



Sermons of the Savior

Matthew 5:13-20

Lesson 4

Although one might come to the conclusion that Jesus, in teaching the Beatitudes, was calling for a life of perfection, this next section reveals that there were already some before Him whom He knew were useable for His kingdom. From pronouncing His true followers to be *salt* and *light*, Jesus moved to a startling proclamation of the requirement of righteousness, claiming that He had come to fulfill it.

OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 5:13-20

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

Key Words: words that refer to *Jesus* and *God, the Father*
salt and *light*

Underline or highlight the phrases: *I say* and *kingdom of heaven*

3. The contrasting word *but* is used five times in these verses. Choose one and record what is being contrasted.

CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What are some of the benefits of salt?
2. What is it about darkness that frightens people?
3. What are some of the purposes of laws?

Read Matthew 5:13

1. The gospel affects people differently. The prior verses dealt with the *persecution* that often results from living righteously. In Matthew 5:13, Jesus turned to His followers to remind them of another effect. What did Jesus call His followers?
2. *Salt* has many attributes. What essential characteristic of *salt* did Jesus refer to in verse 13?
 - a. In what ways do believers *season* the lives of others?
 - b. When are you most like *seasoning*?
 - c. *Salt* can *lose its flavor* or its beneficial effects. What are some indications in your life that are warnings that your life is *losing flavor*?
 - 1.) What actions do you take to regain your “tastiness”?
3. What did Jesus declare about *flavorless salt*?
 - a. What will happen to *flavorless salt*?
 - 1.) In what ways are *flavorless* believers disrespected by unbelievers?
4. Mark 9:50 is a parallel passage to Matthew 5:13. What additional information does this verse provide?
 - a. How is a life that pursues *peace* with others a *salty* life?
5. Consider believers who have been *salt* in your life before you became a Christian. In what ways did they make Jesus appealing to you?
 - a. Consider believers who have been *salt* in your life after you became a Christian. In what ways have they drawn you to Christ?

Read Matthew 5:14-16

1. What is the second comparison Jesus used to describe His followers?
 - a. This is an astounding title for Jesus to give. According to the following verses, who is the *light of the world*?
 - John 1:4
 - John 1:9
 - John 3:19
 - John 8:12
 - 1.) What can we learn from these verses about our calling to be little lights?
2. *You are the light of the world* (Matthew 5:14). How does the fact that you do not have to manufacture the *light*, but you are to simply allow the *light* to shine, speak to you?
3. *A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden* (Matthew 5:14). We understand the purpose of building a city on a hill is to be seen. Here we are reminded that we are *built* for a purpose also. Read Ephesians 2:10 and record our purpose.
4. Explain the example given in Matthew 5:15.
 - a. In what ways can a believer *put her life under a basket*?
 - 1.) What is the result?
5. What is the effect of a *light* in a dark place?
6. Reflect upon Matthew 5:16. What can be the response of others to a believer who shines?
 - a. How do people most often respond to your *good works*? i.e. Do they give the *glory to God* or do they just consider you to be a good person?

b. Reflect upon Titus 2:5. What can be the response of others to a believer who does not *shine*?

1.) How is neglect of God's Word a hiding *light*?

Read Matthew 5:17-19

1. Jesus' statements seemed to be indicating that He was opposed to *the Law* and *the Prophets*. What did He say to correct this belief?

a. *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets* (Matthew 22:40). What *two commandments* was Jesus referring to? See Matthew 22:37-39

1.) Did Jesus ever do or say anything that contradicted those two *laws*? (just checking ☺)

2. Matthew 5:18 presents the first of many times Jesus will use the phrase *I say to you*. His previous statements countered their thinking. The authority with which Jesus will present His viewpoint of the law will rattle Pharisaic teaching. What are your thoughts when you read of Jesus boldly stating the words, *I say to you*?

3. According to Jesus, what cataclysmic event would have to happen before God's Word could be invalidated in even a tiny way?

a. How much of *the law* did Jesus say would be fulfilled or accomplished?

1.) Using John 19:30, record Jesus' words from the cross.

4. Consider Matthew 5:19. Describe the one who shall be called *least in the kingdom of heaven*. Note: the word *break*, as it is used here, refers to dissolving, annulling, or making invalid.

a. Describe the one who shall be called *great in the kingdom of heaven*.

5. In discussing the *commandments*, Jesus made a point of saying *one of the least of these commandments*. All of God's commandments are important to Him. He turns a blind eye at the breaking of none of them. Why do believers sometimes put little value on obeying what we might call the *least of God's commandments*?

a. Share an example of what some believers consider to be one of the *least of the commandments* (including instructions both in the Old and New Testaments).

Read Matthew 5:20

1. Meditate on the words of Matthew 5:20 as you write them below:

a. Jesus again used the statement *I say to you*. This is a strong statement. Only One with great authority and knowledge of the *kingdom of heaven* could say this. How *righteous* did the Pharisees think they were?

1.) If a man must be more *righteous* than a *Pharisee*, what kind of *righteousness* is God looking for? What do the following verses teach us to help us answer that question?

Romans 2:28-29

Romans 3:3

Romans 4:5

Romans 10:3,4

2. How would you react if you read Matthew 5:20 and believed that you must attain, on your own, a *righteousness* greater than that of the Pharisees?

3. Consider the need for *righteousness* to be given to us, rather than earned by us. What predicament do you think Jesus wanted the people to see?

a. Recall Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-27. What question did the disciples ask in verse 26?

b. Record Jesus' glorious answer in Mark 10:27.

1.) How is salvation possible *with God*?

REVIEW: Read Matthew 5:13-20

1. What lessons have you learned from *salty* Christians?
2. How have you been challenged to *let your light shine...so others will glorify your Father in heaven*?
3. How have you been challenged to be sure you are not *breaking even the least of God's commandments*?
4. What are your thoughts as you reflect upon the wonderful fact that Jesus' *righteousness* exceeds that of the Pharisees and He has applied His *righteousness* to you?

*teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;
and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*
- Matthew 28:20

Observation Worksheet

Matthew 5:13-20

¹³ "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. ¹⁷ "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.