I want dew all over the grass and all over the ground, but no dew on the fleece. Well, Gideon woke up the next morning, went out and looked at the

fleece, and there was dew everywhere.

And he looked at that fleece, and it was dry as a bone. Now, one would think that would be good enough for a skeptic, but Gideon wasn't just an ordinary skeptic.

He says, okay, I appreciate that, but let's try one more thing to really be sure.

Tomorrow morning, I want dew to be just on the fleece, but no dew anywhere else. And then I'll believe.

So, the next morning, Gideon got up, went out and looked, and there wasn't any dew anywhere except on the fleece.

[10:46] Gideon said, okay, I'm your man. Now, that was a very personal thing. Don't you try that.

That's not the way to determine what God wants to do in your life. But that was given for our learning, not for our duplicating.

And there's a huge difference. We walk by faith, not by sight. Gideon wasn't willing to do that, but do you know, Gideon belonged to an aggregate of people who were accustomed to walking by sight. That means that means you order the affairs of your life and your agenda and your values based upon what you see. That's walking by sight.

And when Moses was called to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, in order for them to be released, God had to bring all of these plagues, ten of them, on the nation of Egypt.

[11:58] And the last one was devastating. It involved the death of the firstborn. So Israel, as a nation, cut their teeth, as it were, on a ready-made miracle that God provided.

In fact, ten of them. And each of those plagues was directed at a different Egyptian deity, which of course was a false deity. And then when God led them out, next miracle in line, opening of the Red Sea.

All Israel passed through on dry land, all of Pharaoh's army died when the waters came back.

That's another miracle. When they got out into the desert, no water.

God brought water out of the rock when Moses struck it. There they had a miracle. Nothing to eat. Manna from heaven. Rain down. All they had to do was collect it. Then it came to the place where our souls loathe this light bread.

In other words, I'm so sick of this manna, I don't ever want to see it again. And then God gave them meat. He gave them quail.

[13:05] That's another miracle. And then water out of the rock the second time. Another miracle.

And then a pillar of fire by night and a pillar and a cloud by day. It's another miracle. So what I'm saying is Israel cut their teeth on miraculous demonstrations that God provided for them.

But when we come into this dispensation of the grace of God, which is different from that under which Israel functioned, we do not walk by sight.

We walk by faith. And what does that mean? It means you don't have to see anything that God does. You don't have to require anything from Him.

You don't have to expect some physical phenomena, some miracle deliverance. You believe God simply on the basis of what He says. That's walking by faith.

You don't have to see visible evidences of this. You don't have to see this proof, this miraculous one thing or another. You just believe what God said. And how many times have I told you over the past 40 years, more than anything else, God just wants you to believe Him.

[14:21] That's it. He just wants to be believed. And it is insulting to Him not to believe. Now I say all of that to say that in this section of Scripture that we have, the Sermon on the Mount, it is couched in the Gospels.

And it is traditionally accepted pretty much across the board by virtually all the major denominations that this is part of the New Testament. But it isn't. It never has been.

It belonged to the Old Testament. Jesus Christ was a Jew. He lived under the law of Moses. And he obeyed the law of Moses from his circumcision on the eighth day.

to his attendance at the feast days, to his keeping the Sabbath, everything he did was in observance of the Jewish law. Because that's what he was born under.

And he makes it clear here in this opening passage of chapter 5 of Matthew, he says, I did not come to destroy the law. You know, that's one of the greatest items of opposition that the enemy had against Christ.

[15:33] And that's what they repeatedly charged him with. He teaches against the law of Moses.

And the reason they thought that was because his explanations of the law of Moses were

completely different from theirs.

And theirs had stood for centuries. But theirs were all wrong for the most part because they interpreted the law of Moses in accordance with the letter of the law and Christ interpreted it according to the spirit of the law.

That is, its original intent. And the two clashed. So what Jesus was telling them, and it is repeated throughout this passage, in fact, I told you there were six areas that we're going to be looking at where Jesus said, you have heard that it has been said, but I say unto you, what's that all about? that means he was overthrowing the established interpretation of that particular section of the law that the Pharisees and scribes had always given to it.

And they did not appreciate him contradicting them. So they are immediately set at loggerheads, and this is going to exacerbate all the way through the Gospels until finally it ends in his crucifixion. [16:52] And then they think they have triumphed. But of course, we know better. So let me give you some of these things. Some of it is repetitive, but I do not apologize for it because repetition is the mother of learning.

Christians try to Christianize it because whereas it must be Judaized with interpretation and Christianized by way of application, the four Gospels are Jewish, not Christian.

you find very, very little grace in the Gospels other than things like the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Well, when was that applied? Not until after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. So up until that time, everything surfaced, everything was built upon, everything was capped off by the law of Moses.

And these things, including the four Gospels in the first half of the book of Acts, they belong with the Mosaic law which Jesus was careful to follow as an observant Jew.

[18:03] Can you imagine Jesus coming on the scene as he was introduced by John the Baptist? Can you imagine Jesus saying after his baptism, all right, all you Jews, I want you to get this straight now.

You're not under law anymore. You're under grace. I'm here and this is the grace dispensation. So no longer are we confined to the dictates and the requirements of the law.

You are free. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female. You are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Can you imagine Jesus saying something like that to the Jewish? They would say, is he crazy or what?

It wouldn't have made any sense at all. And yet that's exactly what some Christians want to make it out to be. It wasn't like that. Jesus was a Jew.

He was born under the law of Moses and he functioned and operated that way. And it wasn't until the night that he was betrayed that he took that cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

[19:16] And even then, they didn't understand. They didn't understand. Peter didn't turn to John and whisper, you know what he means by that? You know, that means that he's going to the cross and shed his blood for the sins of the world and he's going to usher in the new covenant.

And John said, yeah, yeah, right. No, nothing like that. They didn't understand that at all. When he said, this bread, take eat, this is my body, which is given for you.

What's he talking about? What does he mean, given for us? What does he mean? They didn't understand. They didn't believe. Even when he told them what was going to happen when he got to Jerusalem, they didn't believe him.

He's just thinking negative. What is he on this crucifixion thing? He's going into Jerusalem and he's going to establish his kingdom and he's going to drive out the Romans and it's going to be wonderful.

That's what's going to happen when we get there. And when he came riding into town and all those people were gathering around strewing the palm branches and saying, Hosanna to the son of David.

[20:22] Hosanna. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. I could just see Peter turn to John again and say, see, I told you, see, they love him. They love him. It's going to be wonderful. It's going to establish that kingdom. him.

And hours later, you'll be on the cross. What happened? Well, this means the Sermon on the Mount was not about how to live the Christian life, but it was about how to live the life of an observant Jew

so as to be qualified to enter the kingdom of heaven when Christ the Messiah established it here on the earth.

And that's why included in the Sermon on the Mount is the prayer, part of which is thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That's what this is all about. And Jesus said, unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.

That's what this whole sermon is all about. righteousness and what kind of righteousness do you have to have in order to receive a position in the kingdom of heaven when it is brought from heaven to earth and established here.

[21 : 57] Who's going to be in that? And who's going to be excluded? And what are the qualifications? That's what this Sermon on the Mount is all about. And he spells out those qualifications.

When we say the Sermon on the Mount must be Judaized by way of interpretation and Christianized by way of application, we mean also there are several corollaries found in the Sermon on the Mount to every believer in any and all dispensations.

While the four Gospels, the Old Testament, and the first half of the book of Acts are distinctly Jewish and are written to the Jew, nonetheless, they all contain valuable truths for the people of God in any and all dispensations.

And let me just insert this for a moment. When I say the first half of the book of Acts is Jewish, it's about the Jews, it's for the Jews, it's by the Jews, and it's to the Jews.

One of the proof positives of that, I think, is that incident in Acts chapter 10. Remember Cornelius, the Roman army officer who was a God-fearer who was definitely not a Jew.

[23 : 13] And when Peter went to him at the insistence of the Spirit of God and gave him the message about Jesus and Cornelius embraced this Jewish Messiah as his own.

Do you remember the stir that caused? Remember the hubbub? Caused among whom? The Jews. Why should it cause so much stir among the Jews?

Because Cornelius was a Gentile. You get that? Cornelius was an outsider. He didn't belong. Jesus was a Jew, and all those early believers were Jews, and Cornelius.

And when Peter, when Peter preached this message to Cornelius, and the Spirit of God came on them, and they all began speaking in languages that they had not learned so as to intensify the communication skills that were required and needed there, Peter was dumbfounded.

Peter says, what's going on here? They're speaking in languages they had not heard, just like we did on the day of Pentecost.

[24 : 27] And what's the day of Pentecost? It's a Jewish feast day. Who was there? Jews. Only Jews. Non-Jews wouldn't attend a Jewish feast.

They wouldn't be welcome. They were all Jews. Cornelius was not a Jew. And Peter was stunned. He couldn't figure out what's going on. Hey, we've got a corner on God.

And these people are dogs. They're the circumcised Gentiles. They have no interest in this. Well, they had a lot of interest in it.

But the Jews wouldn't recognize that. We are told Old Testament and New that God raised up Israel to be a light.

To whom? To the Gentiles. Were they being a light? No. No. Best example is Jonah.

[25 : 24] When he went to Nineveh, didn't want to go. God said, go to Nineveh. Jonah got on the boat and went in the opposite direction. He's not going to go preach to the Gentiles. These heathen dogs, these foreskins, these uncircumcised pagans, they don't belong to God.

And they can't belong to God. God is for the Jews. And it was that Jewish exclusivity that really irritated the Lord. Because while Jesus Christ came to his own, and his own was the nation of Israel, he came to Israel, but he came for the whole world.

And the Jew wanted a corner on God, wasn't going to share. well, you find this clear through the first half of the book of Acts, and then they have a big argument about it.

All of the Old Testament, the four Gospels, and the first portion of Acts are not written to us as Christians, but they are written for us by way of learning and application.

Presently, we are focusing on Matthew 5, 13 through 16, where Christ referred to his disciples as salt and light.

[26 : 50] And we have seen that salt was a preservative that prevented corruption and provided flavor. And we don't place that much of a premium on salt today.

as I told you earlier, our dieticians are telling us today that Americans consume entirely too much salt, and it contributes to high blood pressure, heart disease, and a host of other things, but it tastes so good.

And they put salt in everything, and they do so because it enhances the taste, but it's not good for you. And one of the reasons it's not good for us is because most Americans live such a sedentary life that we don't have opportunity to work out all of the food that we take in through hard physical labor like people did years ago.

We've come up with all of these labor-saving devices that come back to bite us because we don't have the physical activity that we used to have. So salt was a preservative that prevented corruption and provided flavor, and we talked about their salting fish and other things like that.

A couple of other passages in the Old Testament, though, I want you to look at. And by the way, I want to warn you now, I'm not going to get to my message of this morning because it was light in case you didn't discover that.

[28 : 10] But I want you to go to Ezekiel, or no, let's go first of all, yeah, let's go to Ezekiel. Ezekiel 16. There's a passage there that is just really easy to overlook, and I remember years ago, I would read passages like this, and I would stop and say to myself, hmm, I wonder what in the world that means.

Well, I don't know. One of these days, I'll look it up. But you know, when you teach the Word and you go verse by verse, you can't get very far before you have to start looking up a lot of things. And I remember coming across this passage and the research from it was quite fascinating. Ezekiel 16 and verse 1, it's a different application of salt. And God, through the prophet Ezekiel, is reaming out his people for their idolatry and for their unfaithfulness.

And what he's got to say about them isn't going to be very complimentary. Look at chapter 16 and verse 1. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations.

This is another way of saying, I want you to ream them out. And say, thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem, your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite.

[29 : 39] your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. That is not intended to be a compliment. We would call this, what would we call this?

We would call this politically incorrect language. But God is not bothered by our political incorrectness.

Truth of the matter is, those inhabitants of Jerusalem were not from the land of Canaan. Their father was not an Amorite and their mother was not a Hittite.

So why did he say this? God is speaking. Why is he saying things that are not true? Because these things are not true. of the people of Israel. You understand something about poetic license?

About hyperbole? About exaggeration? This is a very legitimate Old Testament literary usage of language.

[30 : 52] And when you understand something about language differences and cultures, you'll see this is not a contradiction. question, they were not actually from this place and these were not their parents.

These people, the Canaanites, the Amorites, and the Hittites, were among the lowest of the low in the world morally and socially and behaviorally and just about every other way.

people, the Canaanites, the Amorites, and the Hittites, were the moral scum of the earth. That's what God is saying his people are.

He's saying, you're like that. You're just like that. You are what they are. This is not a compliment at all. Look at verse 4.

As for your birth, on the day you were born, your navel cord was not cut. Nor were you washed with water for cleansing.

[31 : 58] You were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths. What in the world does that mean? Again, these are derogatory things.

They are not complimentary. When he says, you were not washed, it is like a baby that is born that is completely unattended and uncared for.

Didn't even snip the umbilical cord. Now, this is what we would call gross, crass, negligence.

This is like treating the baby as nothing, worthless, of no value at all. And this is what he is saying Israel is portraying itself to be nationally.

This is the way you're making yourself look. As if from your very origin, you are worthless. And then he says, you were not rubbed with salt.

[33 : 09] salt. Well, does that give you the impression that that was standard operating procedure? Was to rub a newborn baby with salt? Now, it seems to me that would be a tad irritating.

You take a newborn baby, I do not know that there is a creature on the face of the planet that has such tender, sensitive skin as a newborn baby.

and it would almost seem like an act of cruelty to take salt. Can you imagine here's a baby five minutes out of the womb and you take the salt shaker or the Morton's can of salt and you pour salt all over it and you rub the salt all over the body and this baby is screaming, crying.

Why would anyone do that? Salt is an antiseptic. this was their way of making sure that this baby had a good clean start in life.

And not only that, but rubbing that salt all over the body of this newborn baby is going to make that little tyke open up its mouth and scream and cry.

[34 : 23] And all the while it's doing it, those lungs are filling and developing and opening and expanding and it's a wonderful thing. Now, we would look upon it today in medical science today as an act of cruelty and you could probably go to jail for it.

But here was standard operating procedure and that was called salting, salting. And you were not even wrapped in cloths. If the baby was wrapped in salt and rubbed salt all over it, salt speaks of preservative and it speaks of absence of corruption.

That's the way we are supposed to be. When Jesus said you are the salt of the earth, it is you who are supposed to provide a preservative for this sinful world.

You and your influence. Because you see, by application, this applies to you, applies to me. by application, salt and light is what the people of God are supposed to be to the unbelieving world around them in any and all dispensations.

It doesn't make any difference whether it's Old Testament, New Testament, kingdom, whatever it is. We are supposed to be salt and light. The people of God were supposed to be salt. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were supposed to be salt and light.

[35 : 48] The disciples whom Jesus was addressing said, you are the salt of the earth. I'm going to say something that's going to be hard for you to believe, but I'm convinced that it's true.

From a moral stability standpoint, you who are members of the body of Christ is the only thing this world has going for it, morally.

You're it. The world has nothing wrong, but corruption. Corruption politically, morally, socially, financially, you name it.

The whole world is in a pool of corruption. And those who belong to God, wherever they are, they are the only thing that this world has going for it, morally.

You are the salt of the earth. And salt in the Old Testament times, as they used it, spoke of moral purity and integrity.

[37 : 07] That's another way we are supposed to be salt. And when they eat together, they engage in what is called a covenant of salt. That's a fascinating thing, too. Would you come with me to 2 Corinthians, 2 Chronicles?

There are just so many passages like this that are virtually overlooked or never thought of at all, but it's all part of the mystery and the mystique of the Word of God. 2 Chronicles 13, and verse 4.

2 Chronicles chapter 13, Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, Listen to me, Jeroboam and all Israel, do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?

Well, what in the world does that mean? You see, I've told you a number of times that when you come to read and study and interpret the Bible, there are numerous chasms, gulfs that you have to bridge, and one of them is the historical bridge, because this was written thousands of years ago, another is a geographical bridge, because it wasn't written in North America, it was written in the Middle East, and another is the language bridge, because it was written in Hebrew, so we've got to bridge that.

A big one here is culture. They have an entirely different culture, and when we try to impose the principles, the standards of our culture, upon the biblical culture, it won't work, because the cultures

are different, and I would remind you, theirs came first.

[39 : 13] So here, when he says, he gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt. Hmm.

whenever the Jews had a meal, and invited friends in for meals, family, relatives, whatever, even if they happened to be enemies and they were thinking about making a truce, when they served the meal, they always served bread, and bread had in it by intention, by necessity, bread had in it salt, and there would also be little containers of salt that they could sprinkle and add more to it.

And when you shared a table, you entered into a covenant of salt with whoever was at that table, and that meant that you were bonding yourself to that person, and you were pledging the integrity of your character to that person, so that no matter what it was that was agreed upon at that table between those participants, eating salt together, meant that each was dutifully bound to the other to whatever terms or agreement came out of that meeting, and it was inviolate.

You would perform whatever was engaged in over that covenant of salt, even if it cost you your life. That's how sacred they regarded it. And what this passage here is saying is that God gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt.

And if you want, you can go to 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 for an elaboration on this of the covenant or the promise that God made to David.

[41 : 27] And God is using their culture that existed at that time and is condescending to identify with it, to impress upon those people how definite, how certain, how positive, how ironclad the promise was to David and his descendants that his throne would endure forever.

And it was sealed with a covenant of salt. And there is one more in Numbers chapter 18. And we just see these things.

We read them in passing because we're reading a chapter a day in our Bible. And we see it. We just kind of skip over it. We have no idea what it means. We say, hmm, that's interesting. I'll have to look that up sometime. But unfortunately, we usually never get around to it.

Numbers chapter 18 and verse 19. I'm embarrassed to tell you, these pages in Numbers are not read by me very often in this Bible.

And they kind of stick together. I'm not proud of that. Numbers 18. As to, in verse 19, all the offerings of the holy gifts which the sons of Israel offer to the Lord, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you as a perpetual allotment.

[43 : 05] It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord to you and your descendants with you.

I don't know how long I had been a Christian. I suppose it was 15 or 20 years before I had ever even heard the expression covenant of salt. And I thought, what in the world is that?

What's salt anyway? Why would anybody make a covenant of salt? Well, that's because we have little or no appreciation for their culture. And don't you dare put it down as being inferior or anything else.

Because remember, it was here long before ours came along. They were on this. This covenant of salt spoke of integrity. when Jesus said, you are the salt of the earth.

What that means is, listen now, what that means is, you are the only people in the world that have the kind of integrity that matters.

[44 : 13] The world is in corruption. They don't have it. Integrity, it's the word from which we get the word integrate, and it speaks of wholeness or togetherness.

It means when a person has integrity, it means they are on the inside what they seem to be on the outside.

That speaks of personal wholeness and oneness so that you are not two persons. You are not this in front of this crowd but something else in front of another crowd.

You are what you are on the outside and the inside. This is tied in with what he's going to say later about let your yea be yea and your nay nay.

That means you are to be a person of your word. When you say no, you mean no. You remember when you were a kid?

[45 : 23] some of you can remember. Some of you aren't that far from it. But I remember we used to play games on the playground, you know. And were you this or were you that or did you do this or did you nope, nope.

But you had that thing forever in your favor. Remember what it was? Cross your fingers. So whatever you say when you have your fingers crossed, doesn't count.

You know, you're off the hook. Jesus is as much saying here in the Sermon on the Mount, let your yay be yay and your nay nay and no finger crossing.

Because none of that counts. People of integrity. I know that it sounds like a real heavy trip and in a sense it is. And I know that there are probably a lot of Christians who don't even believe this, but I am absolutely totally convinced that it is true.

And that is this. you who are members of the body of Christ, it's the only thing this world has going for it. You are the only light that it's ever going to see.

[46 : 31] You are the only salt that it's ever going to experience. And if it doesn't come from you, it isn't going to come because it doesn't exist any place else, only in the body of Christ.

And someone may say, Barb, do you realize how arrogant that sounds? Yeah, I think it probably does sound arrogant, especially to a certain element.

But what really concerns me is not whether it sounds arrogant or not, but whether it's true. And it is. It is true. When the scriptures say in 1 John that the whole world lies in the lap of the evil one, and that we are called out of the world to be a light to the world, we are the only thing this world has going for us.

And I know that makes us sound elitist, it makes us sound arrogant, it makes us maybe sound messianic, but it is true. It is because Christ is in us and we are in Christ, we are the only thing this world has going for us.

And I must say, I never really thought of it that way before. You're it. You are it. You really are. But don't get the big head over it.

[47 : 48] Because what makes us it is not us, but it is Christ in us. And when we let our light shine, which was supposed to be the message for the morning, when we let our light shine, we have nothing to boast of any more than the moon.

When the moon is full and shining brightly, the moon has no right to say, hey, everybody, look at me, look at my glorious light. Because anybody who knows says, hey, moon, you don't have anything at all to brag about.

Because you wouldn't be shining if it were not for the sun. And you are merely a reflection of the sun.

So we have nothing to boast of. we are only reflections of the light of the sun, but a really important one.

And so it is with salt. It doesn't originate with us, but as we sprinkle ourselves around, we can have much more of an impact than we ever thought possible, just by being what we are.

[49 : 05] Nothing exceptional, nothing extraordinary, nothing above and beyond the call of duty, just be what you are. You are salt. Jesus didn't say to his followers, you guys ought to be salt and you ought to be light.

He didn't say that. He said you are. You are. Maybe some of us are shining very dimly. Because when we don't let our light shine in a consistent manner, the world doesn't know how to read us. They get confused. They hear contradictory messages. This is really important stuff. Even if it isn't ours by interpretation, it sure is all over us by way of application.

And next week we'll get to the light part because my problem was I kept studying salt when I should have stopped. And then when I got it, I couldn't hold it.

so I had to give it out. And that's what I did. And thank you for the morning and thank you for being here. And we don't have time for questions and answers, but I'm going to take time anyway.

[50 : 18] I'll give you three minutes. Is there a question or comment? Anybody? Way in the back, Scott. Ruth has a question back there. Get on your roller skate, Scott.

Who has a question? Not a question necessarily, Marv, just to say that it's a real responsibility being the light and salt.

Indeed. Indeed. It's an enormous opportunity and a great responsibility all wrapped up into one. Anybody else before we dismiss? Our benediction will be presented by our flute choir.

And thank you again, young people, for being here. I'm right up. Thank you. Thank you. it's not Sod investig and tools Uhh Unterschied our immortaluration na ch Interesting The End
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[53 : 51] The End The End The End