



The Narrow Way

#2

- The Sermon on the Mount -

From the Pulpit Ministry of Christ E Free Church of Saegertown
March-April 2020

“The Narrow Way”

Part **2**



The Sermon on the Mount, taken from the words of Jesus

Matthew chapters 5-7

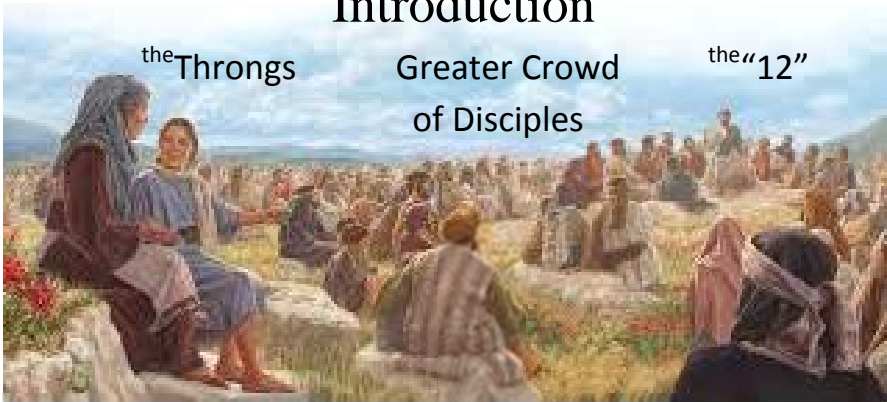
"Enter by the narrow gate..."

Matthew 7:13a

Table of Contents - Matthew 5:9-20

- ❖ Introduction, p.5
- ❖ Blessed are the Peacemakers, p.6
- ❖ Blessed are the Peacemakers, pt.2;
Children of the Heavenly Kingdom, p.14
- ❖ Blessed are the Persecuted, p.23
- ❖ Don't Waste Your Affliction, p.26
- ❖ Blessed are the Persecuted, pt. 2, p.33
- ❖ "Blessed are the Persecuted", pt.3, p.39
- ❖ Salt of the Earth / Influence and Input: p.50
- ❖ Light To the World / Expectations & Responsibilities, p.59
 - "What is the Value of the Old Testament Law, in the life of the
Present day believing Christian?"**
- ❖ "Law and Order", p.69
- ❖ Christian and the Law, p.74
- ❖ Christina and the Law, pt.2, p.84
- ❖ The Reality of the Depravity of Humanity, p.89
- ❖ The ABCs, p.97
- ❖ Free Resources, p.98

Introduction



As Jesus presented His Sermon on the Mount, He addressed 3 specific Crowds of people, from a variety of backgrounds, a variety levels of faith and a variety of differing life experiences. He shared the Beattitudes, which addressed the character of Christ and His Kingdom that is to be reflected in the citizens of that kingdom. But He also addressed the inexpressible value of the Old Testament Law of God, in the lives of present day believers in Jesus Christ.

Within these precious heavenly principles shared in the SoM, we receive so many insights into the King and His kingdom, that promises to all who read and believe, a steady assurance that will carry each of us faithfully and successfully into our eternal destination and heavenly dwelling.

SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "THE NARROW WAY"

SERMON: "Blessed are the PeaceMakers" March 1,8, 2020



Subj: Making or Keeping the peace between others, between one another and between God.

Text: Mat.5:9

Suffering: Being Used by God to Bring His peace into a world of hurt, misunderstanding & strife.

Mat 5:9 ESV "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Prayer for Peace, St Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;

Where there is hatred, let me sow charity;

Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is error, truth;

Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light; and Where there is sadness, joy.

*O, Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console; To be understood as to understand;*

To be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive;

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; And it is in dying to ourselves
that we are born to eternal life. -Amen.*

INTRODUCTION

Dr Alfred Nobel was a Swedish Business man and inventor. With 355 patents attributed to him, he discovered how to stabilize nitro glycerin, invented dynamite, blasting caps and amassed hundreds of millions of dollars from developing a variety of munitions, armaments and war time implements.

With no wife or heir to his massive fortune, his last will left all his savings to a foundation to distribute the interest of his money to be awarded as prizes in 5 areas of human achievements; (1) Chemistry, (2) Literature, (3) Physiology or medicine, (4) Physics and (5) Peace. In 1901, the first peace prize was given and the criteria for being awarded the prize was prescribed by Dr Nobel: "The peace prize is to be

awarded to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between the nations and the abolition or reduction of standing armies and the formation and spreading of peace congresses.”

With all the history of the world and the news today; and with all the violence and warring in our world, it is good to be reminded that there are still those who desire and value peace.

Mat 5:9 ESV "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Peacemaker – There is relational peace with others. There is mental peace, helping other find hope, stability Reassurance. There is eternal hope in their relationship with God in Christ.

(i.) In the OT Hebrew language; Peace was the word *Shalom*.

שָׁלוֹם It was both a greeting as well as a farewell. Hello, or Good bye.

In Hawaiian one would say “Aloha” coming and going. In Korean, we would say “On-Yong”. In the Hebrew culture one would say Shalom.

In human relationships, Shalom implied completeness or overall well-being. It was a wish for safety and prosperity. It may express an interest in another person experiencing health, stability and prosperity.

With reference to God, it was used as a reference or reminder to the covenant relationship between God and His chosen people. It was a God focused reminder and declaration of, “We are unconditionally blessed of the Lord”.

In Gen_43:23 we have the first time this is used as a greeting, and it is spoken by Joseph to his brother with whom he was recently reunited. He replied, "**Peace** to you, do not be afraid...”.

Jdg 6:24 “Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is **Peace**...” Jehovah-Shalom, The Lord is our Peace, or “the Lord is our health, prosperity, and well-being.

Through Isaiah the Prophet, God promised a Ruler of Peace for Israel **Isa 9:6-7** (6) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of **Shalom**. (7) Of the increase of his government and of **Shalom** there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Today we might greet someone with “Hi. How are you doing?” and then await an answer; “Fine thank you and how are you?” BUT greeting others with “Shalom”, was like us meeting one another and as a greeting, the first words you say is “Fine; Content: Abundance. Well blessed”, before anyone even asked. It is a statement of one’s personal life, or a wish for the other person in their relationship with God.

Shalom was intended to communicate a perspective of the overall state of a person regarding the goodness of their personal life, as well as a wish for the other person, in relation to the presence of God; and as an assurance in His faithfulness in keeping His covenant. *This is peace in the Old Testament Hebrew culture.*

(ii.) In the NT Greek culture; Peace was the word ***Irene***;

εἰρήνη: It was a word that refers to quietness, or tranquility: lack of rage or absence of havoc; peace.

In reference to the Messiah: this experience, peace was that which would result from salvation.

In reference to NT Christianity: It would refer to the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with one’s earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that might be. *This is peace in reference to New Testament Christianity.*

Today, The Beatitudes focus Jesus’ teaching about...

WHAT IS A PEACEMAKER OR PEACE KEEPER?

Mat 5:9 ESV "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

The Desire and value of peace

* A Peacemaker is someone who understands the value of peace.

Rom 12:16-18 ESV Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. (17) Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

(1) A Peacemaker may be someone who helps stabilize and bring peace into an otherwise potentially volatile relational situation. It would be a person who lives in harmony with one another, or help others live at harmony with one another.

(2) A Peace maker may help bring assurance and stability to someone who is mentally or emotionally distressed, perhaps through a set of circumstances or due to another stressful relationship. A peacemaker is one who does not repay evil for evil; they do not treat others the way others have treated them, if they have been treated badly. That would only serve to make things worse.

In 2 Cor.13, Paul refers to God as “the God of all peace”. Peace reflects an aspect of the character of God Himself, as well as foreshadowing a quality of His eternal Kingdom of Heaven. And when we help others live at peace, we help them experience just a glimmer of what the Kingdom of Heaven will one day be in its fullness, and through our influence, for them to begin to desire that kingdom.

Willing to Do What it Takes

* A Peacemaker is also someone who is willing to do what it takes to make or keep the peace. We must not only desire and value peace but we must be willing to work for it and do what it may take to achieve and sustain peace. Those whom we may view as a peacemaker may have to sacrifice their own way, their own preferences or their own point in the discussion. A peacemaker may be the one who knows when to “agree to disagree” and let the issue go.

Romans 12:18 gives us an important clarification. “As long as it is

within your power to do so, leave a peace...” The fact is, sometimes it will not be in our power to keep the peace, as much as we may desire it and value it. Sometimes we not only have to let it go, we may need to actually remove ourselves from the context of the issue of controversy itself. A Peacemaker is someone who desires and values peace, and is willing to do what it takes to achieve and sustain that peace.

Today, The Beatitudes focus Jesus’ teaching about...

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF PEACEMAKERS

* Being a peacemaker means I don’t insist on my way, or getting what I want nor winning every argument.

Abraham (Gen.13)

* We may discuss things because we disagree on a matter. Perhaps we are learning as we go. We discuss it, because “I feel I am right and I want you to see things my way.” And when we feel that way, it is difficult when we fail to persuade others.

A few years ago, I was collecting 5th and 6th graders from the elementary school to take them to our Bible study off campus. The students were lining up in front of the main doors to exit the building, which was also directly in front of the Principal’s office, when 2 boys got into a fist fight. I got between the students and the teachers and principal came running out of the office. Then the principal ordered both students into her office.

Just so happens our lesson for that day was “Being a Peacemaker”, along with this example of Abraham. I approached the principal and told her what my lesson was to cover that day, and requested that she allow the students to come with me for the lesson, then I would come back to her after our lesson to report what they had learned and how they had acted. She agreed!

I’d like to encourage you to get your Bible and read Genesis chapter 13. Abram and Lot have left their home of Ur and are basically nomads, roaming the countryside. And as time passed both Abram and Lot’s

flocks and herds of livestock grew and grew until each of them had so much livestock that the hillsides didn't have enough food or watering holes for their combined herds. And, the issue that sparked strife was that Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen began arguing. As tempers increased, Abram the peacemaker springs into action.

Gen 13:8-9 ESV (8) Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. (9) Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left."

“for we are kinsmen”: Abram was a man who desired and valued peace. He valued family relationships higher than getting his own way. And he was willing to do what was needed to be done in order to keep peace. And so he invited Lot to take the areas of land he wanted and Abram would just go in the other direction.

We might think, “Poor Abram”, he had to make the sacrifice.” Or we may think that he lost out. But we see here that “When we do things God’s way and honor Him first, we lose nothing. Ultimately, we sacrifice nothing.” Because after Abram and Lot part ways, notice what God does.

Gen.13:14-1 (14) The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, (15) for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. (16) I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. (17) Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

God told Abram to look to the North... now look to the South... now look to the east... now look to the west. Guess what Abram. Its all yours. As far as your eye can see, as far as a human can walk I will give it all to you. You lose nothing. Abram was a peacemaker who didn't value his own way over the relationship with his kinsmen, so that he let

someone else take what appeared to be the very best.

(1) Abram valued peace over his possessions and His relationship over earthly things. (2) He trusted and Honored God, rather than satisfying his own preferences. (3) And ultimately he lost nothing, but gained the promised blessing from God.

Our next example is Abigail. I would encourage you to take your Bible and read 1 Samuel chapter 25.

Abigail (1Sam.25

David was with His band of “valiant men”; loyal warriors dedicated to their leader. In their travels they came to what appears to be the “kingdom” of Nabal, or at least the area where his vast herds grazed. In that area, Nabal’s herdsmen kept their flocks and herds and from what the text may indicate, Nabal never paid much attention to that part of his possessions.

David and his warriors dwelled in peace among all the livestock and their keepers. At one point David and his men had such little food, that David sent a messenger to Nabal to request any food or resources he might be willing to offer them. Vs.10-11 Indicate the unpleasant disposition of Nabal. He belittled the messenger, mocked David and refused them any help. When the messenger returned with Nabal’s answer, David became so enraged, he told his men to “strap it on”. So David and 400 of his warriors strapped on their swords and departed to go visit Nabal and they would not leave one man standing (v.34).

One of the herdsmen heard what was going on and he went ahead of David to report to Nabal’s wife Abigail. When she received the news, this Peacemaker of a lady sprung into action.

1Sam. 25:18- (18) Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. (19) And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I come after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

She heard of the coming massacre and took what she could prepare and took it as a bit of a peace offering to David.

1 Sam.25:23-24 (23) When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. (24) She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant.

She met David, humbled herself before him, basically putting her own neck on the chopping block and even blamed herself for the situation. "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt."

She basically saves her husband's skin along with every man in that kingdom. And her husband never even realized what was happening. The scripture indicates later that he was probably too busy keeping himself drunk. (v.36) As a result, David was so amazed by this woman, that his anger was averted and he even thanked her for stopping him from carrying out his intended actions of bloodshed. (v.33) Wow. What a peacemaker! This was a third party intervention.

(1) Abigail valued peace more than her own live, to approach David on behalf of her husband, family and their servants. (2) Her actions kept David and all his "valiant men" from this wrong-doing.

David was not right in what he was going to do. And we may even think that Nabal had it coming. Nevertheless, the heroine of this story is Abigail the peacemaker.



“Children of the Heavenly Kingdom”

Peacemaking is not an easy task, nor is it glorious. Recently we have seen the challenges of peacemaking on a global scope. President Trump working on a Peace Plan with Israel and Palestine. Most recently attempting a Peace Treaty between US, Afghanistan and the Taliban. Certainly good intentions, only time will tell how successful these efforts have been. Peace is often elusive and difficult to achieve.

From the pen of a great rock legend came these lyrics expressing the desire for peace.

“Imagine”

Imagine there's no heaven, It's easy if you try, No hell below us,
Above us only sky; Imagine all the people living for today---

Imagine there's no countries, It isn't hard to do, Nothing to kill
or die for, And no religion too;

Imagine all the people, living life in *peace*...

*You may say I'm a dreamer, But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us, And the world will be as one*

Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can,
No need for greed or hunger, A brotherhood of man;
Imagine all the people, sharing all the world,....

You may say I'm a dreamer, But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us, And the world will be as one.

“Imagine”, by Singer / Songwriter, John Winston Lennon.

John Lennon, a well-meaning man, who desired something that God also desires for us, that is peace. John Lennon desired war and poverty and hunger to be eradicated. He used LSD, and other drugs to attempt to achieve personal peace. He viewed Religion and patriotism as evils that stole peace from humanity. He was eventually shot to death.

On Dec.8, 1980; After having autographed a copy of one of his albums for the man who would soon become his killer; as John Lennon and His wife Yoko approached the entrance of their apartment building in NY,

the man whose album Lennon had just autographed, fired five [hollow-point bullets](#) from a [.38 special revolver](#). Four of the shots hit Lennon in the back. His assailant remained at the scene reading *The Catcher in the Rye* until he was arrested by the police. Lennon was rushed in a police cruiser to [Roosevelt Hospital](#), where he was pronounced [dead on arrival](#). John Lennon desired and valued peace, yet died a violent death.

John Lennon desired and valued peace, yet he died a violent death. Unfortunately many people may genuinely seek peace, only to have it evade them. John Lennon died, not having achieved personal peace, and evidently never experiencing peace with God.

Today we finish part 2 of “Blessed are the Peacemakers”. Today’s title is: “**Children of the Kingdom of Heaven**”.

The Beatitudes focus on Jesus’ teaching about...

THE BLESSING OF BEING A PEACEMAKER

* One of the Blessings of being a peacemaker is in helping others to get a taste of the Kingdom of Heaven and how God desires to transform our lives, for others to experience little of what God and His eternal Kingdom – our eternal home, will be like.

Identified with Christ

One blessing of being a PeaceMaker is to be known as A True Child of God or Child of the Heavenly Kingdom. This Beattitude is not merely an “attitude” of the sons of the Kingdom, but a practice or an action taken to accomplish an intended result.

Mat 5:9 ESV "Blessed are the peacemakers, <i>for they shall be called sons of God.</i>
--

Again, this does not mean that by being a “peacemakers”, they somehow become sons of God. But by being a peace maker we are known as or are identified as children of God.

And in doing so, we become....

An effective representative of God’s KoH

* Not only is a peacemaker one who helps others live at peace or to be able to get along peacefully, but a Peacemaker would also be one who helps others find peace with God, through faith in Jesus Christ. Apart from experiencing relational peace between others, most importantly is our ministry of helping others find and experience eternal peace with God.

Isa 52:7 ESV How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes **peace**, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes **salvation**, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

Isa 52:10 ESV The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the **salvation** of our God.

This is an Old Testament Scripture that presents, what some might refer to as, a New Testament principle. I see Peacemaking as a command, high expectation and perhaps even an obligation to Christ. However more so, this is a holy privilege.

As peacemakers...

(1) We can help others find peace with God, through faith in Jesus. As believers in Jesus Christ, we must be ready with our own testimony of faith in Christ and prepared to share the gospel message of peace. I am a believer in Jesus Christ. He died for our sins and was raised from the dead to give us new life. The Bible promises, that if we "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved." What would prevent you from trusting in Jesus today?

(2) We can also help others get a faint glimmer of what the KoH will be like. Peaceful. Pleasant. Void of havoc, free of violence, physical or verbal; so that others will begin to desire and value God's eternal kingdom of heaven as we do.

Making Disciples is about helping others to come to faith in Jesus Christ, and nurturing their faith to begin to desire their new home and to help detach them from attractions of this present life.

This is what our H.O.M.E. groups are all about; Sharing our faith. Teaching God's Truth. Presenting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and providing an opportunity to personally trust in Christ. In this context they can grow in their understanding of Scripture and in their depth of faith.

AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST

* Peacemakers are ambassadors of Christ. Being a Peacemaker identifies us as children of God, so that others know where we stand, what we believe and who it is we represent. What a colossal privilege, to represent our King of Kings to those who presently don't know him personally.

A Representative...

* A Peacemaker is a representative or an Ambassador of Christ and of His kingdom of Heaven. It is one thing to define peacemaking, to describe peacemaking, to preach about peacemaking, or to teach a lesson about peacemaking. The problem is that none of that is actually *making* peace. Our verse says: "Blessed are the peaceMAKERS....". This is an action quality.

An Ambassador for Christ is actively being a man or woman of peace.

2Cor. 5:18-21 ESV (18) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (20) Therefore, ***we are ambassadors for Christ***, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

God has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation(v.19), that is the message of the gospel of salvation. And true believers in Jesus are described as being "ambassadors for Christ". Then in v.20, Paul indicates what the steps of action actually are when he describes an

ambassador or representative of Christ as “God making His appeal through us”. There is the action, urging or imploring others to believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved.

I was recently teaching a class of 5 & 6 graders about Communion and the Crucifixion, that they were linked but not the same thing. One is a memorial ceremony or meal, and the other is the actual event of Jesus dying on a cross and shedding His blood, in order to pay for the sins of the world. I encouraged the students to think of the things they have done wrong, whether they were caught or not. I asked them to consider their sins that have separated them from God and would cause them to spend eternity in hell, separated from God, unless those sins were forgiven. I encouraged them to think of all these things.

Then I emphasized the fact that when Jesus died on the cross, His death was their own death payment for their sins. Jesus was given the guilt of their sins. Jesus paid the penalty for their sins. Jesus was punished for all the wrong things you have ever done and for all the sins you have ever committed. And at that moment a young voice in the class said out loud, “Oh.... No...! I didn’t see which young person it was that said that. But the statement and the manner in which it was expressed, indicated that some young student there, got the idea.

So, would you consider yourself a Peacemaker? Do you Desire to be an ambassador of Peace? Do you see the value of being a Peacemaker between others and God?

Do you value peace enough to ask God to make you a PeaceMaker? I can’t help but think that this is intended to cause us to desire to become peacemakers or peace keepers. We have the holy privilege of representing the Prince of Peace to the world.

The Need and Value of a Peacemaker

In closing, lets consider what a Peacemaker is **NOT**.

(1) A Peacemaker is **not** a fence straddler on issues which Scripture is clear on. It is not about keeping peace of unity at all costs, especially at the cost of the Truth. The biggest enemy of Truth can be “unity”.

(2) Along with that, Peacemaking is **not** choosing to be tolerant on issues that God calls an abomination. We don't impress God nor do anyone any favors by being "tolerant", condoning, glossing over or turning a blind eye to the things or practices that offend or concern God.

(3) Peacemaking is **not** refusing to take a position of conviction for fear of not pleasing someone. It would be far better to offend someone out of genuine love, than to be silent out of fear and never know where they will spend eternity.

(4) Peacemaking is **not** choosing to keep the middle ground in a discussion or conflict for fear of being accused of "taking sides" and "not remaining neutral."

A Recipe for Peace

(1) Implement the Golden Rule

"Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you" (Mat.7:12)

Don't treat people they way they have treated you. Don't return fire when someone criticizes or rebukes you. Practice holding your tongue and not having the last word.

(2) Be Patient and kind to others.

1Cor. 13:4 ESV Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant

Pride is often at the core of disunity. Pride has to have its way. Its what pride does. When you are kind to those who are not kind, it takes away their ammunition. It can pour water on a heated situation. It also leaves them with an example of what the KoH will be like in its fullness, *peaceful*.

(3) Practice forgiving others.

Col 3:12-13 ESV (12) Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, (13) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

When we forgive, we do away with resentment. We throw away the list of things the other person has done to hurt or frustrate us. When we forgive we take away the tool of satan in bringing about dissension and strife. Forgiveness expels revenge from the heart. Forgiveness then forbids the seeking of revenge, because genuine forgiveness seeks to remove the sense of offense, as well as the motivation to pay one back or treat them as they have treated us. Forgiveness is a key ingredient in being a PeaceMaker between people and between others and God.

The Value and Need of Peacemakers...

The Need for Peacemaker

* Step right Up and Sign Up. Every church needs a few peace makers. Every family needs a peace maker or 2. Every work place environment needs a peacemaker, male or female. There is need for those who do not stir up drama and tempers. Someone who minds their business and controls their tongues; who knows when to speak words of peace, and who knows how to and when to keep their thoughts to themselves.

A peacemaker must value people and desire peace over their own opinion, preferences or sense of need “for others to know I am right”. A Peacemaker must also be willing to do what it may take to keep or make peace, in a potentially volatile situation.

If we make stress worse, by our own arguments, we are helping light a fuse that may likely result in an explosion. Or we can help to possibly defuse a potentially volatile conversation or situation, by choosing to be a peacemaker.

We never know the stress other people are experiencing. Their anger, disrespect or hatred may stem from their own pain, fear, frustration or personal hardship. Our words and our influence on others can intensify a heated situation or we may be used to de-escalate matters and perhaps avoid relational explosions.

In being a peace maker, we can't know what worse problems we may have helped to avoid. We can only do it because we know it's the right thing to do and that it pleases God. We have to desire peace, value peace

and be willing to do what it takes to make peace, keep peace, bring peace into a given situation.

AND we may be unsure where a certain *someone* will spend eternity; they have given us no indication that they are trusting in Christ. We must not remain silent. We must love enough and be willing to be a Peacemaker between them and God, if they will allow us and if they will be willing to listen and take to heart what we say.

In being a peacemaker, or being a child of the Kingdom of Heaven, we help others get a glimpse of what God's eternal kingdom will be like and help them become open to our message, as we implore them to trust Christ, be reconciled to God and become a citizen of God's Kingdom of Heaven.

This happens through relationships established at work with those who seem closed and with those in school, who may claim to be an atheist.

CONCLUSION:

Benediction:

1Th 5:23-24 ESV Now may the God of *peace* himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (24) He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

A Prayer for the PeaceMakers

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. ²[You are my help and my deliverer]; ³[do not delay, O my God!]

¹**I am poor and needy**; That is humbly acknowledging our desperate need. I am lacking in purity of heart or a single-focused, Christ-focused spiritual life. I want to be a peacemaker. I want people to see me as a child of God, but alas, I am in desperate need of help.

²You are my Help and Deliverer; that is a confident dependence upon God is my only Help and my only Hope You are the Prince of Shalom and the only one who can take my disposition and nurture a desire to be peaceful and to bring peace.

³Do not Delay, Oh my God. – A Desperate Humble plea to God. Hear my prayer today. “Do Not delay, Oh My God”. Do not delay in doing your work in my own heart, my focus, my attention, my affections, my pursuits, in keeping you as Ruler of every area of my life.





Text: Mat.5:10-13

"Blessed are the Persecuted" / Overcoming the enemy and possessing the Land

Suffering: Martyrdom; enduring to the end; perseverance of the saints

Mat 5:10-12 ESV (10) "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

INTRODUCTION

All we have to do is follow the Spread of Christianity and Christian missions from Christ to our present day and you soon realize, you are following the spread Christian persecution around the globe. As the gospel went out to the uttermost part of the World, Persecution followed to the uttermost part of the World. The Story of the spread of the gospel and missions is the story of Christian persecution.

Suffering should cause us to prepare for home - not only ourselves, but those we are put here to reach. Time is sort. Persecution or Illness may make it shorter. Suffering also reminds us of our eternal home. Persecution should cause us to long for home and serve as a constant reminder that this life and this place is not home.

"I'm Kind of Homesick", Squire Parsons

I'm kind of homesick for a country, To which I've never been before.
No sad goodbyes will there be spoken, For time won't matter anymore.

I'm looking now, just across the river, To where my faith,
shall end in sight There's just a few more days to labor.

Then I will take my heavenly flight.

Beulah Land, I'm longing for you; And some day on thee I'll stand;
There my home shall be eternal, Beulah Land, Sweet Beulah Land.

I am also reminded of the old hymn: “*This World is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through*”.

Today, The Beatitudes focus Jesus’ teaching about...

BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED (v.10)

* (1) All believers in Jesus Christ are presently blessed, and are presently recipients of God’s unmerited favor, right now, regardless of your circumstances.

Persecution for a Purpose - righteousness

* Persecution is not bad luck nor Karma catching up with you. Persecution is not Satan ruling the world as though God has not control over him. Satan is our enemy and our persecutor; and Jesus Christ is presently gloriously exalted, and righteously reigning over all His creation

<p>Mat 5:10-12 <u>ESV</u> (10) “<u>Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven</u>”</p>
--

Sometimes persecution comes through circumstances and sometimes it comes mainly through people – sometimes even through Christian people.

Persecution is Christians suffering due to our faith in Christ and devotion to His Holy Word and service. And it is important to bear in mind that In our pain, suffering and even in persecution, God has a purpose.

Theirs is the KoH

* (2) All believers are not only presently recipients of God’s divine favor, but we are also presently citizens of God’s eternal Kingdom of Heaven. Right NOW.

The Apostle John, wrote his epistles of 1,2, and 3 John, possibly as Shepherd of the church in Ephesus and possibly to the same 7 churches of Asia, as he wrote the book of Revelation.

Consider his message in 1 John.

1Jn 2:13 ESV I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because **you have overcome the evil one**. I write to you, children, because you know the Father

1 Jn. Was written in the first century, sometime around 80-90ad. During that time frame of about 60AD-80AD, the Jewish wars took place, Jerusalem was invaded by enemy armies and succumbed to Roman occupation. In that time the temple was also destroyed and believers began to be dispersed to others parts of the world. The book of Acts depicts some of that persecution during the Diaspora. Read Acts 18:1-4.

Can you imagine living during that time in the history of the Jewish people? Feeling they had been defeated. Thinking this was the end. Humanly speaking, they experienced the loss of all hope and appearance of certain defeat and ultimate annihilation. Then to hear John write, “**you have overcome the evil one**“. What an encouraging word. All that and yet God had a purpose in the persecution. If persecution has a divine purpose, then we must also believe the Corona Virus and other medical issues or natural disasters have a purpose as well.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake...”

A Prayer about Persecution

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹[I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me]. ²[You are my help and my deliverer]; ³[do not delay, O my God!]



Text: Rom.5:1-5

Subject: All gatherings including churches are suspended in light of Corona Virus Disease 2019.

Suffering& Affliction:

Rom 5:1-5 ESV Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, (4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, (5) and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

INTRODUCTION

When affliction is experienced, whether personal, national or global, we tend to ask the question: "Is God purging the world?" "Is Satan attacking the world?" Or "Are the effects of human sin, taking its toll on the world?" My answer would probably be, "all of the above".

Today, We may not be facing persecution but we are....

FACING AFFLICTION

When we feel we are facing affliction of any kind, I think it is a good idea to examine ourselves personally, before we accuse our nation of bringing affliction upon us. The nation is the sum total of its individual citizens. If the nation is sinning, then it is because its citizens are sinning. If our nation is honoring the Lord, then it is because its citizens are honoring the Lord.

When We are afflicted we should make it a priority to...

Seek God personally and then Nationally

* When we feel we are afflicted, we should seek to determine that we are personally, not the cause, and then that our nation is not to blame.

Psa 139:23-24 ESV (23) Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

This is great “sinner’s” prayer, as well as a prayer for Christians who may have hidden, or unconfessed sin. If every person in America sought God and His cleansing, then the nation as a whole would be in better shape and more in line with direction and lifestyles that please the lord.

(i.) God search me.

(ii.) God forgive me.

(iii.) God purify me and keep me from further sin.

Let’s do what is within our power to address, when it comes to attempting to determine if God is addressing sin, whether personally or nationally.

When afflicted we must...

Be reminded of our human frailty

* Our church family has been focusing on Ps.40 as we go through the Beattitudes together.

Psa 40:17 ESV ¹As for me, ²I am poor and needy, ³but the Lord takes thought for me. ⁴You are my Help and my Deliverer; ⁵O my God! do not delay!

Be reminded of our human state of the frailty of humanity and our own desperate need for God at every moment and in every area of my life. ¹This is personal. Its about me not anyone else. ²I am weak and needy. No pretense. Honest evaluation before God. ³The Lord takes thought of me. This is important that we understand our affliction does not mean God has forsaken us, but He has a purpose in it. God hasn’t forgotten us. He is still in control watching over and protecting us. ⁴You are my Help and my Deliverer. ⁵Oh, my God. Do Not Delay. God I need you now. Don’t wait.

If we survive anything, it is not going to be because we are shrewd or

capable or great, but because we have a Great, Great God.

When we are afflicted we should...

Ask God questions for learning

* I believe it is a good idea, when we experience times of trials, to ask God, “what lesson would you have me learn from all this?” If God has a lesson for us, certainly we would not want to fail to learn that lesson, only to have God use some other trial or trouble to get our attention all over again. God, what do you want me to learn from this?

When we are afflicted we should...

Realize that we may be under attack

We must surely realize that our adversary the devil is at work and if he can defile or destroy what God has created, he will be very happy. We know, “He comes to steal, kill and destroy.” It is his method of operation. It is what he does. It is who he is.

Today, I wanted to share....

SOME THINGS I HAVE HEARD OTHERS REMARK ABOUT THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE 2019

I have heard people say...

What satan means for evil, May God use it for Good.

* In the book of Genesis Joseph was hated by his brothers, so much so that they sought to kill him. But instead the sold him into slavery. He was purchased by a slave owner and eventually, God worked it out that Joseph was 2nd in command over all of Egypt; only the Pharaoh himself was higher than Joseph. The faced with a drought and famine the people were in need and God blessed Joseph with wisdom to know how to gather food ahead of time, so they would have enough when the famine hit and though the earth would not produce food, they had enough to survive.

The entire nation of Egypt came to Joseph for food, and eventually so did his brothers. Upon realizing Joseph was alive, his brothers were

initially happy to see Joseph, but then they began to fear him, thinking he would certainly attempt to pay them back.

We don't know when it happened, or how long it took to happen, but we know that Joseph had enough time to come to understand that God was in control and he forgave his brothers. So he told his brothers:...

Gen 50:20 KJV But as for you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save many people alive.

We must see that even if Satan is working for evil, nevertheless, ultimately God is in absolute control of Satan and can use what Satan means for evil and use it for good and to accomplish God's own purposes. If God had a plan for Joseph, He must surely have a purpose and a plan for us through this Corona virus crisis.

I have also heard people say...

Perhaps CoViD-10 is what God may use to spark a Revival in our day.

Act 8:1-4 ESV (1) And Saul approved of [Stephens'] execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (2) Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. (3) But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. (4) Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

This affliction of persecution against the church is what caused the church to spread throughout the known world. God caused persecution to spread the gospel, as well as the revival of the scattering Christians.

I have heard it said...

Maybe this is just a trial run to prepare us for what is yet to come.

There was a drought and Elijah was praying for rain. Several times he prayed for rain and several times he sent his servant out to check the

1Ki 18:43-44 ESV And [Elijah] said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times. (44) And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, '**Prepare** your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'"

The Key word here is Prepare! "Get Ready!" Elijah saw only a small cloud, yet told his servants, to prepare and get ready for the coming rain. The sight of a small cloud got him preparing for the coming downpour.

Whatever challenges we face, let us use that to think clearly, act prudently and to be stronger and better prepared for what may yet be ahead in our future.

I have personally thought...

We might Consider this God's way of getting His way in our lives.

* Jesus always sends His servants out.

Mat 10:1-5 ESV And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. (2) The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; (3) Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; (4) Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. (5) These twelve Jesus sent out...

And He did the same with the 70 disciples.(Lk.10:1-9) Perhaps the Corona Virus is God doing what needs to be done, in order to get the church doing what we ought to be doing; that is, learning to live and minister OUTSIDE its own walls, and into our mission field to which Christ has called us and placed us.

Christian: We are not to be monks. We are not meant to be comfortably cloistered.

Church: This is why we are here. This is the very context out of which the early church was birthed. We must not panic and live as Cowering Christians. But rather be Cautious and Courageous. We must use common sense. Our health is compromised and I believe it is important to abide by our National recommendations and restrictions. The elderly should be protected from potential contact with contaminated people, which could prove catastrophic for their health.

Yet, the church in general, must not retreat, or isolate, or panic or cower in a paralyzed state of fear. Fear is not a bad thing. But we cant be ruled by fear. In times of fear, we turn to God and Trust in God.

Fear is not the absence of courage. Fear is the recognition of danger and our response to it. Fear is our warning system. In the face of fear, we should respond with caution as well as with courage.

The C.V. is a crisis. In the last 2 months we have realized the reality that we are vulnerable and that there are areas of weakness in our national health and crisis preparedness. That's what crisis does. Crisis helps identify areas of weakness and can make us stronger to face our next and possibly greater challenge.

For the Church: this crisis can reveal our own specific, spiritual and ministerial weaknesses. For some it hard to function without meeting in a particular setting or building. This is a weakness. Our goal is not so much to get the community into our building, but to get the church into our community, as we develop relationships in our community to connect others to Christ and to other Christ followers, the church.

The church of Jesus Christ has always survived in difficult times and we will always survive. Not because we are strong, or great or wise. We don't survive because of who we are or what we can do. We survive because of who we belong to. "I will never leave you nor forsake you".(Heb.13:5) Make no mistake about it. We survive because we have a great and Awesome, Almighty God.

Don't Waste our Affliction. Allow it to teach us. Allow it to reveal our areas of personal and national weakness. Allow it to make us stronger, wiser, more ready for the greater challenges of life that are yet ahead of us. Allow it to be viewed as God's purpose to force us into learning how to function better outside the walls of our churches, which is exactly where we belong.

Look for the people God places in our path and the opportunities to help others. To help others in need. To help others who don't have hope. To help others living in paralyzed fear.

Be prepared to pray with others even in public.

A Prayer about Persecution

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹[I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me]. ²[You are my help and my deliverer]; ³[do not delay, O my God!]

¹I am poor and needy; That is humbly acknowledging our desperate need. I am weak. I tend to worry and fear and despair. I don't have courage in my heart that would allow me to experience peace.

²You are my Help and Deliverer; that is a confident dependence upon God is my only Help and my only Hope You are the only one who can help and provide and make something good out of what is taking place in the world today.

I don't endure suffering or affliction well. I ask you to nurture a heart that would respond to affliction and fear and possible diseases strong faith and courage as a true child of God.

³Do not Delay, Oh my God. – A Desperate Humble plea to God. Hear my prayer today. "Do Not delay, Oh My God". Oh God, Help me to, come to the rescue of America and the world right now. There is no leader capable of doing what needs to be done. So we look to you in humble desperation. Oh, God.... Do not delay in doing your work in our hearts, our nation and the world.

SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: “THE NARROW WAY”

SERMON: “Blessed are the Persecuted”, pt2 March 29, 2020

Subj:

Text: Mat.5:11

In this Beatitude, Jesus gives us a continuation of this reassurance of divine blessing. ...

BLESSED ARE THE SLANDERED (v.11)

Mat 5:11 ESV (11) "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."

* When persecution includes verbal persecution or slander, those who suffer such treatment are viewed from heaven’s perspective, as being “blessed of the Lord”.

Again, it's not that slander itself is a blessing. But that when as believers in Christ, we are slandered for Christ’s sake; the issue is while we are being persecuted from people around us, we are presently blessed of God, as we are undeserving recipients of His unmerited favor or grace.

Verbal Persecution

* If Physical persecution doesn't get the best of us, perhaps verbal persecution may. Slander can be just as painful and personally destructive as physical abuse.

Jesus promised; “You will be hated because of my name”.(Mat.10:22; 24:9). They will hate you because they hated me”.(Jn.15:18)

We know from Rev.12:10, that Satan is the “accuser of the brethren”. If he can't beat us down and break us physically, he will try to do it verbally. And sometimes he uses the verbal assaults of people, maybe even other Christians to do that.

(i.) “Revile and persecute” means to taunt; This is verbal terrorism. This is teasing or purposefully attempting to provoke someone; an attempt to “get a rise out of someone”; or to get someone to lose control. Then when a person loses control or responds in like

manner in which they were treated or taunted, then that information of their behavior is what gets broadcast as their inappropriate behavior.

People who revile, seek to taunt or provoke us to discouragement, to anger, to hopelessness and they are instruments of Satan. People who slander have Satan as their influence. Those who gossip, are guided and willingly led by the Devil. ***Even Christians***. When we are gossiping, we are involved in the devil's work; When we are slandering others, we are being used of Satan and are instruments of of the Adversary; When we revile others with our words, we are taunting them and we are pawns of the Evil one.

(ii.) We have an “Adversary”;

1Pet. 5:8 ESV Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your **ADVERSARY** the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

An Adversary is one who opposes another; the one who works against you; Your Adversary the devil desires to devour you.

Jesus said...

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan desires **to have you** ..., Luk 22:31

HE wants to devour you; he wants to sift you. He wants to attack you, to destroy you, to tear you down with the words on someone close to you.

Gen 26:18 ESV And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. And he gave them the names that his father had given them.

(iii.) We not only have an ADVERSARY, but we have an ACCUSER.

John wrote...

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the **ACCUSER** of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. Rev.12:10 ESV

To Accuse: is to charge wrongly or to blame a party without good reason or evidence, for something they did not do. That's what Satan

does: and Day and Night, he accuses or blames or brings false charges against Christians, before God. The idea is he attempts to incite God's wrath against His own.

And Christians, when we accuse people wrongly; when we revile others, or gossip about them or slander them; it is acting in the spirit of Satan, as the Accuser of the brethren,

The punishment for gossips and slanderers is severe.

Rom 1:29-31 ESV They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are **gossips**, (30) **slanderers**, **HATERS OF GOD**, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Gossips are busybodies. Busybodies are gossips. Idle spirits, but busy mouths. And When we are involved in gossip, slander, reviling others, criticizing others, tearing others down in order to make ourselves appear to be more built up, we are engaged in the work of Satan our Adversary.

Mat 5:11 ESV (11) "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

At that moment and in those circumstances, you are blessed.

As Christians, if we don't know what to do or how to behave...

We Have Our Example to follow - Jesus

*Jesus doesn't just tell us what to do or how to treat others; He gives us an example to follow.

1Pet. 2:21-23 ESV (21) For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that ***you might follow in his steps***. (22) He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (23) When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Verbal and physical persecution were experienced by Jesus and ¹we

must be willing and prepared to *suffer* the same. AND ²we must likewise be willing to *respond* the same.

“When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly”.

Isaiah prophesied about Jesus’ attitude toward his persecutors.

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

When we are mistreated, our flesh is what wants to fight back. Our fallen, broken, sinful, human nature is what motivates us to fight back, get even and pay them back for what they have done or said.

Jesus said, Blessed are the persecuted and blessed are those who are slandered for righteousness sake and then He gave us an example of what that would look like. We may not like it, but its how Jesus would have us respond under those conditions.

CONCLUSION:

As Christians, what is to be the purpose or motivation of our speech?

(1) Our speech must be full of grace. “Let your speech always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Col.4:6)

(2) Seek to speak in ways that builds others up, rather than tearing others down. “Let no corrupt talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for **building up**, as fits the occasion; that it may give grace to those who hear. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...” (Eph 4:29-30)

Not only do we have an Adversary, and an Accuser;

(iv.) in Jesus Christ, we have an Advocate:

1Jn 2:1 ESV My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The Bible Dictionary defines an Advocate as: **(1)** One summoned to come along side; **(2)** one who pleads our case before the Judge of heaven; Our Divine Defender.

A Prayer about being verbally Persecuted and Reviled >>

Psa 40:17 ESV ¹As for me, ²I am poor and needy, ³but the Lord takes thought for me. ⁴You are my help and my deliverer; ⁵[do not delay, O my God!]

1As for me - here is our focus. Not on anyone else, other than myself. This is my situation.

2I am poor and needy; That is admitting to God that I am weak and I am needy and when people say things about me, gossips, verbally persecutes or slanders me; I am not prepared to suffer as Christ suffered, not do not tend to immediately respond as Jesus responded.

I tend to strike out when confronted or opposed or spoken evil of. I need help.

Or perhaps you need to acknowledge and confess to God that you are one who in your gossiping, is being used of the Devil to do his dirty work amongst believers.

3but the Lord takes thought for me: Thankfully you know me. You are aware of my spiritual weakness; You know and understand what I am experiencing.

4You are my Help and Deliverer; My help comes from you. I am powerless, but you are All-powerful. You alone can help me and deliver me from this body of flesh and this temperament of getting even. Or perhaps, You know I am a person of unclean lips and am in need of deliverance from this spirit of gossiping.

³Oh my God' Do not Delay. – A Desperate Humble plea to God. Hear my prayer today. “Do Not delay, Oh My God. Help me now. Do not delay in doing your work in my own heart, my focus, my responses,, in keeping you as Ruler of every area of my life.

SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” April 19, 2020

SERMON: “Blessed are the Persecuted”, pt3

Text: Mat.5:13



Mat 5:10-12 ESV (10) "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

INTRODUCTION

Before we get into our text on the Sermon on the Mount and specifically, in the BeAttitudes: I would like to ask you to consider something that the Bible speaks about often: **Meditation**.

Psa 119:148 ESV My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may **meditate** on your promise.

Lam 3:19-23 ESV Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! (20) My soul continually **remembers** it and is bowed down within me. (21) But this I **call to mind**, and therefore I have hope: (22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Meditation is filling our mind, and focusing our thoughts in the person of God, On our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, on the promises of God, or perhaps meditating on our eternal home with God. When it comes to Christian persecution, Matthew records Jesus emphasis on this important topic. v.12) “Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven....”

As Christians we have a way out of worry. We have an escape from anxieties. WE have a cure for distress, frustration and despair; it is Meditation; Filling our minds and focusing our thoughts on our eternal reward. The writer of the book of Hebrews wrote: “**Fix your eyes** on to Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy that was set

before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) **Contemplate** Him who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. (Heb.12:1-3).

Perhaps we are so upset at the circumstances around us; perhaps we are so troubled and so irked by the decisions that are being made by our Govt; Maybe, just maybe we are so easily troubled, depressed, angered and reactive to things going on in our culture today – Maybe this is because we have failed to fill our mind and focus our thoughts on the person, work, love, Blessings, promises and Home we have with God. And in place of that, we have filled our minds, focused our thoughts, and meditated day and night on the frustrations and fears we are all experiencing.

The Song this Morning - “Remember. Remember, your promises are True.” If we are interested, God may have a remedy for us in today’s lesson from the BeAttitudes. This is the final Beatitude in Matthew. This is our 3 lesson on this Beatitude. And our focus for today is:

v.12) “Rejoice and be glad, for Great is your reward in heaven, ...”
--

Perhaps we fail to rejoice over our great reward in heaven due to:

(1) We are not certain of our eternal reward in heaven. Or (2) Perhaps we are uninformed regarding our glorious eternal reward in heaven. (3) Or we have been told about heaven, but we have failed to be awed by how scripture describes our eternal reward to come. All these mental, emotional and spiritual problems can be greatly helped by meditation on Scripture the focuses on our home in heaven.

Thomas Watson was a puritan nonconformist, preacher and author; And on this topic, His title was: “Holy Meditation quickens the Affections”. He states: As the musing on amorous objects makes the fire of lust burn and the musing on injuries make the fire of revenge burn, so meditating on the transcendent beauties of Christ would make our love to Christ flame forth.”

Or maybe Meditation on Christ, and heaven may be helpful in bringing back the “awe” to our Christian Spirit.

Occasionally in our home, something would be said that my Mother didn’t fully understand or grasp and she would say, “Hmm. I think I just need to sit down and mull that over in my mind for awhile”.

Which translated means: “I need to stop what I’m doing, clear my mind, refocus my thoughts, and dedicate some time to just think this thing through over and over again.”

And if you have things in your life, that are causing you mental anguish, emotional instability, vexation of your spirit, or fear or frustration – I believe the best place to start is to sit down, clear your mind, dedicate some time to think about your eternal rewards, and mull it all over for a while.

Perhaps take this challenge: (1) Spend one month researching from Scripture, your eternal reward. And (2) Pursue the Awe that may be missing in your perception toward Heaven.

We practice meditating all the time. If we meditate on an upcoming family vacation, your excitement increases. When you meditate on what you will get for Christmas, you long for the gift all the more. When we meditate on what you will order when you go out to eat, makes you all the more hungry, that you can hardly wait for your order to arrive.

And as we think about when you will finally be able to leave the house, we may become more impatient and we look forward to that day. Meditating on things causes us to look forward to it, all the more. The same with Heaven.

IN the context of Christian Persecution Jesus prescribed:

v.12) “Rejoice and be glad, for Great is your reward in heaven, ...”
--

In order to rejoice over our heavenly reward, we must be familiar with what the Bible tells us about our home in heaven; Not the best selling books on heaven; not the video documentaries about people who say they went to heaven. But to get our information directly from the Source.

(1) **Meditation** can nurture a greater knowledge, a deeper understanding and a more unshakable assurance in our heavenly home.

(2) **Meditation** can reveal a broadened awareness of the details of our reward; as dusk darkens the sky, it highlights the stars that seem to come to life. Likewise Meditation on the glories of eternity and the awe of heaven begins to come to life in our hearts.

(3) **Meditation** on our Reward in heaven can fan to life, our flame of love for God and sharing His home with Him.

This practice of meditation on God's word on the topic of heaven, can cause the fire of love to burn hotter and the joys of heaven to rise higher in our praise to God.

And even in times of heightened persecution for our faith, we would do well to remain focused on God, His Home, and our eternal reward.

Brief Review:

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED (v.10)

* All believers in Jesus Christ are presently blessed, and are presently recipients of God's unmerited favor, right now, regardless of your circumstances.

Affliction & Persecution Always has a Purpose -

* Persecution is not bad luck nor Karma catching up with you. It is something God allows, in order to accomplish His purpose, and fulfill His eternal plan. He may use the devil; He may use the Govt; He may use disease, affliction or natural disasters; But all these things we must understand, are under the absolute Authority of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

In this Beatitude, Jesus gives us a continuation of this reassurance of divine blessing. ...

BLESSED ARE THE SLANDERED (v.11)

Mat 5:11 ESV (11) "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."

THE NARROW WAY

* When persecution includes verbal persecution or slander, those who suffer such treatment are viewed from heaven's perspective, as being "blessed of the Lord".

We Have Our Example to follow - Jesus

* Jesus doesn't just tell us what to do or how to treat others; He gives us an example to follow.

1Pet. 2:22-23 (22) He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (23) When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

CONCLUSION:

We learned how very important is our perception of our circumstances as well as our responses and speech concerning our circumstances.

(1) Our speech must be full of grace. "Let your speech always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Col.4:6)

(2) Seek to speak in ways that builds others up, rather than tearing others down. "Let no corrupt talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for **building up**, as fits the occasion; that it may give grace to those who hear. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God..." (Eph 4:29-30)

***Today** our focus in the Beatitudes is.*

REJOICE IN YOUR REWARD (v.12)

* With this beatitude, Jesus elaborates on the blessing itself. He tells us to keep the end in mind.

Mat 5:10-12 ESV (10) "**Blessed are those** who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Why are we blessed? Why are we to rejoice? (v.12b) **for your reward is great in heaven.**

Remember, this is not a command to be blessed or happy. Nor is it a promise to be blessed. It is a statement of being blessed at this very moment, it is a present reality. And that is the blessing and that is the reason we are to rejoice, because we are presently blessed with unspeakable rewards in our home in heaven.

We can begin to rejoice in the midst of persecution if...

Keep the End in Mind

* If we focus on our circumstances, we will all become hopeless, desperate, pessimists.

Heb 12:1-3 ESV Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us **run with endurance the race** that is set before us, (2) looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so **that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.**

Keep the end in mind. The finish line. The Prize. We must not keep focused on our circumstances or on the news, or on persecution. We must keep focused on the end result of our persecution or affliction.

Where is our reward? Heaven. Not in the praise or acceptance in this life. Not in our possessions or acquisitions we have gained in our earthly journey. Our reward is in heaven.

Remember the Kingdom of Heaven – the gate or the entry way is narrow, and the path or the journey is difficult, troublesome; (Lit. Tribulation.)

That means, affliction, persecution, slander, all kinds of evil attacks, satanic accusations and discouraging experiences, designed with you in mind – to derail your purpose; distract your focus;

Our Reward is Heaven. Should that not be where our focus is; our desires are; our interests lie; our reason for living takes us?

Keep the End in Mind.

We can begin to rejoice in the midst of persecution if...

Keep Persecution's Purpose in mind

* Persecution's purpose is for the Joy of our Reward. The purpose of persecution is to prepare us for our eternal reward. Don't worry this life away. Don't pine and long for things that are going to be gone in a matter of years. Don't wish for things to return to normal as soon as possible. I can't imagine that is God's will.

Lord; Teach us the Lessons you want us to learn. Personally I am not presently afraid of the Corona Virus. I understand its dangers. But I'm presently not afraid of it. What I am fearful of, is being tested by God, and failing the test. That's what I'm afraid of.

I'm not fearful of the Govt taking away our American or Christian rights. I'm not afraid of that. I certainly hope it doesn't happen. I would do what I could, If there was anything I could do, to keep that from occurring. I'm not afraid of the Govt taking away our rights.

What I am afraid of is what appears to be a focus on politics, rights, entitlements, the fact that we are "Americans"; I am afraid the other personal, national, earthly concerns at this time for many, occlude our focus on being the people God wants us to be; to be Christ-like in times of affliction or persecution, if it were ever to turn to that. I'm afraid of the church in America, having the opportunity to sort of re-mold the unbelieving culture's perception of who we are and what we are like, yet giving them legitimate reason to say, "yeah, there they go again. Bunch of hypocrites".

Don't desire to get back to normal, but seek to become who God wants us to be and to learn what He wants His church to learn.

Don't grieve over the troubles of this world, but allow them to focus our minds and fill our thoughts on our Reward in Heaven and what the devil meant to cause evil, God uses to turn the tables and cause us to rejoice,

with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

Rom 5:1-5 ESV Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, (4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, (5) and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

This is the Narrow Way; the path; the journey of affliction and tribulation. The Gate is narrow and the path is troublesome.

Are we up for it?

Keep Persecution's Purpose in mind

Q: Are we rejoicing? Do you rejoice? Do the sufferings, trials, tribulations, troubles, frustrating circumstances, persecutions of this life, cause you to rejoice and become homesick for Heaven?

1Pet. 1:6-8 ESV In this you rejoice... though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, (purpose) (7) so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (8) Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

Suffer – Rejoice - Purpose? motivation? Focus? Desires? In all these things, we must remember persecution's purpose and keep the end in mind. *-For Great is your reward in heaven.*

Col 1:22-26 ESV he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, (23) if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (24) Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for

the sake of his body, that is, the church, (25) of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, (26) the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.

Are we up for it?

Keep Persecution's Purpose in mind

Php 2:14-18 ESV (14) Do all things without grumbling or disputing, (15) that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, (16) holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. (17) Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and *rejoice* with you all. (18) Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

CONCLUSION:

A few more gospel songs come to my mind. Perhaps you may be familiar with some of them.

Home Where I Belong, BJ Thomas

“When I’m feelin lonely, and when I’m feeling blue,
Its such a joy to know that I am only passin through.
I’m goin home – where I belong”

This is Not Where I belong?, Bldg 429

All I know is I'm not home yet, This is not where I belong
Take this world and give me Jesus, This is not where I belong

So when the walls come falling down on me, And when I'm lost in the
current of a raging sea, I have this blessed assurance holding me.

All I know is I'm not home yet, This is not where I belong
Take this world and give me Jesus, This is not where I belong

Brothers and Sisters we are not home yet. If our murmurings are louder than our Rejoicings, then we have lost our way. If we don't *learn* to rejoice now, we will live and die in *misery*. Don't let our fear to cast out His perfect love and purpose for us, in these times.

Let us get our sights off this worldly life; Let us hope in Gods' promises and our eternal home, Let God's eternal kingdom of Heaven refocus our vision and regain our attention. Great is your reward in Heaven!

Whatever your problems? Whatever your trials? Whatever your present distractions? Whatever your fears? Whatever your desires?

I hope this has not become so repetitive, or so familiar that you no longer take this prayer seriously.

2Tim. 3:12 ESV (12) Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

A Prayer about Persecution

Psa 40:17 ESV ¹As for me, ²I am poor and needy, ³but the Lord takes thought for me. ⁴You are my help and my deliverer; ⁵[do not delay, O my God!]

¹I am poor and needy; That is humbly acknowledging our desperate need. I am weak. I tend to strike out when confronted or opposed. I don't have peace in my heart that would allow me to be persecuted and not fight back.

²You are my Help and Deliverer; that is a confident dependence upon God is my only Help and my only Hope You are the only one who can purify my heart, captivate my attention and lead me in your path of righteousness, or path of right living before you.

I don't endure suffering or persecution well. I ask you to nurture a heart that would respond to persecution as our Lord Jesus did; when he suffered, and when He was vilified, he did not respond in like manner, but in humility.

God forgive us for the sin of being so caught up in earthly troubles and distractions that we have failed to rejoice NOW, that our reward in heaven, is Great.

³Do not Delay, Oh my God. – A Desperate Humble plea to God. Hear my prayer today. “Do Not delay, Oh My God”. Oh God, Help me to entrust affliction and persecution and troubles into your loving care. Make me more like Jesus.

“Oh God, what a mess am I! Fear. Hope. Frustration. Joy. Doubt. Assurance. Restore my joy and my Awe over my eternal home. Fill my mind and help me focus my thoughts on eternity with you. In Jesus name. Amen/”

[End of the Beattitudes]



SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” April 26, 2020

Sermon Title: “**Influence & Impact**” (Testimony)

Text: Mat.5:13-16 | Salt shaker; Flashlight;



REVIEW:

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has 3 audiences, all seated together.

Luk 6:12-20 ESV (12) In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. (13) And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: (14) Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, (15) and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, (16) and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (17) And he came down with ¹them and stood on a level place, with ²a great crowd of his disciples and a ³great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, (18) who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. (19) And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all. (20) And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:.... (Sermon on the Mount)

v.12) “mountain”; Sermon on the Mount.

v.13) He chose 12 disciples / apostles (v13-16)

(1) v.17a, “them”, being “the 12”. (2) v.17b, “great crowd of disciples”; would have included “the 72”, many more who were genuine believers and servants of Christ by this time; and (3) v.17c) “a great multitude from Judaea, Jerusalem and the seacoast.”

There would have been a wide variety, of levels of faith, represented in this diversity of Jesus’ disciples. There would have been differing levels of personal spiritual maturity; differing levels of understanding of Jesus’ teaching regarding God’s eternal kingdom of heaven.

In fact this group of disciples would most probably be just like any church today; different people, at different levels of faith; some viewing Jesus differently, some dealing with Jesus differently.

Mat 5:13-16 ESV (13) "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

(14) "You are the **light** of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do people **light** a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives **light** to all in the house. (16) In the same way, let **your light** shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. [Phi.2:14]

INTRODUCTION

In Matt.5:1-12, Jesus addresses our Christian influence even in times of persecution. Remember, the Beatitudes depict the present reality of true followers of Christ. In.5:13-16, Jesus highlights the particular responsibilities of true followers of Christ. These are not rights. They are expectations and responsibilities.

Take note that the progression of Jesus teaching through this passage is not a coincidence, nor is it random. The emphasis of these verses is on our Influence & Impact are Christians and citizens of God's Kingdom of Heaven. And the Context of these responsibilities and influence is most immediately in the context of **persecution**. Not our Rights, but our Responsibilities of how we are expected to respond when being mistreated and abused because of the word of God and our testimony of Jesus.

This is our focus this morning.

Q: As Christians, how do we respond when under pressure or under fire? It seems to me, we have to be able to accurately evaluate, whether or not we are actually under persecution, or are we just inconvenienced and experiencing the same thing as everybody else in the same situation?

RESPONSE: "Well we have to speak up and put up a fight or else we're liable to lose our Christian rights."

Q: As Christians, how will the church of Jesus Christ, be characterized when this crisis is all over?

RESPONSE: “We certainly can’t stand idly by and let them close all the churches.”

Q: When this is all over, will the name of Christ or Christian, be appealing or appalling to the world around us? Will the world have heard our words, seen our works, and found the name of Christ appealing or appalling?

Personally, I am not as concerned with Christians losing our rights, as I am about possibly failing the test that God is allowing us to undergo.

Jesus used imagery. “I am the Vine, and you are the branches.”

WE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

* Imagine life without Salt.

Mat 5:13 ESV (13) ***"You are the salt of the earth,*** but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Who likes salt? Imagine French Fries without salt. Or Popcorn without salt? Potato chips or white rice without salt.

I’ve read that if you wash your windows of your house in salt water, it prevents the windows from frosting up during the winter.

Years ago, before I was married, I was out on my own and I did some grocery shopping and I purchased some butter. I came home made a big batch of my favorite sausage and biscuits. And when I put the butter on the biscuits I realized something just wasn’t right. Something didn’t taste right. I eventually noticed that the butter label looked different and I discovered I had purchased un-salted butter. Unsalted butter? What is surprise. What a disappointing surprise. Unsalted butter? I didn’t know there was such a thing. Unsalted butter is like unsweetened tea; Why would something like that even exist?

The Value of salt

* Sometimes the more we lack salt, the more we grasp the value of salt.

In Matthew 5:13, when Jesus stated “You are the salt of the earth”; By stating "you", Jesus was pointing the finger and stressing the unique calling of His disciples (cf. [Mat 5:14](#)). Salt was important in the ancient Near East because it ¹flavored food, ²retarded decay in food, and in small ³doses fertilized land. [Note: Eugene P. Deatrick, "Salt, Soil, Savor," *Biblical Archaeologist* 25 (1962):44-45.] Jesus implied by this metaphor that His disciples could positively affect the world (*kosmos*, the inhabited earth; humankind). They had the opportunity through their lives and witness to bring blessing to others and to retard the natural decay that sin produces in life.

Jesus gives the Sober Warning of salt

* Christian: Church of Jesus Christ: Take heed of this warning.

Mat 5:13 ESV (13) "You are the salt of the earth, ***but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?*** It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

One writer described his experience of testing chunks of salt in the Eastern Countries: “I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed to the rain, sun, and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savor.”

In other words, there was salt that looked like all the rest; It crystalized like the rest; it sparkled like the rest; for all means and purposes it have the appearance as all the rest; but when tasted, it has lost most or all of its salty taste.

So the question is: “If salt loses its saltiness, how then can its saltiness be restored?” This is a question that presents a warning.

It is stated that salt had many uses. (1) It was used for flavoring. As it grew weaker (2) it would be used as preservative to be rubbed into meats to prevent decay. Once he had become so weak and having lost the majority of its valuable properties; (3) it would be used as an ingredient for fertilizer or would be used in chunk form as rocks in a walkway.

The warning is: “If the salt loses it saltiness, how can its saltiness be

restored?” Meaning: “If we as the church lose our saltiness, or tarnish our testimony or lose our positive influence, how will we get it back again?” That is meant to be a confronting question with a sober warning.

the Question for the salt

*** Q: If the Salt, loses its saltiness, how will its saltiness be restored?** If you have your KJV- what is the first word in v.13? “Ye”. That is the plural form of “you”. The plural form of “you”, is “us”; you and me and all the rest of us Christians are “the church”.

It is possible for **the church** to lose our Influence or our testimony. It is possible to lose **our** Impact. It is possible to tarnish our testimony. It is possible to fail in the mission that Christ has called us to carry out. The focus here is the influence of the church, in the context of Persecution.(Mat.5:10-12) Not one person here and there, but the overall testimony and influence of the church.

Salt is only positively noticeable, when the food is especially, bland and distasteful. Salt is only a positively noticeable valuable preservative, when it comes in contact with food that is in danger of decaying and spoiling. This is the purpose of salt. This is the purpose of the church. Churches suing the Government. Christians speaking out and shouting about our rights.....

I wish that the church of Jesus Christ was that passionate about sharing the gospel; winning the Lost; Obediently making Disciples. If only we were just as concerned about those, as we are about our rights; our calling; our Testimony and our Influence.

Can we ask the Question: “Does God want us to sue our Government over our rights?” And can we honestly answer, “Yes”?

If salt loses its saltiness, how can its saltiness be restored?
AND if the church loses its testimony or our influence, how then,
can our testimony be restored?

ILL) 1993 a handful of us started a church in In a Northern Suburb of Chicago. We did a lot of door to door ministry. We did a lot of kids

ministry and community oriented ministry and interaction.

The Fair came to town. Several of us went to the fair; distributed Christian tracts, engaged people in conversation and sharing the gospel. After a few hours, the chief of police, “Officer “R”, approached us; told us we had to leave; The Catholic priest had filed a complaint against us. We were escorted out the gate and off the grounds.

As you can imagine, we were all infuriated. How dare they do that. This is a free country. We have our rights. Some of us began to entertain the idea of contacting a lawyer and taking legal action, and hopefully we’d teach them a lesson.

But the more we discussed it, and it was heated. But the more we discussed it, the more I did not feel that, suing the people God had called us to reach for Christ, was the answer. As bad as I wanted to be able to show them a thing or two, we eventually began to cool down and we committed this to prayer.

We continued reaching out to our community in different ways, and another year rolled around and the Fair was coming back to town. Our church received a letter from the Mayor’s Office at City Hall. It was a request for our church to be part of the Fair; we would be responsible for having children’s games and activities at the Fair. At the request of the Mayor’s Office. The city would pay all our expenses; we were to have nice prizes for the children’s games, and we would be allowed to distribute any and all literature that we wanted.

What happened? Why the change? *Here’s what happened.*

In that year, between the time we got escorted off the Fair grounds, to the time we received the letter of request from the Mayor’s Office: We continued praying for our situation and for our community and continued ministering in any way we could.

(1) We discovered that our mayor was also our mailman. Over that year, we developed a wonderful relationship with Mayor John, aka. John the Mailman. (2) Also, during that year, we had a bomb threat at our church,

which at that time was still meeting in our apartment. We contacted the police and guess who came to investigate? Officer “R”, the chief of police. During his investigation, he told us about his wife who was fighting cancer. And we began to pray for Officer “R”’s wife. After that we had many other contacts with him often prayed for him on the street. (3) Also during that year, we rented an old dance hall, to begin holding our Sunday Church services. The man who owned the dance hall, was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. He was also the head of the local VFW. He began inviting me to be his assistant during the community Memorial Day celebrations. His name was Bruno and Bruno was the most powerful Italian in town, and in his church.

Nobody ever took us aside and explained to us, what happened or why things changed. But it was clear enough that having committed all things to prayer and determining to wait on the Lord and to trust God in the situation and not to put up a fight; that God indeed intervened and changed people’s hearts, worked a great miracle and opened the door that no man could open, except God Himself.

Pro 3:3-7 ESV (3) Do not allow steadfast love and faithfulness to forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. (4) So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God **and man**. (5) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (6) In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (7) Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

I can’t tell you how many times, that experience and this passage of scripture has come up in my personal life and in ministry for Christ.

If salt loses its saltiness, how can its saltiness be restored?

A: I don’t know how.

AND if the church loses its testimony or our influence, how then,
can our testimony be restored?

A: We May NOT!

This is a very confronting question with a most sobering warning. How the church responds in times of hardship, affliction or “persecution” – and of which I must say, what we are experiencing is miniscule on the radar of affliction – it seems mostly an issue of inconvenience, irritation; But how the church responds in times like these, is like a test from God. My personal priority is not on whether or not my rights are being infringed upon, but perhaps more importantly, my priority should be on whether or not we as “the church” are passing God’s test? How is the church responding to the crisis around us? What is our Testimony? What Impact are we having upon our culture? How are we treating or viewing others? AND AND AND, here is our testimony – what is the world of darkness around us thinking about us, due to our behavior?

We blast. We rant. We complain. We talk about the constitution more than we talk about the Gospel. We threaten to sue our culture then turn around and expect them to be interested in what we have to offer them?

If God is the giver of Christian rights, then He’s going to have to do some serious apologizing to the church in China; the USSR, N.Korea, Vietnam, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Japan, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Columbia, Cuba, Nigeria, Israel, Jordan, Nicaragua, Yemen, Turkey, Ukraine, Thailand, Tajikistan, Somolia, Sri Lanka and about 130 other nations.

The Aroma of Christ

* We have the opportunity to leave our culture with the stench of our flesh or the aroma of Jesus Christ. Our Testimony and Influence. Our Blessed Attitude in the midst of persecution.

This passage is directly addressing our Testimony and Influence upon our culture and within our communities. How do we act, and what impression do we leave to the on-looking world around us?

2Cor. 2:14-16 ESV (14) But thanks be to God, who in Christ, always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us, spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere. (15) For we are the aroma of

Christ to God, among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, (16) to one, a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

How the church responds in times of hardship, affliction or persecution is like a test from God. My personal priority is not on whether or not my rights are being infringed upon, but perhaps more importantly, my priority should be on whether or not we are passing God's test? How is the church responding to the crisis around us? What is our Testimony? What Impact are we having upon our culture? How are we treating or viewing others? AND AND AND, here is our testimony – what is the world of darkness thinking about us, due to our behavior?

We blast. We rant. We complain. We talk about the constitution more than we talk about the Gospel. We threaten to sue our culture then turn around and expect them to be interested in what we have to offer them?

The Aroma of Christ. Do we as the church, leave the unbelieving world around us with the appealing aroma of Christ, or the appalling aroma of complainers? Do others get a whiff of the stench of our message of life, or are they more attracted by the fragrance of the other dead people around them?

SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” June 7, 2020

Sermon Title: “**Light to the World**”

Sermon Title: “**Expectation and Responsibility**”

Text: Mat.5:14-16 | 2 Cor.4:1-10 | Light; direction



REVIEW

So as Jesus began His earthly ministry, he began proclaiming the kingdom of Heaven and along the way he often healed or even raised the dead. In doing so, he left people with a foretaste of what His eternal Kingdom of Heaven would be like; no more sickness, no more pain, no more death, and no more sorrow.

Then as Jesus presented His sermon on the mount he had 3 distinct groups he was addressing. From Luk 6:12 and following we know he addressed the 12 disciples or his apostles (v13-16). Then Scripture speaks of the “great crowd of disciple,” which may have included “the 72”, or many more; perhaps even the 500 whom Paul spoke of in 1Corinthians 15; many of who were genuine believers and servants of Christ by this time. And then there were “a great multitude from Judaea, Jerusalem and the seacoast.” (v.17). Many of those may have been believers, some seekers, some looking for a miracle, while others may have just been curious to see what he would do next.

There would have been a wide variety, of levels of faith, represented in these groups of followers. Today we focus on Matthew 5:14-16.

INTRODUCTION

Today our focus is on Privilege and Responsibility. Most of our newer cars have an onboard computer which constantly calculates our average miles per gallon and will display it around our speedometer. This week my average miles per gallon gauge, advanced from 27.3 to 27.4 Avg Mpg. It was a very good day. You may be thinking: “Jeff, how can you be so superficial, so as to base a good or bad day on .1 of a Mpg increase?” Well, little things mean a lot. And Little things add up to become a big things.

Mat 5:14-16 (ESV) (14) "You are the **light** of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do people **light** a lamp and put it under a

basket, but on a stand, and it gives **light** to all in the house. (16) In the same way, let **your light** shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. [Phi.2:14]

Question: “So, where were you when the lights went out?”

Answer: “I was in the dark”. LoL.

Without Light, we have no sight. We’d all be blind. In fact, at one point Jesus was teaching that He was the Light of the world and then he turned right around and healed a man born blind.(Jn.9:5) Life without light, is blindness and hopeless and utter darkness. And spiritual life without Jesus Christ, is NO Life. Do we get that? Without the Light of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World; there is no spiritual life, only utter and eternal darkness, forever separated from God by sin.

To be sure, the world needs Jesus, the Light of the World.

JESUS IS THE LIGHT

* This is in reference to the person, the message and the Source of our eternal salvation. Light refers to spiritual direction; divine illumination; our personal testimony & witness; our individual input, our corporate Influence and our eternal Impact.

Our Christian Responsibility is to be salt and light to the world around us; as every little bit has an important impact. Little things mean a lot. And little things add up to bigger things. Our witness for Christ. Our testimony of What God has done and how He is presently at work in our lives, are all things that may seem small and insignificant to you, but God has promised that those little things, mean a lot. And in terms of influencing others toward Christ, all the little opportunities and brief kingdom moments, add up to larger spiritual impact.

Isa 60:1-3 KJV ¹Arise, shine; for your ²light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. (2) For, behold, the ³darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the ⁴LORD shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you. (3) And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

¹Arise Shine is both a prophecy, as well as a command. It is what is expected and what will one day be evident in their lives.

²Light has come refers to the promised coming Messiah, Jesus. He will be the embodiment of glory of Almighty God Himself.

³Darkness shall cover the earth: This speaks of the growing spread of the curse of sin, to all peoples of all the earth, not only in geographic regions but in levels of depravity.

⁴The Lord shall rise upon you: God will assuredly visit His people and bring redemption to the sinful world, or the light salvation to all those in the darkness of sin.

Jesus is the Light of Creation and Salvation

* Jesus is not only the creator of light in Genesis 1, He is also the Source of light in John 1.

Joh 1:1-5 (ESV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. (4) In him was life, and the life was the **light** of men. (5) The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

God's creation was it seems, a temporary representation or shadow of the true spiritual state of things in God's eternal kingdom of Heaven, but of course it only lasted a brief time, until sin came into the world.

Jesus Light of the Word

* Jesus was not only the creator of Light in Genesis, but he came to be the light of life to all who would believe in him and find redemption in Jesus Christ, both Creator and Savior.

Joh 8:12 ESV Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "**I am the light of the world**. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

That is whoever believes in and follows Christ, will have the light of life, in that we will possess it personally. BUT we will also have the responsibility of sharing the light; we are to pass the light of Christ on to

others living in darkness. We are to share our light; our testimony; The Context of these verses Matthew 5:14ff, is focused on our own Influence & Impact as God's instruments in reaching the fallen darkened world with the message of salvation.

Mat 5:14-15 ESV (14) "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

IIIC. Church is the light of the world

Question #1: Do you believe this? Church: Do we believe this?

Question #2: If we believe it then, *SO WHAT!?* -- *SO WHAT!?* If we truly believe it, then I'd like to hear more testimonies of people who have shared Christ with others this week. I'd like to hear more prayer requests for the people you are presently sharing Christ with and are presently in a disciple making relationship with.

We could read the original new testament greek and through our shoulder out of joint patting ourselves on the back; we could do word studies on what a disciple is, what salvation means, what the content of the gospel message really is – and we could write a book about it and sign autographs and go on a tour of book signing and seminar lectures; – we could study all that – all day and every day; But if we are not doing that, then why not?

We just finished our Missions Conference focused on “**Jesus, the Light TO the World**”; emphasizing our own responsibility of taking Jesus, the Light, to the world, dead in the darkness of separation from God due to our sin.

In John 9:5, Jesus claimed to be the Light of the World. Here in Matthew 5:14 He turns to the crowds of disciples (or learners) and referred to them as “the light of the world”. And in the same way as a lit city on a hill shines, so the disciples were expected to let their light so shine.

v.15) The purpose of light is not to be concealed or hidden; or cloaked,

THE NARROW WAY
or to be too timid.

Get this now; We are the Light of the World. We are *NOT* the Savior of the World. We are *NOT* the Hope for the World. We are the light of the World; in that, the light of life and love of Jesus Christ in within each of us. We are the messengers and Jesus is our message. We have the witness and testimony of Christ within each of us.

In times of hardship and trouble; in times of viruses; in times of riots; in all these situations, the world needs to see our light; they need to hear our message; they need the hope we have; they need the light as we needed it.

That light is needed in your family. That message is needed in your classroom. That HOPE is needed at your work place. That peace and assurance is needed in your neighborhood.

Mat 5:15-16 (ESV) (15) Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

(v.6) “In the same way”, that is just like the city shining on a hill on a dark night, disciples; you are responsible for your light and your influence to be felt and experienced by those around you.

Let your light shine, or live your life in such a manner that testifies to the rest of the world of our love, hope, joy and purpose.

(i.) Salt and Light Light: We are the salt of the earth. That refers to our Witness and Testimony or our Influence.

We are the Light of the World. That refers to the Responsibility and Effectiveness of our Witness and Testimony Influence - . as we take the message of Jesus as the Light of the world, ***to the world***. Light is the message of salvation; the hope in Christ; the promise of the ages;

(ii.) world: being the unbelieving, God-rejecting darkness of our sin-broken humanity;

(iii.) The purpose of light - to illumine the way; give direction; to dispel the darkness. To help people find the personally discover that Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life, and that NO ONE comes to the Father , except through Him.

(iv.) The purpose of the church - to give spiritual hope, direction and input; to illumine the way to the person and salvation in Jesus Christ.

ILL) This week I was on the roof of our house cleaning out the gutters. My neighbor, across the street was sweeping his driveway. He shouted out: “Hey Jeff”. “Are we in the end times of what?” and then he just stood there across the street and up his driveway – he just stood there leaning on his broom and looking toward me on my roof.” And I began to think to myself: “It seems like he may be expecting me to answer him.” A few seconds when by, then he yelled: “Well what do you think.?” I said, “I’ll be right down.” I climbed down my ladder, walked down my driveway, across the street and up his driveway and we began talking – for about 45 minutes - about end times, the violence in our country, the Lord Jesus, his faith, my faith, and both of us being ready for the return of our Lord Jesus.

Do you know what I like better than praising the Lord and giving our testimonies here together on Sunday morning? Give praise to God and sharing my testimony of our Lord Jesus with people outside the walls of this church gathering with people who need to think about Jesus and who need to consider their own spiritual state before God.

The purpose of the church is not to remain silent or to keep to our testimonies to ourselves. God’s expectation for us and our responsibility before God is to share His love, to be His witness to others as He provides the opportunity.

CHRIST, THE LIGHT TO THE WORLD, IN OUR SUFFERINGS

* Earlier I read our passage for this morning in NIV. I’d like to read it in the KJV. The KJV gives us the plurality of nouns and verbs.

Mat 5:13-16 KJV (13) Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost his flavor, how shall it be salted *again*? it is therefore good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.
(14) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. (15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light unto all that are in the house.
(16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

KJV – “Ye” is the plural of “you”. “You All” or “We All” or All of us. That referring to The overall, global and local Church of our Lord Jesus as a whole. Light has a purpose. The Church has a purpose. That purpose is our privilege and our responsibility.

Church: “We All” are the salt of the earth. “We All” are the Light of the World. Each of us and all of us, are responsible for taking the good news of God’s saving grace, through the faith in Jesus and His death blood payment for our sins. That belongs to everyone.

Our witness and our influence, is our privilege and our joint responsibility to take Jesus, “the Light”, TO the world; and we can make a big difference. Your witness and Your influence and Your responsibility to take Jesus the Light, to the world, can make a big difference and have such a tremendous kingdom impact.

Its like the joy of your gas mileage creeping up .1 of a mile per gallon. It doesn’t seem like very much, but Little things mean a lot. And Little things add up to become a big kingdom thing. That is how the world was meant to be reached for Christ. It was never meant to be reached by a few Hot Shot celebrity Christians. But by “we All” – the entire church working together and little by little, but adding up to something really big for God’s Kingdom.

Q: What would you say is the biggest sin in the church of our Lord Jesus today? Gossip? Adultery? Gay Marriage? Financial mismanagement? Pastors abusing the church and getting fired? That was certainly prevalent in the past 2 years?

I don't think the biggest sin is one of the big 10. I believe the biggest sin in the church today is addressed right here in the Sermon on the Mount. I believe the biggest sin in the church is the Salt of the Earth, neglecting, excusing or saying, "I'm not going to be salt!" or the Light of the World deciding, "I'm not going to shine." This is the sin of "contented disobedience."

Jesus never meant for a choice few to be the salt and light; to be those who would be obedient to the Great commission and would be a witnesses and Influence, and would take the responsibility to be a light and illumine the way for others to come to Christ.

2Cor. 4:6-10 ESV (4) For God, who said, "*Let light shine out of darkness*," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (7) But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. (8) We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; (9) persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; (10) always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

We = We All; everyone in the Church

Treasure: The Message of hope and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ

Jars of clay: within each and every human life. The message of Christ. The experience of our own salvation; the hope of the hopeless; the light for those living in darkness.

How does this light shine the brightest?

* In Cor.4:8, affliction and hardship are circumstances in which, as Christians, our lights are purposed to shine their brightest. Its easy to act happy, be congenial and be a blessing to those around us, when all is well, everything is peaceful; all our needs are met, and everyone is getting along with us. Even the pagans act that way.

But when difficulties arise, trouble befalls us, trials threaten to overtake us; those are the situations that for us Christians, allow the light of our

Lord Jesus, to shine through into the darkness around us as peace, love, joy and hope.

It this something we are even aware of or interested in?

* We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. And the darkness around us will determine how real and how bright the light of Christ is within each of us. Wherever we go, our witness must be salty. Whatever we do, our light must be effective. Whoever we meet, we have the privilege and responsibility to be the light and life of our Lord Jesus to those around us, maybe even those whose personal darkness seems to most threaten our own personal light.

It is our purpose and responsibility to connect with others, in order to connect them to Christ and to other Christ followers, the church. We get so caught up in our own world, our own life; its possible for any one of us to go an entire week without talking with someone about our faith in our Lord Jesus.

Assignment:

(1) Take what Jesus Christ has done for you and communicate that with someone else this week.

(2) Let your light so shine. Share the message of Jesus and His salvation with just one other person this week.

(3) Talk to someone about spiritual matters and your own faith specifically this week.

ILL This week at Home Depot, I was helping an elderly man find some items and I noticed he had a T-shirt that had the name and logo of his church on the front. I told him I liked his shirt. And in an instant he said, “Can I tell you what God has done for me?” I said, Sure!. And he told me about his experience of driving in his SUV along the interstate when an 18 Wheeler came by and pulled into his lane and cut I him off, hitting his SUV and pushing it off the road and causing his vehicle to flip several times. He was in the hospital for a while and was still recovering. But his testimony was how good God had been to him, in

allowing his life to be spared and to help him in his recovery.

Well this conversation was going on and we were walking back toward the cash register when we bumped into another man I knew who was also looking for something in the store. I placed my hand on the elderly man's shoulder as asked him ... "Just a minute" and I asked the other fellow if he needed any help. He said "No thanks", but that he was just thinking and browsing.

I said do you know my friend Russell, here? And with no introduction or any other comments, the elderly man perked up and said to the other fellow: "Sir, can I tell you about what God has done for me?" And I disappeared around the corner.

(4) Last point. Let's learn from Russell and be ready to talk to others about the Lord Jesus, as he gives us opportunity to do so.

*"The darker the dark,
The brighter the Light.
The greater the need
Of soul saving light."*

"Wherever there is one lost soul, there is need for a missionary."

SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” June 14a, 2020

Sermon Title: “**Law & Order**” : “**Christians and the Law**”

Key Word: “**Expectations**”

Text: Mat.5:17-20 | 2 Cor.4:1-10 | Light; direction



Subj: What part does our OT law play in the life of present day, Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-20 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away [Mat.24:35/2Pet.3:7] not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

REVIEW:

Sermon on the mount: (1) We began with the Beattitudes with a focus on the present blessedness of all citizens of God’s Kingdom of Heaven, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Our key word was “**Blessedness**”. (2) Then with salt and light, we considered our Witness and our Testimony as part of our Christian influence to the world around us. Our key word was “**Responsibility**”.

Today, Jesus focuses our attention on the Law of God as God’s standard for His Kingdom of Heaven. This reveals God’s expectation upon His people as we travel the troublesome path and live the journey in the Kingdom of Heaven. Our key word is “**Expectations**”.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAW OF GOD

The question we’ll address throughout this section is, “What is the value of the OT law, in the life of the present day believing Christian?” So when Jesus is teaching through the Sermon on the Mount, as we read Matthew 5, it looks like Jesus is just going from topic to topic, as they are seemingly unrelated.

THE NARROW WAY

But if we glance back at Luke 6, we see that Mat.5 and Lu.6 compliment one another. Luke sheds some light on the progression of these topics. In Luke 6:1-2, Jesus and his disciples are walking through a grain field on the Sabbath and they stop to take some of the heads of grain, rub them together to separate the fruit from the husks and then eat it. Then the religious leaders become upset with Jesus and his followers for gathering grain and breaking the Sabbath.

Then in Luk.6:6, Jesus healed a man with a withered hand. At which time the religious leaders became furious with Jesus over his perceived breaking of the Jewish Law. And Jesus answered their accusations: "Is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath? Or is it legal to save life or to destroy it?"

With this in the immediate context of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus brings up this issue of the Law.

Mat 5:17-20 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away ^[Mat.24:35/2Pet.3:7] not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished..

**** Our OT / Jewish Tanakh**

- * Judaism is the foundation for the Christian faith.
- * Christian faith is the fulfillment of the Jewish faith.
- * Jewish Tanakh = Christian Old Testament
- * The OT - Compliments the NT
- * The NT – Completes the OT (Testament or Covenant)
- Covenant is the promise of God to His people to bring



about an intended end.

When we think of the Law, in Jesus day, this is what they would have been contending with.

THE JEWISH LAW

- 1) **1st Law** – Gen.2:17 (In the Garden of Eden)
- 2) **10 Commandments** – Ex.20 @ Mt Sinai - **Torah**
- 3) **Pentateuch** – Gen-Deut / 1st 5 books / “*Books of Moses*” / **Torah**
- 4) **Tanakh** – Entire Jewish holy book – **Torah** (Our Christian OT)
- 5) **Rabbinical “Law”** – running commentary of Oral Teachings from the Jewish Religious leaders passed down through generations. Eventually written down and compiled after 70ad, the destruction of the temple. On issues of the 10 commandments, culture, philosophy, customs, festivals, a wide variety of Jewish practices of their day. (*A little like the decrees of the Pope. Became equivalent to written law. Accuracy was dependent upon the memory of those who passed them on*)
- 6) **Halakhah** – additional Jewish “law” (Lit. “the path one walks” dealing with customs, decrees, clarifications / ¹Idols, ²Courts of justice, ³sexual sin, ⁴eating meat, etc.
- 7) **Talmud** (70/200AD)– taken from oral traditions, focused on the studies and clarifications upon the Torah “*Talmud’s inspiration outweighs the Scriptures in sanctity and authority. Scripture is the water; the Talmud is the wine*” (*Mishna, Midrash, Mitzvot*)

The Law of God was under attack in Jesus day, not from the world around them, but from their own Jewish leaders.

**“Whenever the Word of God is *added to*,
the Authority of Scripture is *taken away*.”**

In Jesus day the Word of God was under attack.

For us Today - The Holy word of God – that is, our inerrant, infallible, fully Inspired and authoritative Bible from Almighty God - is under

heavy, heavy adversarial attack. In my opinion, it is not coming from any secular government, not from any political party; not from any pagan organization that promotes abortion, violence, racism or doubt. The Holy Word of God, our Bible, is under nuclear level attack in our culture today, by churches, or pastors of churches; many who claim to be evangelicals, as we are - who are seemingly attempting to present themselves as relevant and the church and the Bible as fresh and up to date, as relevant – as they are trying to reach an unbelieving, dark, sinful, unredeemed world, that presently doesn't believe the Bible.

Evangelical pastors who have verbally left the faith they had been preaching, promoting and over emphasizing that God is love and no loving God would send anyone to hell. Pastors, Youth pastors, Christian musicians and more. But that which makes me tremble, is not that an unbelieving world is becoming more unbelieving, but that supposedly solid, evangelical pastors or leaders are declaring their faith no longer exists or that the Old Testament is no longer of value and Christians should forget about the OT law of God as it is “old” and irrelevant.

Q: Are Christians under law or under Grace? What does it mean to be “under the law”? Are we Under the curse of the law? Are we Under the obligation of the law? Are we Under the condemnation or the guilt of the law? Are we Under the law of Christ? (1 Cor 9:21). Are we under the Royal Law of Love? (Jas.2:8). Love God (Mat.22:37); Are we under the perfect Law of Liberty? (James 1:25; 2:12)

Q: Are we Living by obeying the Law, so as to achieve eternal salvation?
NO

So then: **“What is the value of the law of God, in the life of the believer in Christ?”**

Psa 19:7 ESV The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

Is it any wonder why Satan would want to destroy the foundation of the Christian faith. And as we go through these points on the Law, hopefully we will realize, No Wonder the Word of God and the OT is under attack

as irrelevant, old, full of God's hatred and violence.

ENDING: What is the value of the Law of God in the life of the believing Christian?

2Tim. 3:16-17 ESV All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

All Scripture = At this point it would have been the OT Law.

Inspired = God breathed; from God's heart and mind to ours / thoughts desires , intent

Useful for: (i.) Teaching: doctrine: Do this or believe this.

(ii.) Rebuking: Don't do that or believe that.

(iii.) Correction: Do this or believe this instead;

(iv.) Preparing: changing, instruction for the purpose of developing personal righteousness./ life change.

If Satan can deceive us into discounting or devaluing any part of God's holy Word, how great a victory he will have won. We must never discard, or diminish the value or authority of God's holy Word.

SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” June 21 & 28, 2020

Sermon Title: “Christians and the Law”, pt.2

Key Word: “ ”

Text: Mat.5:17-20 | 2 Cor.4:1-10 | Light; direction



Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-20 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away [Mat.24:35/2Pet.3:7] not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

REVIEW: (1) Judaism & Christianity
(2) Law: 10 Commands, Gen-Deut, &
All Jewish holy book. (3) The whole

of the Jewi

Love the Lord your
God... (Mat.22:37)
*Greatest
Command*

Love your
neighbor
(Mat.22:39)
*The
Second like it*

Fulfill the

Royal Law

James 2:8

GOD

- 1: Do not worship any other gods
- 2: Do not make any idols
- 3: Do not misuse the name of God
- 4: Keep the Sabbath holy

MAN

- 5: Honour your father & mother
- 6: Do not murder
- 7: Do not commit adultery
- 8: Do not steal
- 9: Do not lie
- 10: Do not covet

THE GOLDEN RULE

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

—Mat.7:12



Also, notice how the NT refers to the Importance of the OT Law.

Mat 22:36-40 (36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (37) And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (40) **On**

these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

In other words, the OT Law of God, represented here with the 10 commandments; all hang on to those 2 NT commands to Love God – Commands 1-4, and to Love others: Commands 6-10.

Then when we read the Golden Rule , which states:

Mat 7:12 ESV "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, **for this is the Law and the Prophets.**

Or "this single principle sums up *all* the Law and the prophets". So nowhere does the NT devalue or end the OT, but the OT is the foundation for the NT and the NT is the fulfillment of the OT Law of God.

Q: "So What is the value of the OT law of God, in the life of the present day believer in Jesus Christ?"

About 2 years ago, a friend of mind was debating a fellow belonging to the "Hebrew Roots" religion and it was live streamed and recorded. In that debate, My friend supported the position that Christians are not "Under the Law" but "under grace"; and that we are not held to the law of Moses or OT law. The other fellow argued that both Old and New Testament believers in God and followers of Jesus, are obligated to keep the OT Law; the Jewish customs, practices, commandments, activities, festivals and celebrations, rites and rituals.

After the debate, I connected with my friend and told him he made a great presentation and didn't get rattled by his opponent. But his position really troubled me and I asked him: "If as Christians we are not under the Law and are not meant to keep the law of God, then **"What is the value of the OT law of God, in the life of the present day believer in Christ?"** To which my friend answered: **"Well that's a good question. I'm sure glad they didn't ask me that during the debate."**

The Take Home Principle for us today regarding the Old Testament Law of God – and this is so important, as this seems to be what we may be

missing – is that: **“The OT Law of God is not merely about what God expects from us, but also about what we can expect from God”.**

The Law of God has always been focused on this: God is our Source and His Word is our Standard. We hear “Law” and we probably think: Hindrance, restraint, bondage, restrictions, what are we to do or say; what are we not to do or to say. We may even refer to the Law of God as “legalism”.

Jdg 17:6 KJV In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

All instruction from God is viewed interchangeably with His **Word**. Please take a pencil and circle these words.

Psa 119:9-18 BETH. (9) How shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to your **word**. (10) With my whole heart have I sought You: O let me not wander from your **commandments**. (11) your **word** have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against You. (12) Blessed ae You, O LORD: teach me your **statutes**. (13) With my lips have I declared all the **judgments** of your mouth. (14) I have rejoiced in the way of your **testimonies**, as much as in all riches. (15) I will meditate in your **precepts**, and have respect unto your **ways**. (16) I will delight myself in your **statutes**: I will not forget your **word**. (17) Gimel. Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your **word**. (18) Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things from your **law**.

You see, the Word of God is synonymous with the Law of God. All the word of God is ***Inspired***, in that all of the Bible is God breathed, from the heart and mind of God. All of the Bible is also ***Inerrant***, in that there are no errors in its transmission from God’s heart and mind, to us, through the human authors of the day, as they were originally written down (the Autographs). And all the Bible is ***Infallible***, in that there are no inaccuracies in the content of the Bible, as it refers to events, places, people etc.

Each and everyone of those words we just circled in the Ps.119 passage, refers to the fully Inspired, Inerrant, Infallible and Authoritative, holy word of God, including the Old Testament.

Q: “So What is the value of the OT law of God, in the life of the present day believer in Jesus Christ?”

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE TRUE BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?

- In the OT the law of God is synonymous with His Word.
- In the NT the word of God is Truth.
- The OT Law is God’s Standard and Expectations for His People

THE LAW OF GOD PRESENTS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE:

The Law of God presents examples of how God dealt with His people. The Law of God also presents examples of the propensity of God’s people to rebel against God and the literal, historical value of the OT Law of God must not be underestimated or diminished in its value.

1Cor. 10:11 ESV Now *these things* happened to them as an example, but they were written down for *our* instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

“**these things**” being references to things in the OT. And “**Our**” refers to the NT believers and us who are reading it today. God’s word is Truth. The Law of God’s OT instructs us in how to worship God acceptably. It teaches us how to treat our fellow man. The Bible addresses relationship with God and our relationship with others; what God expects from us and what we can expect from God.

In 1 Cor.10, Paul recounts the story of the Hebrew children in the wilderness. “under the cloud of God”. He recounts their enjoying God’s provision of physical, as well as spiritual food. He speaks about their sexual immoralities and their idolatries. At one point they were overthrown in the wilderness; they were consumed by serpents.

Take you pencils again and mark this as we read.

1Cor. 10:6 ESV Now these things, took place as **examples** for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

Here's the Lesson for us: These things were the writings of the OT Law of God, documenting God's dealings with His people. In v.6, it states, "these things" refer to the OT events as examples for "us", referring to the NT believers at the time. The in v.11, "our instruction" again referring to NT believers receiving valuable instruction and life principles from the OT Law of God.

So What was the purpose in "these things" being written? As examples for all of us as we read these historical accounts. And what was the value or purpose in us reading and learning from those examples?

They were as WARNINGS – "**That we**", believers in Jesus in 2020, "**might not desire or lust after evil as they did.**"

Rom 15:4 ESV For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Whatever was written" is all of our Old Testament Scriptures. What was the purpose stated here? That through the encouragement of these OT Scriptures, we might have HOPE. If Satan can just get the church today, to discount or minimize the value of the OT Law of God for the Believing Christian today; Oh, what a victory He will have won!!"

Question: Are those lessons from those examples ever worth devaluing? No. Being reminded of their history doesn't celebrate their history, but it is a modern day warning to never again repeat those things in our day.

1) The OT Law of God presents the relationship between God and His People. It helps us know what God expects from us, as well as us learning what we can expect from God. Praise God for our OT Law.

Hopefully the more we are thinking this way, and reading through the New Testament, we should begin to realize the value of the OT Law of God throughout the NT Scriptures. Also the OT Law helps us realize how desperate we are for a Great Savior. Jesus, our Great Savior has provided for us, so Great a Salvation.

We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

As we think through this question, we must be aware that the Laws of God serve a dual purpose. First, the Greatest Law of NT Law is to love the Lord; that keeps us in right relationship with God Himself. The “Second” greatest NT Law is to love others. Lets apply that to our social laws today.

Lets consider the speed limit. (1) If we obey the speed limit, that keeps us in good standing with our government, as well as with our law enforcement. (2) But how does the speed limit help us in our relationships with others? GODS LAW: Love God and Love others. SOCIAL LAWS: Obey the Speed limit and stay in good standing with law enforcement, but what how does the speed limit affect our relationships with others? How are others affected when we obey the speed limit? When we obey the speed limit it helps us drive in a manner that helps keep others safe; thus affecting our relationships with others in society. So even in a secular society, our laws serve a dual purpose.

I have my own New Testament that I received when I was baptized in 1967. That was all I got. And this week I was wondering if, when people get a New Testament, for whatever reason, I wonder if they may get the impression that the OT is not important, or necessary?

Turn with me to Psalm chapter 1.

Psa. 1:1-3 ESV (1) Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; (2) but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. (3) He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

“Blessed is the man”: Here is a compelling beginning. Who is blessed and why? Notice the progression here; walking, standing and then sitting. The Blessed person does not allow him/herself to be negatively affected by ¹the wicked, ²the sinner or the ³mocker. They live apart from God, they are separated from life in God and they detest and disrespect anything from or about God; they mock Him and His word.

These are all described this way as they are all rejecting, at some level, the OT Law of God. They are contrasted with the “Blessed” man who delights (v2) in the Law of the Lord and thinks about it constantly. The key to the man being “blessed” is revealed in verse 3. “He will be like a tree planted by the water.’ He will always be refreshed, renewed, revived, nourished, satisfied, and rejuvenated. Even when scorching heat and lack of rains come, the man who values the OT Law of God, does not wither or is not overcome by any adverse circumstances, but that man or that woman will remain blessed of the Lord.

Oh how the evil one, would like to deceive us into thinking the OT Law is of little or no value to us today as New Testament Christians.

One of the first areas of value of the OT Law of God is:

Through God’s OT Law, the present day believer in Jesus Christ, finds examples, instruction, and warnings from the OT Law, regarding the relationship between God and His people. (1Cor. 10:6,11)

And our take home principle is: The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.

Another value of the OT Law of God in the life of the Believing Christian...

THE OT LAW OF GOD EXALTS THE HOLINESS OF GOD: Ex.20;

When we hear the 10 Commandments what comes to mind? “Do this.” “Don’t do that”. Commands & Prohibitions -- Requirements & Restrictions.

But what if we viewed the 10 Commandments, not as pronouncements that restrict our freedom, but as statements which exalt the holiness of God, and are boundary markers for His people, that were intended to keep them and us, in right relationship with our Most Holy Creator. They would almost be like ***cause and effect*** kinds of warnings. The Law could be like a WARNING on the stove that says: “Don’t touch the

stove top when it is red hot.” Or a label on an Ammonia bottle that reads: “Don’t drink contents, as it will kill you.” It’s a cause and effect kind of warning. Touch the cherry red stove top and you’re going to get burned. Drink Ammonia and you will likely die. And so God’s Law exalts the holiness of God as guidelines for how we might best relate to Him and live a meaningful life in His favor.

Gen 2:15-17 ESV (15) The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (16) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, (17) **but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**"

So in Gen.2:17, God gives Adam this warning, and as we look at it, we can see a warning with a particular “Cause and Effect”. You can have anything in the garden but that one tree. If you eat from that one tree, you will die. Cause and Effect. A Warning – that is not focused on Prohibitions and Restrictions, but on exalting the holiness of God, and the result of His holiness being violated or transgressed by His creation. And we see our Main Idea --

“The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.”

When riding in an F-16 fighter you look over and you see a big red button which says: “Whatever you do, Don’t push this button.” That is a warning. And we all know the effect of pushing that button; you’d trigger the ejection seat.

Eze 43:6-8 ESV (6) by setting their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them. They have defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed, so I have consumed them in my anger.

God has not minimized his standard for those under the New Covenant nor has he relaxed his holiness. The Inspiration and Authority of His holy Word still bring conviction of sin through the workings of the Holy Spirit.

If anything it is all the more strict. Jesus states: You have heard it

said (in the law) you shall not commit adultery, but I say if you lust after a woman, you have committed adultery in your heart.(Mat.5:27-28).

God is all the more strict towards those who are truly His and how we view the holiness of God, will determine our relationship with God.

Question: What if we discounted the OT Law? We would have no passages such as Ezekiel 43 which describes the holiness of God being defiled. We wouldn't have the Isaiah passage of Isaiah seeing into the throne room of heaven and seeing God, who was high and lifted up, and the angels crying Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty, the whole earth is filled with His glory". We wouldn't have the book of Exodus with the 10 commandments which exalt the holiness of God and prescribes boundaries that will keep us from defiling his holiness and affecting our relationship with Him and resulting in damaging our relationships with others. We would also lose the book of Leviticus in which God gives many laws with which we learn of the holiness of God. We wouldn't have Jeremiah 2:3; Zech.14:20,21 where "Holiness to the Lord" is written on the people of Israel, upon the bridles and bells of the horses and upon the utensils for worship in the temple. If we devalue the OT Law, we would lose so much.

Isa 42:21 (ESV) The LORD was pleased; for his righteousness' sake, ¹to magnify his **Law** and ²to make it glorious.

*Justice is God enforcing His standard of Righteousness

Tony Evans put it this way:

“Righteousness is the moral standard of right and wrong to which God holds men accountable: based on His divine standard.

Justice is the equitable and impartial application of God's moral law in society.” –Tony Evans (6/16/20)

So (1) Why would God magnify His OT Law and (2) why would He make the OT Law glorious? Because it is the Law of God that exalts the holiness of God! God magnifies His Law and glorifies His Law, because it is the Righteous standard of His law, which exalts His holiness, without which we – here in 2020- would have a very incomplete perception and shallow understanding of the holiness of God.

Question: So I ask you..

Q: Is the Law of God ever to be devalued or minimized? **NEVER.**

Q: Is the holiness of God ever to be devalued or minimized? Never. Never. Not in any dispensation. Not under any circumstances.

(1) So Not only does the OT Law of God present the relationship between God and His People:

(2) But also the OT Law of God exalts the holiness of God:

And our take home principle is: The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.

CONCLUSION:

* Thank God today, for the great salvation we have and for our relationship with Him, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

** If you have been inclined to overlook, minimize or devalue the OT Law of God, begin to see the OT Law as the foundation of your own NT faith.

*** Read the OT with the purpose of learning from all its history and how God has dealt with His people.

[ENDED JUNE 28, 2020]



SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” July 5, 2020

Sermon Title: “**Christians and the Law**”, pt.3

Key Word: “ ”

Text: Mat.5:17-20 | 2 Cor.4:1-10 | Light; direction



Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-18 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

I believe we may be able to be more receptive to the answer to this question, if we remember the importance of our Foundation and its Fulfillment. (1) the OT Law of God is the FOUNDATION of the New Testament Faith. And the NT faith is the FULFILLMENT of the OT Law. (2) The Jewish faith is the Foundation to the Christian Faith and the Christian Faith is the Fulfillment of the Jewish faith. (3) the OT Law is not merely commandments on what God expects from us, but also information about what we can expect from God.

Oh how the evil one, would like to deceive us into thinking the OT Law is of little or no value to us today as New Testament Christians.

One of the first areas of value of the OT Law of God is:

1) The Law of God presents the relationship between God and His People: Through God’s Law, the modern day believer in Jesus Christ, finds examples, instruction, and warnings from the OT Law, regarding the relationship between God and His people. (1Cor. 10:6,11)

Another value of the OT Law of God in the life of the Believing Christian...

2) The OT Law of God exalts the holiness of God: Ex.20;

What if we viewed the 10 Commandments as statements which exalt the holiness of God, and as boundary markers for His people, that were

intended to keep them and us, in right relationship with our Most Holy Creator; almost like *cause and effect* kinds of warnings.

[BEGIN July 5, 2020]

Mat 5:19-20 ESV (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

We must realize that Jesus is not requiring that we obey the Law better than the Scribes and Pharisees, but that we are better in recognizing our own sinfulness and then allowing God to address it.

A 3rd reason the OT Law is of value to us as present day believers in Jesus Christ:

1) THE OT LAW OF GOD ESTABLISHES GOD'S AUTHORITATIVE STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS:

Rom 8:3-4 ESV (3) For [God has done] what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. | By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, | (4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Question: What does God expect from us and what God require of all people? – *Righteousness*

Question: What can we expect from God? - To do what the Law could never do. To do for us what we could never do for ourselves. That is to provide a righteousness apart from the Law, through His Son, Jesus Christ. This is what we are all lacking and it was what the Pharisees and Scribes were lacking.

Psa 14:1-3 ESV To the choirmaster. Of David. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. (2) The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek

after God. (3) They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

It is interesting that when Paul quotes this in Romans 3:10, he substitutes “goodness” with “righteousness”; “There is none Righteous, no not one.”(Rom.3:23)

The Law doesn’t bring about righteousness, it never did. But it does point to and present the *Standard* of God’s righteousness, which is perfect. **“God did, what the Law could not do”**: The Law could not provide righteousness only direct us to it.

HOW did he do what he did? **“By sending His own Sons...”**; Jesus has done for us, what the Law of God could never do, nor was it ever intended to.

WHY did God send His only Son? **“In order that the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in us”**.

Jesus said; “I came to fulfill the law...” (Mat.5:17). At His Baptism, Jesus said: “Thus it is fitting that we fulfill all Righteousness”. (Mat.3:15 The Law of God causes us to seek the Righteousness of God outside of ourselves, through God’s provision of Jesus Christ. That is what Abram did. Gen. 15:6 tells us that “Abram believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness”.

Remember: The “Law” is not just, ‘do this’, or ‘don’t do that’. It is not just orders, but the Law includes a mixture of commands, which are boundaries; promises, prophecies, history, guides for worship and prayer; and a variety of other elements.

Psa 119:106 ESV I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to ***keep*** your righteous rules.

“Keep” – is not a word for obedience; but lit. a hedge: protect, guard, preserve; observe; take heed; Highly value; David is not swearing to “obey” all God’s righteous rules. He is committing to build a hedge of protection around all of God’s Word, by the immense value he ascribes to God’s Word.

Therefore, we must not minimize our Statements of faith, diminish our doctrinal positions, nor relax our Biblical convictions. We must never devalue the Old Testament Law of God, because ***the Law of God does not merely tell us what God expects from US, but also what we can expect from GOD.*** Through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteous requirement of God's law is fulfilled for us, by Jesus Christ.

Together with the New Testament, the Old Testament Law of God acts like a spiritual map; helping us to navigate the holiness of God, the sinfulness of the world and how to get to where He wants us to be.

And so we can be assured that: **The Law (Word of God) directs every believer in the paths of righteousness** for His name's sake. I don't recall who said it first, but this quote is true: "God's word always directs us in God's way". Today, as Christians the law of God does not condemn us, but guides us in the path of righteousness. If we sin, we read God's word or the Holy Spirit brings to mind our sin; we are convicted, that we might repent, confess and fellowship be renewed.

Psa 23:1-3 ESV A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (2) He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. (3) He restores my soul. He leads me **in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

Remember: the OT Law of God exalts God's holiness; It presents God's dealings with His people and It establishes God's Standard of Righteousness and leads us in His path of Righteousness.

ILL) If we drive down the road going 55 mph and see a speed limit sign that says: "Speed Limit 55", we are not condemned by that sign or even convicted by it. But a constant reminder of how fast we are to drive and to keep that in mind. But if we are driving 65mph and see that sign, for the responsible driver, it should serve as conviction that we have transgressed the speed limit, and that we repent by immediately reducing our speed within the speed limit parameters.

Jesus fulfilled the law, not abolished it. He is the full keeping of the law, not the nullifying or bringing it to an end. He evidenced a life of full

obedience. *In that he fulfilled the Law.* In Him, His righteous obedience, is applied to our own. *In that he fulfilled the Law.*

Fulfilled = “fully obeyed”; Also completed what the OT pointed to, to fulfill.

Q: Is God’s righteousness ever lessened, relaxed or diminished? *Never.* Therefore we have no reason to devalue or lessen the righteous standard of His Law of the OT scriptures.

The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.

(1) So Not only does The Law of God present the relationship between God and His People:

(2) But also the Law of God exalts the holiness of God:

(3) Also, the Law of God establishes God’s Authoritative standard of Righteousness. So, together with the NT, the OT Law helps us navigate the holiness of God, the sinfulness of the world and where it is God wants us to be.

CONCLUSION:

(1) As you are reading through the Bible as many of you are; do so keeping an “eye out” for God’s righteous standard in the areas of my personal relationship with God or with others.

(2) Read the OT with an eye to recognize any specific area of unrighteousness in my life. Like the speed limit; you might read something and stop and think; “I don’t think that is addressing anything in my life right now.” And that’s good.

(3) But if it does address something in your life, be willing to repent from that, confess that as sin to God and ask God to refresh you with “clean hands, and a pure heart”. Be willing to pray: “God change this area of my life.”

SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” **July 12, 2020**

Sermon Title: “The Reality of the Depravity of Humanity”

Text: Mat.5:17-20



Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-18 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Mat 5:19-20 ESV (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus gives 2 promises here: (1) The Law of God (i.e. OT Law) will not be abolished. (2) As long as there is heaven and earth, the OT Law will not be relaxed. (3) Those who loose, relax or minimize the Law and lead others to do the same, will be punished.

We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

REVIEW:

So far the Law of: (1) God presents God’s dealings with His people in an historical context, as examples for us to read, learn from and hopefully not repeat. (2) The OT Law of God exalts the holiness of God. (3) The OT Law of God establishes God’s Authoritative standard of Righteousness:

Rom 8:3-4 ESV (3) For [God has done] what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. | By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, | (4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Therefore, we must not minimize our Standards of faith, relax our doctrinal positions, nor soften our Biblical convictions. We must never devalue the Old Testament Law of God, because ***the Law of God does not merely tell us what God expects from US, but also what we can expect from GOD.*** Through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteous requirement of God's law is fulfilled for us, by Jesus Christ.

((The OT Law of God establishes God's Authoritative standard of Righteousness))

Today... Our focus is on "the Reality of the Depravity of Humanity"

1) WITH THAT STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE OT LAW OF GOD ILLUMINATES THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MANKIND

There are people today who believe that all people are basically good. And that people are merely a product of their environment or upbringing. And from the same reasoning, there are those who believe that humans are basically evil and sinful, and are not merely products of their environments, but are that way at the moment of their birth. Which would you say is true?

Isa 24:4-5 ESV The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers; the highest people of the earth languish. (5) The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have *transgressed* the laws, *violated* the statutes, *broken* the everlasting covenant.

This is quite a convicting indictment against humanity in general.

Isa 59:1-2 ESV (1) Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; (2) but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

(1) We are guilty of sin. (2) Sin has separated us from God. As early as Genesis chapter 3, God reveals the Reality of the Depravity of Humanity and the sin that has caused us to be estranged from our Creator.

ILL) Imagine your sitting in a dark room. You are in your very comfy, easy chair, where you often nap. You are at peace. There is only harp music playing ever so softly. You feel comfortable, safe and at peace. Then someone turns on the light switch and you discover that there are hairy spiders the size of your hand, with toxic venom dripping from their man eating fangs, all over your body. Furthermore, the floor is covered with lively poisonous snakes; King Cobras, Diamond Back Rattlers, and Black Mambas. And you are suddenly horrified!

But, you were in that situation the whole time; for a while you were at peace, relaxed and very content. **What happened to change things?** Someone turned on the light and you realized the reality of your situation.

God's OT Law sheds light into our life and onto our lifestyle, if we allow it. We have to value the light. We have to acknowledge the light and its valuable purpose for the present day believer in Jesus.

That is what the Law of God does. Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. (Ps.119-105)

If we did not have the light of God's law or guidelines in scripture, we would not know of the holiness of God, nor would we be aware of our own sinful propensity to violate His holiness.

Rom 7:9-12 ESV I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. (10) The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. (11) For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (12) So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

The light of the Word of God; the OT Law of God is Gods' standard of Righteousness and it illuminates the unrighteousness of all mankind.

Q: Should the Law or Scriptures that point out our sin, be removed so we will feel better about our situation? *No.* because It reveals *the Reality of the Depravity of Humanity* and without the OT Law, we would never realize the horrors of being separated from God. Let us thank God for His OT Law.

2) THE OT LAW CONVICTS OF OUR NEED OF A SAVIOR.

NT Scripture refers to the whole of Scripture as a “school master”, or a tutor and it teaches us of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.

Gal 3:24 KJV Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

v.24, “...we are no longer under a schoolmaster”: This is particularly dealing with sin and salvation. After salvation, we need not be continually guided to Christ for salvation or repeated salvation; But we still are in desperate need of the written word of God.(2Tim.2:15; 3:16) It is interesting when Paul writes to Timothy, who was Paul’s apprentice in the ministry, he makes these statements:

2Ti 3:14-15 ESV (14) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it (15) and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Acts 16:1 describes Timothy as having a Greek Father and a Jewish Mother. He was raised and taught, the Hebrew Scriptures which not only made him wise in Biblical Truth, but also learned about Salvation through Jesus; From the OT. Jesus was not mentioned by name, but as God’s promised Messiah to take the sins of the world and provide forgiveness, salvation and eternal life.

Again we see the teachings from the Foundation of the OT, pointing toward the NT Fulfillment in the person of God’s only Son and our only Savior.

All the Law of God was to prepare the heart and point the way to the Messiah, Savior Jesus Christ. The OT looked forward to the Advent of God’s Son, and the NT looks back onto the Truth and foundation of all God’s promises and prophecies.

Q: So should the OT Law of God ever be relaxed, or devalued so as to remove its value of convicting the lost in their need for a Savior?
NO.

(3) THE LAW OF GOD ALWAYS POINTS TO GOD'S MESSIAH

Act 28:23-24 ESV When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them *about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.* (24) And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.

Psalm 22 is referred to as a “Messianic” psalm; that is, it is prophetic in nature and describes the rejection of the Messiah in the NT.

If we read Isaiah 53, we read the foundational promises of the Savior, who would come and suffer (53:4-6). We would read of the Savior coming to bear our sins, in our place (v.4-6, 11).

And the OT Laws have present prophecies about Jesus the Messiah, that are yet to be fulfilled.

- Daniel 9:26ff.
- Zech.12:10; 14:1-5
- Micah 4:1-2

We must never allow the OT Law of God to be minimized, relaxed, loosened, discounted, or devalued in any way. It is full of meaning and hope and relevance for the present day believing Christian.

CONCLUSION:

Remember: The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.

Strive to see God's OT Law for what it was meant to do for us. (1) A lesson of how God deals with His people. And (2) A reminder of Hope and Encouragement that we have, as citizens of God's Kingdom of Heaven, through faith in Jesus Christ. (3) the Exaltation of the holiness of God and His established Standard of righteousness.

How can we value the OT Law of God today?

(1) Read the Old Testament as a “Letter of Reconciliation”. A Letter of Reconciliation is a document written from one person to another, with the purpose of expressing the wrongs done and offenses received in a relationship in which 2 people have become estranged. And the intent of that letter is the reconciliation of the offended parties.

The OT is not merely a bunch of “dos” and “don’ts”, but God’s expressed desire for his relationships with His people.

((“Return to me” –Mal.3:7))

(2) Also READ the OT as a “Declaration of Affection”. IN His OT Law, the written Word of God; communicates God’s love for the fallen, broken, sinful people he had created, and His desire to restore our relationship with Him.

Jere.31:3 – “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” In the OT Law, God reveals the Reality of the Depravity of Humanity and the steps God has taken so our relationship with Him can be made right. And its all right there in “the Law”.

Remember these principles:

The OT is the foundation of the NT.

And the NT is the fulfillment of the OT

The Jewish faith is the foundation of the Christian faith.

The Christian faith is the fulfillment of the Jewish faith.



Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; --
Rom 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness
can only come from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but
have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins
and sent Him to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus
Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still
sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he
gave the right to become children of God,
- John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are
truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins and
citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as you LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...*
your highest calling,
your greatest purpose,
your soul's source and joy,
and your all-consuming passion.

THE NARROW WAY

Other Free Booklets downloadable at www.ChristEFCA.org

1 PETER, (5Vols): *Suffering in Sojourning / The Church God Always Wanted*
A NEW CREATION: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*
ADVENT: *The Submission of Christ*
ADVENT 2018: *Why Was Jesus Born? J.E.S.U.S.*
AMERICA ADRIFT: *A Culture in Crisis and the Challenges Before the Church*
BALANCING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: (2VOL) *Growing together in the Basics*
CHALLENGES OF FAITH FROM CHARACTERS IN THE BIBLE: *Life Struggles of Real People in the Bible*
CHRIST'S COMING KINGDOM: *What Will Be Will Be*
ADVENT STORY BOOK: *Children's Story and coloring book for Christmas*
CPR Evangelism: *Helping others Step from Death to Life*
DRAWING NEARER: *Purposeful Steps Toward The Next Level of Spiritual Growth*
DISCIPLING A COMMUNITY: *Your life is like a stone in the water: What Affect will You Have?*
EASTER STORY BOOK: *Children's Story and Coloring book for Holy Week*
ETERNITY: *What Will It Really Be Like?*
EVIDENCE OF GOD IN COUNTRY: *Proof through our documents, monuments and edifices*
FACING THE FLAWS OF OUR INNER WORLD: (2Vol) *Starving the Old, Nurturing the New*
GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: *A Match Made in Heaven*
GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE FAMILY: *The Intelligent Divine Design*
GROWING THROUGH GRIEF: *When Pain Won't End and Hope Seems Lost*
HOLY WEEK 2011: *Questions About Christ and His Resurrection?*
HOLY WEEK 2012: *Questions about Life and Death? How Dead Will we Really Be?*
HOLY WEEK 2016: *Events Surrounding the Passion Week*
HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD! *Knowing and Growing in Experiencing God*
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ALMIGHTY: *Life Transforming Prayer & Communion*
IN THE SHADOW OF THE SHEPHERD: *Sheep Becoming Like the Servant Shepherd*
INTERESTS AND INQUIRIES: *Curious Cultural Concerns for The Future*
JAMES (4Vol): *Faith That Makes A Difference*
IS THERE A GOD? *Christian Tract, Asking Questions.*
JUDE: (2Vol) *STANDING FIRM, When the Rest of the World is Falling Away.*
KISS: *Kingdom Impact Saturation Strategy*
KINGDOM VISION: *Seeing the World and God's Kingdom as God does*
LIFEGROUP INFO: *Christian recovery or re-entry format & Bible discussion*
LIFE MATTERS: *What It Means for Others To See Jesus In You*
MAKING LIFE WORK (2Vol): *Discovering Your God Focused Purpose in Living*
MALACHI: *God's Book of Secrets*
MISSIONS INTRO: *DIRTY DISCIPLESHIP: Preparing the Soil / Heart, for the Seed / Word.*
MISSIONS 2016: *THE MINISTRY OF JONAH and God's Heart for the Nations.*
MISSIONS 2017: *IN YOUR GOING - Some Supernatural Elements in the Early Church*
MISSIONS AT HOME: *"YOUR LIFE IS LIKE..." The Challenge to Disciple A Community*
MISSIONS: *100 Years: So Where Are We Now?*
MORE THAN CONQUERORS: *Shaking Off the Shackles of Defeated Christianity*
OLIVET DISCOURSE: *The Greatest of Hope for the Worst of times./Missions & Persecution*
PHILIPPIANS: (4VOL) *The Proper Joy-Filled Christian Perspective*
PRAYERS OF DESPERATION: *Prayer God Answers But No One Wants To Pray*
RUTH: *Our Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD.*
SECRETS AND SHADOWS: *Finding Your Source in the Most High*
SERMON ON THE MOUNT: (6vols) *The Narrow Way of true Christ followers*
SURVIVING THE STORMS OF THE SOUL: *The Presence of God in Times of Trouble*
THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL (2VOLS): *...Good News, of Great Joy, for All Peoples*
THE HOLY SPIRIT: *The Friend You Need To Get To Know*
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: *Seeing and Living the Kingdom of Heaven*
THE 12 DISCIPLES: (2VOL) *Our Spiritual Ancestors – Their Faith and Failures*
THE WONDER OF IT ALL: *The End Times of Trials, from Mark 13*
TRAGEDIES OF LIFE: *Things God Allows & Blessings from Heaven's Perspective*
WATER BAPTISM (& INFANT DEDICATION): *First Step of Believer's Obedience or Disobedience*
WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER (2VOL): *Handbook & Guide for PreMarriage Consideration*



May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

-- Downloadable free resources at: www.christefca.org --

Christ E Free Church, 19682 Hill Rd., PO Box 619 Saegertown Pa 16433

www.ChristEFCA.org

(814) 763-2934

ChristEFree@gmail.com