

# Sermon on the Mount Part VI

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[ 0 : 00 ] In your bulletin there, there is something I'll be reading prior to the scripture. And this is from Miles Coverdale in 1535.

It shall greatly help ye to understand the scriptures, if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after.

Then please turn to Matthew chapter 5. And this morning we're looking at Matthew chapter 5, verses 13 through 16.

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

[ 1 : 51 ] You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

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.

Several weeks ago, we undertook an examination of the Sermon on the Mount, and we are just in the very earliest dealings with that subject, and I suspect that it will probably take most of the summer for us to get through it.

But all of it, Sermon on the Mount, is really vitally connected to one particular verse, and it is the pivotal verse from which all of the sermon emerges, and it is imperative that we understand what that verse is.

[ 3 : 16 ] And as you're looking at your Bible in Matthew chapter 5, please understand that the key verse for understanding the whole of the Sermon on the Mount is verse 20 of chapter 5, and it is all about righteousness.

The issue that is surfacing here is, what are the requirements for righteousness that will enable one to enter the kingdom of heaven when it is established?

That was the vital question on the mind and heart of every Jew, because they believed that when they died physically, they went to a place called Sheol, and it is the place of departed spirits who, having lived their life on this earth and come to the time of its expiration, the spirit exits the body and goes to this place called Sheol.

Then, when God resurrects humanity at the end of time for that great judgment day, God is going to establish the ideal kingdom upon the earth.

It will be the earth as it is supposed to be, not as it has come to the wreck and ruin that man has brought it to.

[ 4 : 44 ] And every Jew knew that the time is God's time when this wonderful kingdom will be established, and it is going to be inhabited by people.

The question is, what people? Who is going to inhabit that kingdom? And it is also apparent to the average Jew that there are going to be people who will be denied entrance into the kingdom. They will not even be in. They are called those outside where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, etc., as Christ explained it later on in Matthew.

So, the question then is, how righteous do you have to be to have a spot in that kingdom reserved for you?

Because it will be an eternal kingdom. And those who are in that kingdom will be in it forever. And those who are excluded will be excluded forever.

[ 5 : 44 ] So, what's the criteria? And how can you tell when you've made it? How many points does it take to have this spot in the kingdom reserved for you?

And what about those who fall two points short? Questions like that. So, verse 20 addresses the issue by saying, Christ says, I say to you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

And why do you suppose he used them as the standard or the example? Well, it's simply because they were looked upon as the authorities and they were looked upon as the guys who had it made. If anybody has a surefire spot in this kingdom of heaven when it comes to earth, it's the scribes and the Pharisees. And we know they are a shoe-in because they have a corner on this God thing and the religion and the righteousness and all the rest.

So, they're the guys that have it made. That was the common opinion among the people. They were the religious experts. But Christ blows that theory completely out of the water.

[ 6 : 58 ] And he tells them, unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter in. What?

Well, good grief. If these guys can't make it, who can? And bottom line to that is, with men, it is impossible.

But with God, all things are possible. So, let's hasten on. The scribes and Pharisees, the religious establishment, they had already set forth the requirements of entering the kingdom of heaven by their interpretation of the law of Moses.

They were the interpretation of the law of Moses and Jesus said they had it wrong. Now, I want you to picture the solemnity and the seriousness of this situation because here is a multitude of people referred to as God's chosen people.

These are the only people, only nation in the history of mankind, the only nation with whom God has ever entered in a covenant relationship.

[ 8 : 17 ] They are the only ones. He's not in a covenant relationship with the United States of America. The only country that he's ever established a relationship with is Israel. and he reiterates that in Amos 3.

He says, you only, speaking of Israel, you only have I known of all the nations of the earth. You're the only ones.

They are referred to as the apple of God's eye, God's covenant people, God's chosen people, etc. And it all stems from what God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now, these people are the only ones. They are the only ones in the universe. The only nation that has the law of God committed unto them as God gave it through Moses on Mount Sinai.

Egyptians never had it. Syrians never had it. Babylonians never had it. Nobody ever, nobody else exclusively to Israel was this law given. However, what the law says is one thing.

[ 9 : 28 ] What the law means is something else. We all know that there is a great deal of wrangling that goes on in the legal community over the interpretation of a law or a statute.

They are even lining up and firing rounds at each other regarding the interpretation of the Constitution. And good grief, that thing's been around for over 200 years, and people still can't agree on what it means.

We know what it says. Anybody can read the Constitution and you can see what it says. But, what does it mean? That's where the interpretation comes into play.

And our founding fathers who drafted that Constitution, I think, labored long and hard to make the language as unambiguous as possible. so that they wanted it to come across with great clarity.

But I'll tell you, I don't care how clearly something is spoken. There is someone, somewhere, who can obfuscate it and make it indefinite and uncertain.

[ 10 : 39 ] And there are even people who are paid large sums of money to do that. They are called, I call them loophole louis.

They're always looking for a way around the law. Well, I know this is what, but, now just take, for instance, I'm just going to give you one example. Cruel and unusual punishment. The Constitution says that no citizen of the United States shall be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment. punishment. What constitutes cruel and unusual punishment? How do you define that? There are those today who are convinced that death by electrocution, by hanging, by firing squad, by lethal injection, all of those constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

Well, is it just a matter of opinion or can it be more carefully solidified? If you look at the history of the situation, and this is where Miles Coverdale comes into play, taking into consideration all of the things that Miles Coverdale says, and it's not only good for interpreting the Bible, it's good for

interpreting any piece of literature, whether it's Shakespeare, the Constitution, or whatever. And if you look at where the Founding Fathers were historically, question, was anybody ever executed under the jurisdiction of the Founding Fathers?

[12:22] Either by firing squad or by hanging? Oh, yeah. A whole lot of people. There were a whole lot of people who were sentenced to death and were executed in one way or another.

And the Founding Fathers, in some cases, were witnesses of those executions. Then, what must their position have been? What must they have been thinking? Do they think that hanging constituted cruel and unusual punishment and that they were violating their own principle that they built into?

Hardly. But you see, down through the years, with the passing of each generation and the arrival of new generations, people want to interpret things in light of their own personal present experience. And these are they who say the Constitution needs to be updated. It's an old, foggy document that is out of style and out of everything and it needs to be revitalized because our Constitution is a living, breathing document, not a dead document that is fixed as in stone.

So, each generation has to take a fresh look at it and see how the Constitution is to be adopted in accordance with what's going on in their culture at the present time. That's where we are right now.

[13:41] And that's where we've been for several years. And the argument goes on. So, a constructionist with the Constitution is one who believes the Constitution ought to be interpreted in light of what our founding fathers who drafted the document originally meant.

And it isn't hard to understand what they meant if you read any of their personal papers behind, which most of them left volumes and volumes behind, that really stated their positions.

So, do we interpret the Constitution in connection with its intent? Or do we interpret, reinterpret the Constitution in accordance with the majority thinking in the current culture?

That's a big, hot potato item. Jesus, the scribes, and the Pharisees faced the same situation.

The scribes and Pharisees had their own interpretation of the law of Moses. and it was designed to accommodate people in a way that the original intent of the law of Moses did not allow.

[15:00] So, they are going to find ways to get around things. And bottom line is this. The Pharisees and scribes interpreted the Constitution in accordance with the letter of the law.

Now, you might think that that was even a plus, but they did it in such a way that when you record, when you take the interpretation with the letter of the law, you put yourself under such a strict kind of operation that no one can function under it.

So, what does that require? that requires you to create some slack, create some ways of getting around what the law seems to say.

And in doing so, they missed it entirely. They missed it entirely. And what Jesus is doing is telling them, no, no, no, you've got it all wrong.

You need to interpret the law of Moses in accordance with the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law.

[16:23] And there was a huge disconnect between those two. Their interpreting it in accordance with the letter of the law led them into a phony kind of legalism that nobody could live under.

And that's what Jesus meant when he said, you have taken these people and have tied them in knots and have placed a burden on them of the law which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

You've just made this thing impossible. And that was never the intent of the law. So Christ is saying interpreting the law that way led to a kind of righteousness that was phony and unacceptable to God.

So I'm telling you unless your righteousness exceeds that which they have created and interpreted you're not going to enter the kingdom of heaven. And of course it is a given then.

If the people's righteousness didn't exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom of heaven that tells you right away where the scribes and Pharisees are. That's why Jesus would excoriate them later with a really solemn word of saying you are of your father the devil.

[17:56] Imagine Jesus saying something like that to somebody. The kind compassionate Jesus. How could he read them out with such severity and with such harshness?

It was because of what was at stake. You are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind followed the blind they both fall into a ditch.

And that's what he is saying when he comes on the scene. That's why he caused such a stir and that's why the scribes and Pharisees had it in for him so intently. Because every time they tangled over the issue of the law, Christ always came out on top with pure simplicity and truthfulness and logic and common sense.

It just tied the Pharisees and scribes in knots. And they soon developed an abject hatred for this man. And yet all he was doing was speaking the truth.

But when there is so much error on the scene and truth comes along, boy, you've got sparks are going to fly. And that's what he had for three and a half years.

[ 19 : 11 ] So, the scribes and Pharisees had already set forth the requirements by their interpretation of the law of Moses. They were interpreting the law and they were in the position of authority for doing so.

And Jesus says in verse 20 of chapter 5, they have it all wrong. Christ is going to counter, contradict, the Pharisees' righteousness with an interpretation of his own in six important areas. And I want you to note, these six areas are not just randomly selected by our Lord, but they are six areas that deal with the very most critical issues of life and living.

And here's what I mean. The first one has to do with the law of murder. And it's in verses 21 through 26. It has to do with the laws regarding the taking of human life.

That's a pretty important thing. And here our Lord starts right off with the life principle. We talk about issues of life and death. That's what he's beginning with.

[ 20 : 25 ] This is the law of murder. And he is going to challenge what the scribes and Pharisees had set forth as standard operating procedure, as what was to be believed and practiced regarding the law.

And he's going to tell them, you've got it all wrong. And then he deals with the law of adultery in verses 31, or 27 through 31.

And how important is that? Because once you get underway with the existence of humanity, then you're talking about the propagation and perpetuity of humanity, and here you've got a man and a woman.

Well, today you might have something else. But, initially, and I am satisfied eternally, it is for a man and a woman.

So, we're talking about the union. of male and female. And if that is to be disrupted, that which God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

[ 21 : 30 ] If it is put asunder, on what grounds is it to be put asunder? And there were two different pharisaical camps on that, that we'll deal with later. And then, the law of adultery, the law of divorce, because these are, of course, very closely related.

And, the fourth one is the law of oaths. What does it mean to swear an oath? It doesn't mean at all what a lot of people think it means.

Even whole denominations have misinterpreted this. I remember reading an anecdotal report about Herbert Hoover when he was sworn in as the president of the United States.

This would have been back in what, like 19, maybe 28, something like that, right before the Depression started.

He had a, Hoover had a Quaker background, Quaker religious upbringing, and they were very much opposed to swearing. We would call it cussing or swearing or taking the Lord's name in vain.

[ 22 : 41 ] And, of course, most religious denominations are opposed to that, but the Quakers especially so. In fact, they wouldn't even use the word swear, because they considered swear, a swear word, I guess.

So, when Herbert Hoover took the oath of office, he didn't even say in his oath with his hand on the Bible, I do solemnly swear. He said, I do solemnly affirm.

He wouldn't even say the word. As far as I know, he's the only president who's ever done that. But that, too, is due to a misunderstanding of what this passage is. When Jesus said, thou shalt not swear at all, that's not what he meant.

That wasn't what he was talking about. And how do we know what was meant? We have to look at the context. We have to look at the culture. We have to examine the history that was involved. And when you do, these things just pop up like daisies pushing up out of the ground.

And it becomes very obvious. And you look at it and say, oh, so that's what, well, that makes a lot of sense. Well, of course it makes a lot of sense. All of scripture makes a lot of sense. It's just we

befuddle it in our interpretations and we make it difficult.

[ 23 : 49 ] So there is the law of oaths in verse 33 through 37 that we will examine. And the law of non-retaliation and this is a biggie. Do you really turn the other cheek?

And if it doesn't mean that literally, then what does it mean? And how do we know? Turn the other cheek.

Love your enemies. Really? Are we really supposed to love our enemies? When the Imperial Navy of Japan bombed and mined and destroyed what they did in Pearl Harbor?

Should all Americans have gotten together and send love notes to Japan? Love your enemies.

Where do you draw the line on this thing? Does it mean that literally? And if it doesn't, what does it mean? And how do you know it isn't supposed to be that way? And then the last one is the law of love and that seems to cover all of them.

[ 25 : 06 ] These areas in very significant ways constitute the underpinning of the laws of Moses and the social code of the nation of Israel.

Now it wasn't just limited to these areas, there are many more, and if you want to know how many laws and rules there are in the law that Israel was supposed to abide by, the number is 633.

Pretty staggering concept. 633, and yes, I've researched the answer and that is quite accurate. 633 individual laws, statutes, judgments, etc., that they were supposed to obey.

So, if you misunderstand and misinterpret these that are described as the very underpinning of the laws of Moses, if you misinterpret these very critical issues, you will have a morally and spiritually chaotic society, which was precisely what Israel had, and it is precisely what we have today in our own culture.

culture. And speaking of our own culture, here is another area of concern. To what degree, in what way, are we as a nation to be bound by these laws or by the law of Moses?

[ 26 : 40 ] And how did it begin and why? And how incumbent is it upon us to observe these things? and another dimension, not just for America in general, which includes the whole of the population, but for Christians in particular.

When we are said not to be under law, but under grace, how does that fly with the laws that we have here? if the chaos, if the ruination of a given society is to be turned around, it must begin with a minority that has the moral code right and the basis for it right also.

We are talking about a remnant. And in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is talking to that remnant in the presence of his initial audience, which was the disciples.

But the original audience with which he started when he began delivering the Sermon on the Mount is going to be expanded considerably because as he is speaking and teaching, there are huge throngs of people making their way up the mountain to where Jesus is with his twelve disciples to join in and hear what this peasant carpenter from Galilee has to say.

And the reason they are so vitally interested is because Jesus has already established himself as a miracle worker. Many people in this multitude who are going to hear the Sermon on the Mount, and when the sermon ends we're told that there's a great multitude there.

[ 28 : 30 ] It didn't start out that way. It was the twelve that came to it, but the audience built and built and built. And by the way, it only takes about 20 minutes to read the Sermon on the Mount, but it was probably delivered over a longer period of time.

I doubt seriously that we have every word that Christ spoke. We have every word that the Spirit of God inspired Matthew to include in the record, but he probably said a lot more than what is included here.

it's just that the Spirit of God is selective in what he inspires and includes in the scripture record. So we have all we're supposed to have, but that doesn't mean that's all that was spoken.

Same way with Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. When you read Peter's sermon in Acts chapter two, you can read it in just a few minutes, but I know preachers well enough to know he spoke longer than that.

How long, I don't know, but this is the essence of it. So we probably have a similar thing here. Christ is addressing a remnant, and this larger group that is going to gather will be able to get perhaps the bulk of this sermon, and I'm sure some of them will miss it, and some will be talking about it later after they leave and go down the hillside.

[ 29 : 51 ] Someone's going to turn to the person next to him and say, I couldn't believe that he said that about such and such. Oh, I didn't hear that. He must have said that before I got there. Well, this

is what he said, and everybody was abuzz talking about this because this man had actually before in the very presence of numerous people had given sight to the blind, caused the deaf to hear, healed the lame, cleansed lepers.

I mean, this was all abuzz. I mean, the household word that was developing everywhere was this carpenter from Nazareth. Nobody had ever seen anything like this or heard anything like this. And wherever he was, he was just a people magnet. They just thronged him in great numbers. So by way of application, we are talking about remnants. And when Jesus is addressing, starts out addressing his disciples, he's talking about them as a remnant.

And he says to them, he said, blessed are you. blessed are you. And all down through the Beatitudes, he's talking about those there before him.

And he is saying, you are in this position for all of these things. You are spiritually well advantaged. And they are enumerated, beginning with verse 3, down through verse 10, actually verse 11.

[ 31 : 19 ] But what we really want to deal with now, having touched on those Beatitudes, is what he says in verse 13 when he is still talking to the people.

You see, in verse 1, his disciples came to him. That's after he saw the multitudes. I kind of think, maybe I'm taking liberty of reading into this, something that isn't there, but this is a Wiseman opinion.

It's derived from reading in the white spaces. But it says, and when he saw the multitudes, he went up on the mountain. I would translate that as saying, Jesus looked at this huge, swan of people, and he turned to his twelve and said, hey guys, let's get out of here.

Come on up. And they go on up the mountain. But it doesn't take long until a crowd starts talking and milling among themselves and say, there it goes, there it goes. And that's James and John. Those are Zebedee's boys with him. I wonder what they're talking about. Let's go up and find out. And in mass, they just start walking up this mountain as Jesus is talking. Before they get there, he addresses his disciples as this tiny flock, this minority, and he says to them, you guys, you are blessed.

[ 32 : 42 ] Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And on and on and on. they are the ones who constitute this blessing that he's talking about, being spiritually well-advantaged.

They constitute a minority. And he says to them, I take it that he says this before the crowd gets there because it wouldn't be true of the whole crowd, but it would be true of the disciples.

And that's in verse 13 when he said, you, you fellas, you are the salt of the earth. you know what? That's another way of saying you are the only thing that this world has going for it. That's exactly what he's saying.

And when he says, and you are the light of the world, he's saying, you are the only hope that this world has going for it. that's the interpretation.

[ 33 : 49 ] And they are the primary audience. And he was talking about them. That's the interpretation. But the application is you. You.

Bodies of believers just like you. Here this morning, April 14, 2013, 2013, in this little gathering here, Grace Bible Church, multiplied many times over by similar gatherings, larger and smaller, all over the world, but still constituting a very tiny minority of the world's population, you, are the only thing this world's got going for it.

Now, you probably don't believe that, but it's true. You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.

Now, don't get the big head over this. Because it isn't because you're so great, and it isn't because you've done such wonderful things, and it isn't because you're smarter than anybody else, and it isn't because you're this blah, blah, blah, blah, and all the rest of it.

It is because you have tasted of the grace of God, you have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, you are placed into a life on a different plane that the world knows nothing about, and you are called upon to be salt and light to those who don't have it, and they don't even know they don't have it, but they don't.

[ 35 : 30 ] Now think of that, salt. Jesus said, verse 13, you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again?

I have never tasted unsalty salt. Have you? I don't know how it loses its saltiness. I don't know if it's some certain kind of salt or subjected to some process or what?

I know that there are all kinds of salt substitutes out there that are said to taste exactly like salt, except they don't.

my heart surgeon, who I still can't believe that the man did what he did, stopped my heart from beating, opened up my chest, and got in there and put all of my blood on a bypass machine and sent it through a tank because he couldn't operate on a heart that was thumping around.

He did four bypasses and closed that up again. And I went to an aftercare session that Dr. Naravetla was conducting and he's one of the leading heart surgeons in the whole area here.

[ 36 : 51 ] And he put up this big sign. He says, the three greatest enemies to high blood pressure are salt, salt, and salt.

What does he know? He knows a lot. He knows a lot. Salt, I had no idea that salt was in, do you know that salt is in ketchup?

Did you know that sugar is in toothpaste? Salt and sugar are both in mustard? they put salt in everything and they do it for just one reason, flavor, flavor.

And the analogy stands because it was an ancient one and it's still in force today. This salt, salt and light are metaphors that our Lord is using and he is saying to his audience, and I want to remind you, his audience is the interpretation, you and other people like you, ever since that time and up to this time, are the application.

This is why we cannot take the Sermon on the Mount or anything else in the Gospels and say, well, that's not Pauline. You just throw that out and you pay no attention to that and you just focus on Paul's epistles.

[ 38 : 23 ] That's all you need. That's nonsense. All of the Bible is for us. not all of the Bible is to us. There's a huge difference there.

So, keep that in mind. It's very important. The Old Testament as well as the Gospels is just riddled with all kinds of practical, important applications to life in all dispensations, in all generations.

And this is one of them. You people, he is telling his disciples, you people do in a human moral way what salt and light do for mankind in a literal way, day to day.

These are very important analogies that were keys to life in the ancient world. Salt and light. And the reason Jesus used these items as illustrations was because everyone knew them well and everyone was really dependent upon them.

Salt serves two very important purposes. especially in the first century. The first was salt was useful for flavoring. I bought some soup that they told me to get.

[ 39 : 36 ] It was a soup that was very low sodium. This was back in my bachelor days after Barb passed away and I was, I opened more cans than you could imagine.

And I'd get these soup cans and it was pretty good, you know, and I'd go back out in my wood shop and come in and throw a bowl of soup in the microwave and go back out. It didn't take any time to prepare.

My preparation time was limited to how quickly the microwave worked. And so I thought, well, I'm going to get some of the kind of soup I ought to be eating.

And I looked over and sure enough I found it there. Low salt, low sodium, and I got a couple of those and I put it in the microwave and I took the first, all I could think of was it needs salt.

It needs salt. It did. It's really, but salt increases the volume of water and of liquid in your system and it puts all of your organs under additional pressure to get rid of all of that stuff.

[ 40 : 47 ] But salt is very tasty and we need it for flavoring and salt was valuable. Do you know that the Roman soldiers received a daily ration of salt as part of their pay?

Have you ever heard the expression that so-and-so isn't worth his salt? That's where it came from. Roman soldiers got paid by the day and just about everybody got paid by the day and included was a little allowance of salt for them.

And if you said then back then that a man wasn't worth his salt. That's exactly what it meant. He was no account at all. So salt was very valuable and it was a critical preservative because in the days when refrigeration was unknown, you were limited to about two ways of preserving food. One was drying and the other was salt. And we all know about cured hams and how delicious they are.

and we used salt for curing things. The big item that was cured back then was fish. Remember the little boy that when Jesus fed the 5,000, the little boy had a couple of fish and a couple of little loaves of bread?

[ 42 : 05 ] Well, you can be sure they were salted fish because is there anything that has a shorter shelf life than fish that's been caught? If you don't eat those babies pretty quick, they will get rank.

I mean, really rank. But if you know how to salt them and preserve them, which was a big business back in the first century, Zebedee had a thriving fishing business, had a whole fleet of boats. And two of his boys, James and John, worked with their dad in the fishing business. It was a commercial business and they made money at it. And they'd bring in all these fish and they'd process them and salt them and sell them.

and that was a main staple of the day. And when somebody would go on a long journey and knew he was going to be gone and away for a couple of meals, he'd take a few salted fish and some bread loaves with him, which are kind of like our pancakes, and that was the staple of the day. So it was a very critical item to them. And the light, of course, is equally critical because light was very hard to come by.

[ 43 : 12 ] You had to have a lamp. Daylight was a prize. And you took advantage of all of the daylight you could. And that's the way they usually worked was from first light to last light.

That was the length of the work day. Other than that, you had to use artificial light. But it became a very critical, strategic thing. And in some households, it even became a matter of contention because there were lots of families that lived together in the same house.

Can you imagine three families living together in one large room? With three sets of parents and maybe eight or ten kids in one large room?

Wow. Where's the nearest cliff to jump? Can you imagine that? Can you imagine the rivalry and the difficulty that would surface from living in close quarters like that with people?

That's going to surface in this Sermon on the Mount. And we'll be talking about the living conditions that prevailed then and the anger and resentment that came out of it and what Jesus gave as an antidote for that.

[ 44 : 25 ] And it's just marvelous. I've enjoyed preparing for these and I'm excited to deliver them. So we'll be looking for what is coming ahead on this. I just want to close with this by reminding you of who you are and what you are.

you are salt and you are light. And it is not an overstatement. It is not an exaggeration to say that believers in Jesus Christ are really the only thing that this world has going for it.

And the world doesn't even know that. tragically, there are a lot of Christians who don't know it either. But I think by the time we get through this sermon we'll be thinking otherwise.

We are a very, very important key. There's nothing to be haughty about or arrogant about. If you really understand it, there will be a burden of responsibility placed upon us that we didn't have before.

And maybe it's time that we get a lot more serious about this. I think so. Thank you, Father, for what we've been able to uncover.

[ 45 : 41 ] We know that we've missed a lot. And we may not have been right on target with some of the things we said, but you know our heart. And we trust that you may be pleased to take what has been offered from you, even though it was sifted through this vessel.

Anything uttered from the flesh, we want it to pass away and come to naught. Thank you for the high and holy privilege we have of being in Christ. And thank you for all of the awesome responsibilities that come with it because you who have given us these responsibilities have also provided the wherewithal for our caring about.

And we are blessed. Thank you for Christ's wonderful name. Amen.