

Jesus Said His Disciples Are to Be Salt and Light

In our last topic, we saw nine attitudes that we want to help our physical and spiritual children develop so that they can experience great blessing and joy from the Lord. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus taught His disciples that believers are to be salt and light on this earth. We will also see that Jesus taught that He came to fulfill the Law.

Jesus taught that we are to be salt and light. Matthew 5:13-16 says, “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. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Salt has many uses. Those uses show us what it means to be salt.

Three other verses tell us some of the things that salt does. Mark 9:50 says, “Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” Our lives are to give flavor to the lives of others as we meditate on the Word of God and bear the fruit of the Spirit. When our lives have the flavor of God, we will also have peace with one another. Luke 14:34 says, “Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?” Our lives will bring flavor to others as long as we have the flavor of God. Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” Here, we see that we are always to speak with grace. We see that such speech will both preserve and help people to get answers from the Word of God to their questions.

Jesus went on to say that we are the light of the world. In Matthew 4:16, we read, “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.” John 8:12 says, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” John 9:5 adds, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Jesus brought Light to this world. Jesus was looking to the time when He would return to heaven and leave Christians to shine as His lights in this sinful world.

Philippians 2:14-15 explains what it means for us to be lights in the world. Those verses say, “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” The darker it is, the brighter a light shines. Here, we see that we are to be lights both by our words and our actions. Jesus gave two illustrations of what it means to be lights. He said that we are to be like a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. We are to be like a light that is put on a lampstand and not hidden under a basket. Jesus then said that we are to let our light shine before the people around us. Only as people see our good works will they be ready to listen to what we say. As they see that our works and our words agree, they will be drawn to Jesus and will glorify our Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:17-18 says, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 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.” Just a short time before Jesus was going to be condemned by the Jews and turned over to Pilate to be put to death, a lawyer that was also a Pharisee asked Jesus a question to test

Jesus. We read that question and the answer of Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40, when the lawyer said, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is *the* first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Jesus explained why He did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets in this answer to the lawyer. Instead, Jesus came to fulfill the Law.

Jesus showed His perfect love for the Father by coming to do His will. John 6:38 says, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” Then, Jesus showed His perfect love for all people (neighbors) by dying for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:2 says, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” Jesus fulfilled the two commandments on which the entire Old Testament hangs. He is the One who could and did fulfill the Law and that meant that He was also the One who was able to pay the penalty for our sins.

He did fulfill the Law by living a perfect life that was without sin. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. God showed that He was satisfied with the payment that Jesus made for our sins by raising Him from the dead. Colossians 2:13-14 says, “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” When we receive Jesus, we are made alive with Jesus. The fact that our sins were nailed to the cross was applied to our lives at the moment that we received Jesus’ payment for our sins by faith. That blotted out all of the sins that were written in the books mentioned in Revelation 20:12-13 that listed our sins before we became followers of Jesus.

We now stand before God as a new creation because we are in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” Galatians 2:20 adds, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” This transformation that happened at the moment of salvation means that as Christians, we are now dead to the Law. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Christ did not destroy the Law. Instead, He fulfilled it. As Christians, we are now in Christ and no longer under the Law. It accomplished its purpose of bringing us to Christ. He is our sacrifice once for all and so we no longer have a need to offer any sacrifices.

Instead, we are to present out bodies to Jesus as a living sacrifice. Romans 12:1-2 says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Our bodies have now become the temple of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Here, we see that we can now glorify God both with our body and with our human spirit. Jesus fulfilled the Law. He went on to promise that not even the smallest part of a letter, like an apostrophe, would pass from the law until all is fulfilled. We can expect everything in the Word of God to be fulfilled.

Then, Matthew 5:19-20 says, “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. 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.” Here, we see that those who try to earn their way to heaven by keeping the Law, instead of being in Christ, would have to keep the law perfectly. Galatians 3:10 says, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’” In contrast, Galatians 3:13-14 says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

The scribes and Pharisees said that they followed the Law. We will see that Jesus went on later in His sermon to explain specific commandments. They thought that their own righteousness would certainly get them to heaven. Jesus had explained to Nicodemus several months earlier, in John 3:3-5, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” Nicodemus lacked spiritual understanding. A person would need to keep the Law perfectly in order to fulfill it. Jesus is the only One who ever did or will keep the Law perfectly. As a result, those who depend on their own works will not be in the kingdom of heaven.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why Jesus was the only One who could fulfill the Law. Then, we want to help them learn to explain to others that the only way that they can be righteous is by repenting of their sin of unbelief and receiving, by faith, the righteousness that Jesus has provided. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.