

Salt and Light of the World

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[0 : 00] For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church. It's my great joy and privilege to preach God's word to you this morning. We are in the Gospel of Matthew, which is the first book in the New Testament.

We're in chapter 5 today. We just finished the Beatitudes. We're in Matthew 5, verses 13 to 16. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word.

Heavenly Father, Father, you have redeemed us at a steep price, the blood of your only Son, Jesus Christ.

And we belong to you. And you have adopted us as your children. And as your children, it is only fitting that we resemble you and represent you.

And so we want to be, as Jesus says here, salt and light of the world. Refresh us.

[1 : 44] Renew us. Help us to remember Jesus and what he has done for us.

So that we might leave this place this morning a little more salty, shining a little more bright than perhaps we have been this past week.

Glorify your name, God, in the reading and preaching of your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please stand to honor God as we read from his word.

Matthew 5, verses 13 to 16. 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. You are the light of the world.

[3 : 03] A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, 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. 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.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. John Lennon was a member of the 20th century English rock band, The Beatles.

And in one of his most famous songs, Imagine, he tells his listeners to imagine a world where there is no religion. And he says that in such a world, there's no heaven, no hell below us.

He claims that there will be nothing to kill or die for and that there would be worldwide peace. Sung over a beautiful piano motif, the sentiment seems more plausible than it actually is because it's a hollow statement that betrays a shallow understanding of the human condition.

The self-centeredness that is at the root of all social ills in the world resides in the human heart. The problem is man, not religion.

[4 : 26] It's man's sin-sick heart that twists everything, including religion, for its selfish purposes. The solution then is not no religion, but true religion.

Truth that sets us free. Truth that heals our sin-sick hearts. And that truth is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The people who believe the gospel, Jesus says, are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salt preserves food and it flavors food.

Imagine food that is bland and rotting without salt. That's Jesus' provocative claim that that's what this world would be like without Christians.

Light, like salt, is an essential ingredient of life. It drives out darkness. It enables us to see. Imagine a world without the sun or without any of the artificial lights that we have.

[5 : 25] Dark, dreary, cold. That's what the world would be like without the light of God that shines through his people. My main point this morning is this, that we must let our distinctive identity as Christians shine in order to bring glory to our Father in heaven.

So first, we'll talk about the salt of the earth, and then second, we'll talk about the light of the world. Jesus says in verse 13, you are the salt of the earth. This marks an important transition from the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes were all phrased in the third person plural forms. If you look back at the few verses before this, it said, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

But then in the second half of that last Beatitude, verses 11 and 12, it switched to the second person plural. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you.

This transition prepares the way for today's passage, which says you are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. The Beatitudes described who Christians are.

[6 : 31] Their identity. But the rest of the Sermon on the Mount now describes what Christians do. How they live. It's from our identity, who we are in Jesus Christ, that our obedience to his commands flow.

This follows a pattern of the Ten Commitments. You may recall when we first started our series in the Beatitudes seven weeks ago, I mentioned that Jesus going up on the mountain to speak God's new law parallels Moses going up on the mountain to bring God's law, to receive the Ten Commandments and the subsequent explanations of it.

The Ten Commandments doesn't begin with the First Commandment. It actually begins with the preamble, which establishes who God is and who God's people are. I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of Egypt from the land of slavery.

It begins with the identity of God's people as the redeemed people of God. And Beatitudes likewise serve as the preamble to the Sermon on the Mount.

It begins, it tells us by showing us who we are. We are people who are poor, mourning, meek, and hungry. We are people who have received God's mercy and purity and peace and righteousness in Jesus Christ.

[7 : 48] That's who we are as Christians. It's only after telling us who we are, Jesus goes on to tell us what we must do. So Matthew 5, 13 to 16 is a transitional passage to the ethical sections of the Sermon on the Mount.

You are the salt of the earth. And that it's an emphatic you, personal pronoun. You, not they. You, yourselves, are the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

So what does it mean to be the salt of the earth? Salt in many ways is a humble condiment, right? Any restaurant you go to, any Western household you go to, you'll find a little table salt, shaker up full of table salt.

But it's only in the last 150 years, actually, that salt became cheap and commonplace. Because of the advancement in the mining technologies and evaporating salt and all that.

But before that, there's actually an entire book dedicated to salt by Mark Kralansky. It's called Salt, A World History. I know, it sounds like I haven't read the whole thing, but it's an interesting idea.

[9 : 06] He writes that human civilization has been shaped by this simple mineral. Wars were fought over salt reserves as early as 6,000 BC in China.

Salt was the first international trade good. And ancient Mesopotamians and Egyptians and Romans used salt as currency. In fact, that's where we get the English word salary, which is derived from the Latin word salarius, which means of salt, because the Romans paid their soldiers in salt.

Why was salt so valuable and cherished throughout human history? Two main reasons. One, salt is essential for human survival, for life.

Salt is crucial for hydration, maintaining blood pressure, nerve impulse transmission, muscle contraction, heart function, and hormonal regulation, digestion, bone health, immune function, and so on.

Severely low sodium levels in our bodies lead to muscle cramps and nausea and vomiting and dizziness and eventually to shock, coma, and death. This is why many endurance athletes carry not only water, but salt tablets.

[10 : 22] Salt is something that our bodies need. And yet, interestingly enough, it's something that our bodies are incapable of producing on its own. It must come from an external source in the same way we receive God's grace and mercy from elsewhere, not from within ourselves.

So that's one reason salt is precious. Second reason is that salt is essential for flavoring and preserving food. Nobody likes bland food, and salt makes food tasty.

Even more importantly, ancient Egyptians, I think, were one of the earliest people to discover that salt kills bacteria in certain foods, and they learned that because it extracts moisture and it kills bacteria, it preserves food to make it last significantly longer than it otherwise would.

That process we call curing, which is commonly used for meats and fish and cheeses. I'm sure you've had some cured ham recently, or bacon. In the days before refrigeration, salt could mean the difference between edible food and spoiled food, which then would mean the difference between life or death.

This antibacterial property of salt was also an effective antiseptic, made it an effective antiseptic, and many ancient civilizations used it to clean wounds and prevent infections, which is where we get the expression, rubbing wound on your salt, which kind of has a bad connotation now.

[11:57] But when you don't have other things to use, it helps. Even now, I think some of you rinsed your throats, mouths, with salt water when you have canker sores in your mouth.

In light of this historical background, what does it mean that followers of Christ are to be salt of the earth? You know to understand that, we must first address what this is implying about the world. By saying that we are the salt of the earth, Jesus is saying that the earth, the rest of the earth, is not salt, and that it needs salt. It means first that the world is bland, and then needs flavoring, and it also means that the world is putrefying.

It is rotting, and it must be preserved. Ever since sin first entered the world, our world has been decaying and dying, and therefore, it needs salt, people who are salt, as a preservative and an antiseptic.

The world, left on its own, has a tendency to fester, unless God's people arrest the continual decay. In Genesis 6, 5, it says, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[13:19] It's this reality that leads God to bring down the flood judgment during Noah's day. And why was the world in such a state? In Genesis 6, it tells us in verse 8 to 9, it says that only Noah was a righteous man who walked with God, while the rest of mankind was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

Why did it come to such a dire point? Because there's not enough salt on the earth. If you do a concordance search for the word salt in the Bible and find references to salt in the Bible, you'll find an interesting phrase that occurs several times.

It's a covenant of salt. God refers to his covenant with his chosen people as a covenant of salt. The reason why is because of salt's preserving property.

It became a symbol of endurance, symbol of permanence. And so when people in the Arab world, in the ancient Near East, would make a covenant with other people, they would often eat salt together to symbolize this is a covenant that's meant to last.

Like salt. So he says in Leviticus 2.13, you shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering.

[14:40] With all your offerings, you shall offer salt. Salt had to accompany every grain offering. In this way, in Scripture, salt becomes a powerful symbol of our covenant relationship with God.

So in light of that, then what does it mean for us to be salt of the earth? It means to be a people who are loyal to God. People who are obedient to God. To be representatives of God.

To be people who preserve the earth as it should be, reflecting on the earth the righteousness of God and resisting the decay and death of sin.

But we can only do that if we remain salty. Jesus says in verse 13, 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. The chemists in the room can tell you guys that salt doesn't lose its saltiness because as soon as, Bailey's nodding over there, as soon as salt loses its saltiness, it would cease to be salt because its chemical composition would be changed.

[15:56] But that defeats the point of the metaphor, so don't go there. In this part of the ancient world, salt was likely derived from the Dead Sea or from the ocean nearby and there would often be other residue and minerals that are mixed in with salt.

So there would be some salt-like things, minerals that are extracted that people would use as salt but they would actually have no taste because it wasn't salt. So if salt has been diluted or it has been mixed with these other minerals, it would be useless for preserving or flavoring food.

And once salt loses its taste, its saltiness cannot be restored. It's really good for nothing. The phrase lost its taste, interestingly in Greek, which is the language that the New Testament is written in, the phrase lost its taste literally means to become foolish.

Isn't that fascinating? The reason why this unusual Greek word is used to mean lose its taste is because in the original Aramaic that Jesus would have spoken and in the related language of Hebrew, the word for tasteless also means foolish or wrong.

For example, in Jeremiah 23, 13, the Lord says, in the prophets of Samaria, I saw an unsavory thing, a tasteless thing. They prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray.

[17:20] That tasteless thing is translated by other translations as folly or that offensive thing or the repulsive thing. In Lamentations 2, 14, that same word is translated as deceptive visions or worthless things or foolish things that prophets, the false prophets prophesy.

In Job 1, 22, and 24, 12, that tasteless thing is used to refer to an offense or a wrong that someone can be charged with. And perhaps most suggestively, throughout the prophetic literature, especially in Ezekiel 13, that same word, that tasteless thing refers to the whitewash that people use to hide blemishes and dirt and grime and mold on walls because that's an unseemly and an offensive practice to whitewash something like that instead of actually cleaning it and getting rid of the mold and the grime.

So that's what it means for the salt to lose its taste, for it to be tasteless. To lose our taste as salt, as believers, is to become foolish.

To lose sight of the wisdom of God. To become complicit with the repulsiveness and the offensiveness of idolatry in our world. to lose our distinctive identity as Christians.

To blend in to this sinful world instead of standing out. It means to whitewash the evils of our world and to call them good.

[19:00] G.K. Chesterton once wrote about this folly in his book, Orthodoxy. He says, what is the evil of the man commonly called an optimist? Obviously, it is felt that the optimist wishing to defend the honor of this world will defend the indefensible.

He will not wash the world but whitewash the world. That's what it looks like for salt to lose its taste. Christians who have lost their saltiness are no longer distinguishable from the rest of the world.

They justify the sins of the world. Their values and priorities are not aligned with God's unchanging word. Rather, it is aligned with the ever-changing culture. But the church that represents God and Jesus must be set apart, must be holy.

In order for us to be a city on a hill and light in the darkness, the salt of the earth, we must be an alternate community, a contrast community. Let me give a few examples as practical application points.

Does the way you talk distinguish you from the way the world speaks? Maybe the conversations in your workplace are usually vulgar and obscene and profane.

[20:24] Maybe it's full of gossip and slander about your coworkers, but when you come into the office space, people start talking differently. They start watching what they say.

They stop taking the Lord's name in vain. They stop talking about lewd subjects. They stop swearing nonstop. They stop gossiping about their coworkers because they know that you don't join in on that kind of talk.

you are being salt of the earth, restraining sin and preserving the earth. How do you interact with people that you disagree strongly with?

Do you caricature your opponent's position to make it sound as unreasonable as possible? Do you cancel and dox them?

when you listen well to your opponents and you represent their positions fairly and when you reason with them instead of canceling them, you are functioning as salt and slowing the rapid deterioration of dialogue in our culture.

[21:30] Is your media consumption different from that of the rest of the world? According to the Pew Research Center, 62% of U.S. adults identify as Christians.

Christians. That number is very, very inflated because there are many cultural and nominal Christians who on surveys like that say they are Christian but don't actually do anything in their life that resembles what a Christian should look like because they don't actually believe what the Bible teaches and don't actually live according to what the Bible says.

But imagine with me, if 62% of U.S. adults were really Christians, if 62% of U.S.

Christians refused to, U.S. adults refused to watch gratuitously violent and sexually explicit and or occultic horror films and shows, do you think that Hollywood keep churning out those kinds of movies when 62% of the population refuses to watch them?

Of course not. It affects their bottom line way too much. they produce those kinds of shows and movies because Christians gobble them up like the rest of the world because their salt has lost its taste.

[22 : 51] Does the way you spend your money distinguish you from the way the world spends money? Of course some basic things and basic needs are going to look the same. We all need food and clothing and shelter.

But beyond those basic needs, if we really store up our treasures in heaven and not on earth, if we are invested in not just temporal priorities but in eternal priorities, then it should show in our budget. It should show in our generosity toward the needy around us. It should be apparent to the people of this world that, oh, these Christians don't treasure the same thing that I treasure.

If we are indistinguishable from unbelievers at this point, then the salt has lost its taste. How sad it is when those who are called by the name Christian are the indistinguishable from the non-Christians.

A tasteless salt cannot flavor. It no longer absorbs water and kills bacteria. It cannot preserve food. And a Christian who exhibits no Christian character, a Christian who does not uphold Christian convictions, is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

[24 : 05] This is a fearful warning. That's not a good thing. Being trampled under people's feet is a mark of destruction. In Luke 8, the parable of the sower, the seed that falls along the path and is subsequently trampled by men and then consumed by birds, Jesus says, is an illustration of people who hear the gospel, but then that gospel seed is snatched away by the devil and it does not, they do not believe from their hearts.

Salt that has lost its taste is useless salt. In fact, it's no true salt at all. Jesus switches metaphors in verse 14.

He says, you are the light of the world. Once again, what we do flows from who we are. Our identity is you are the light of the world and that's a remarkable claim because Jesus is speaking here to his ragtag group of disciples, the ordinary fishermen, the tax collector.

Jesus didn't say, oh, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Caesar, Augustus, they're the light of the world.

The world speaks often of enlightenment. It speaks often of luminaries or geniuses of history who are the light of the world.

[25 : 42] The world speaks often of stars, but it's not the Grammy winners and the Oscar winners and the election winners and the gold medal winners and championship winners and the billionaires in the world that they, the people who have their names on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, who have a star on the walk of them.

They are not the stars of this world. They are not the light of this world. You are the people of God. You are the light of the world.

You are the people who can shine the light of Jesus Christ in this dark world. You are the people whose good deeds, whose righteousness will check the progress of death and decay in our world. You are the hope of the earth. Do you believe this, brothers and sisters? I believe that with all my heart, and that's why I've given my life to serve the church of Christ.

But, brothers and sisters, I did not choose a humble profession. I chose to serve the king of kings. I chose to be associated with and to work among the stars, the light of the world.

[26 : 58] In fact, the only light. The fact that the follower of Christ are the light of the world implies something obvious, again, that this sinful world is now lost.

It's plunged in darkness. It is full of sin and evil. The world is full of knowledge of various kinds. Every time a PhD dissertation is written, it seems like we make some marginal progress toward more knowledge. Yet, for all of its knowledge, the world profoundly lacks the wisdom of God. It understands much about things that are immediate, but it understands very little about the things that are ultimate. Think about this. People are more connected to each other than they ever were before, by fast travel, by social media, by distance communication.

Yet, people are lonelier than they ever were. No matter how intelligent or rich or talented the people of this world might be, Ephesians 4.18 describes those who live apart from Christ as darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart.

[28 : 19] For this reason, only those who humbly acknowledge their ignorance and darkness and come to Christ can receive his light and become the light of the world.

That's why in the Beatitudes, Jesus describes Christians as those who are poor and mourning and meek and hungering and thirsting for righteousness because they recognize their deficiency. They recognize their neediness. They recognize their lack. And those who have become the light of the world, they shine. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, 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.

When a city is nestled in a valley, it can be hidden by the hills that surround it, but if a city is on top of a hill, all eyes gravitate toward it. There's nothing you can do to hide it.

Likewise, people do not light a lamp and then put it under a basket. They put it on a stand so that it gives light to everyone in the house.

[29 : 26] That is the very purpose of light, to shine. If you're going to put your light under a basket and hide it, why have it turned on in the first place?

Jesus is saying that this is the very nature and purpose of Christians. As salt that has lost its taste is useless, so a light that is hidden and fails to give light is useless.

What good is an extinguished candle or a burnt-out light bulb? So a Christian who is indistinguishable from the world, whose life bears no witness to Jesus Christ, is useless.

The best way to understand what it means to be the light of the world is to make the connection that Matthew himself makes in his gospel because earlier in chapter 4, verse 16, he wrote that Jesus, about the coming of Jesus, that Jesus himself is the one who fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 9, verse 2, which says that people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light.

And that's why Jesus claimed, an audacious claim really, if it's, he said in John 8, 12, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

[30 : 46] In order to have the light of life, you must follow Jesus, the light of the world. Second Corinthians 4, 4-6, Paul speaks of the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

So Christians are those who have believed in the gospel or the good news of Jesus Christ. Do you acknowledge that the world is dark?

Do you acknowledge that your ways are darkness? God the Father sent his only son, Jesus Christ, into this world in order to deliver us, deliver us, as it says in Colossians, from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son.

God, we were, no matter how much we claim to say, well, I have eyes, I am not blind. No matter how good your eyesight is, without light, you can not see a thing.

So it is in the spiritual world. Unless the light of Jesus Christ shines upon us, you cannot see.

[31 : 55] We were groping about in the darkness, lost in sin and destined for death and hell and unable to save ourselves, unable to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps.

And it's in that place that Jesus came. God the Father sent his son, Jesus Christ, as the light of the world to illumine our darkness so that we might believe in him who died on the cross for our sins, who bore our darkness and carried our darkness and buried it and rose from the dead so that we can sing and say, I once was blind, but now I see.

And it's when our spiritual eyes are open to the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ that we too begin to shine. It's like we are all a thousand candles being brought to Jesus, the light of the world, and being lit aflame.

It's by our union with Jesus Christ, by faith, that we become light of the world. And the amazing thing about light and the amazing thing about fire is when you spread it, it doesn't get extinguished in its original source, no, it multiplies.

And once we have this light, we can't help but shine. That's why following Christ is not merely about personal, private holiness. There's always a public witness component.

[33 : 35] In fact, if there is true, genuine personal holiness, inevitably there will be interpersonal witness. Because people will notice. It says in verse 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.

What does it mean that we are to shine before others so that they praise their Father? It tells us, it tells us that they will see our good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven.

So the emphasis on this passage is on the good works that we do in response to the good news that we believe in. Light's primary function is to enable us to see, as we mentioned, right?

And how do we point people to the saving light of the gospel of the glory of Christ? Titus 2.10 says that one of the ways we do that is by adorning the doctrine of God our Savior with the good works that we do.

So yes, as Christians, we must speak the good news, but we are also to adorn that good news that we speak by the good works that we do. And what do these good works look like?

[34 : 51] It looks like what Jesus talks about in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. It's not always spectacular things. It looks like being patient and gentle when you can lash out at somebody in sinful anger.

It looks like being self-controlled rather than lustful. It looks like being faithful to your spouse for a lifetime rather than divorcing him or her or committing adultery.

It looks like not retaliating, but loving and praying for your enemies. It looks like giving to the needy in secret. It looks like trusting God rather than being anxious.

It looks like serving God rather than serving money. It looks like praying for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. It looks like, in short, loving God with our whole hearts and loving our neighbors as we love ourselves.

That's what it looks like for us to do good works that shine, that shine our light. I can also point to many examples from history that are maybe perhaps a little more spectacular, although they didn't happen necessarily in spectacular ways.

[36 : 06] Looking back, they look spectacular. Historian Alvin Schmidt points this out in his book, *How Christianity Changed the World*, and he says that Christian influence on government and not all of these happen through the legislations.

It just happened by multiplying Christians in these places so that more and more people thought these ways and started acting these ways. But he says that Christian influence in the world is primarily responsible for, he says, outlawing infanticide, child abandonment and abortion and gladiatorial games in the Roman Empire, instituting prison reforms, something as basic as segregating male and female prisoners, stopping the practice of human sacrifice among the Irish, the Prusians, and the Lithuanians as well as among other nations, outlawing pedophilia, granting of property rights and other protections to women, banning polygamy, prohibiting the burning alive of widows in India after their husbands are deceased, outlawing the painful and crippling practice of binding young women's feet in China, persuading government officials to begin a system of public schools in Germany.

Two-thirds of the abolitionists in America in the mid-1830s were Christian clergymen, not just Christians, but clergymen. In fact, English historian Tom Holland writes in his book, *Dominion, How the Christian Revolution Remade the World*, that every abolitionist movement throughout all of human history, or at least the last 2,000 years since Christ, from Gregory of Nyssa in the fourth century to Martin Luther King Jr. in the 20th century, every single one of them has been Christian movements.

But I do want to add one qualifier here. This doesn't mean that it is the mission of the church as a whole or the church as an institution to specialize in these public good works.

It's the church's mission to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of Jesus Christ who will then obey everything Christ has commanded them, including doing all these good works.

[38 : 19] It's not our mission as a church to build orphanages, but it is our mission to produce disciples like George Mueller, who built many orphanages and cared for 10,024 orphans during his lifetime.

That's what Christian disciples do when they are rightly disciplined and they shine as light in the world. It is not the mission of the church to collectively stage protests and lobby lawmakers.

But it is our mission to produce disciples like William Wilberforce, who led the charge in the UK of abolishing slavery. I pray and hope and I trust that some of you will be professors and scientists and lawyers and judges and diplomats and legislators and teachers and financial advisors and nurses and doctors who will make all kinds of difference in the world.

But if the church as an institution, the collective church's mission becomes merely the betterment of society, then we will eventually lose sight of the gospel, which is the driving engine of all our good

works.

That's why he says in Philippians 2, 14 to 16, Paul tells us the secret to shining as lights in the world. And this is what he says. You shine as lights in the world. How? Holding fast to the word of life.

[40 : 02] What is the word of life? It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The good news of Jesus Christ. When we gather together, that's what we're doing. We're holding fast to the word of life. Being renewed and transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Receiving God's mercy so that we become more merciful people. Receiving God's forgiveness so that we become more forgiving people. Receiving God's generosity so that we become more generous people.

We hold fast to the word of life when we gather together so that when we are scattered, we shine as bright lights in the world. There's one more question that this passage raises and I'll close with this. Jesus says in verse 16, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven. Does this mean then we should do our good works in order to be seen by people?

So they can see our good works and then glorify God? Because that seems to contradict what Jesus says repeatedly in the gospel of Matthew, including in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6, verse 1 to 4 when Jesus says, beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them.

[41 : 21] For then you will have no reward from your father who is in heaven. When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know. Sorry, this is your left. So left hand know what your right hand is doing so that you're giving may be in secret.

And your father who sees in secret will reward you. Jesus says this multiple times. He says, don't pray and fast in a manner to be seen by others. Don't announce it to the world when you do it. In Matthew 23, 5, Jesus denounces the scribes and the Pharisees for precisely this thing because they do all their deeds in order to be seen by others. So are we supposed to do our good deeds to be seen by others or not?

I think virtue signaling is never for the Christian. We should never announce our good deeds on social media in order to be seen by others and praised by men.

You might have other purpose, other reasons for doing that, but it should not be for the purpose of being seen by men and would be praised by them. That is consistently denounced in scripture.

[42 : 35] There are some good works, however, that simply cannot be hidden, at least not from the people that you are doing good to. He says in 1 Timothy 5, 25, good works are conspicuous.

And even those that are not cannot remain hidden. Don't worry about broadcasting your good works. If you do your good works in secret before the Father who alone sees in heaven above, eventually things come to light.

Sometimes it comes to light after you die. All the better. Yeah. Yeah. I think what matters is your heart's disposition.

Why do we do the glory? Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works. Is that the ultimate purpose? Is that the reason why we let our shine light before others? No, that's not.

Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Again, that's the reason. That's the purpose. If we are doing good deeds before others to be seen by men so that they give glory to us, then that's, our heart's not in the right place.

[44 : 00] Our goal is to give glory to God the Father in heaven. And this is important because sometimes the good works that we do are not going to be praised by people.

Right? We just talked about it in the last beatitude and that context is important because it immediately precedes this. Jesus said, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Jesus said, If you do righteous deeds, if you do good deeds and obedience to God, that the world will hate us and that it will persecute us.

And if we are out to get the world's praise, if we are out to be seen by people so that they would praise us and glorify us, then we will not do the works that will gain us infamy and revulsion and slander from the world.

Because there are many good works that are like that. So then what does it mean that people will see our good works and give glory to the Father in heaven?

[45 : 03] Of course, there is some common grace. And there are good works that we do that the world will agree are good works. They'll see that, oh, that is good. And that will bring some glory to God the Father.

But even when they don't recognize them, they revile us as evildoers, eventually the good works that we do will elicit praise and glory from all the world when Christ returns.

And that's what we see in 1 Peter 2, 12. He says, We should keep our conduct among the Gentiles honorable, even when they speak against us as evildoers, so that they will see our good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

It's speaking of the return of Christ, the final day of visitation. Even if we are maligned here on earth because of the good works that we do, even if we are persecuted on account of righteousness, there will be a day when every knee will bow before Christ and every tongue will confess that he is God.

There will be a day when all the good deeds that you have done, they will not have been in vain and they will be seen and they will result in redounding glory to God, our heavenly Father. That's why.

[46 : 19] That's why we persevere. So let's hold fast to the good news and shine our light and do good works.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are so lost apart from you.

in utter blindness, groping about in the darkness, unable to help ourselves from our sin.

Lord, that's who you were. God, thank you that in Jesus the light of the gospel has dawned. And thank you that you now call us the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

What a privilege and honor. Father, thank you. Help us to wear it well. Help us to represent you well.

[47 : 34] all for your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.