

Fall Retreat 2022: Friday Evening Session

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Preacher: Bauer Evans

[0 : 00] I have the privilege of introducing Bauer. I've known Bauer longer than most pastor friends I have.

I mean, because I got to know Bauer. I've known him probably for like 10 years now, 9, 10 years. And Bauer, I met him through Paul at King of Grace when I was still a green seminary student.

And something that really stood out to me even from my early interactions with Bauer is just his humility. And how I remember whenever we would go to a conference together or attend a seminar together, I could always hear Bauer's keyboard just in the back because he's always taking copious notes.

And even though he already knows so much and has learned so much, he's always learning. He's always a student of God's word. And also, even though I was such a young seminary student, he always treated me with so much respect, which is he didn't need to, but he did.

And I just remember that. It stands out to me about Bauer. Bauer has been pastoring for 21 years. He's been ordained for 21 years. He's been in the same church, Crossway Church, that Bailey was a part of at one point.

[1 : 24] And Will was a part of at one point. Will is obviously Bauer's son. And, you know, I mean, there's increasingly a lot of pastors think of pastoring as a profession.

And you try to climb the ladder in the same way. And time and time again, I'll see sometimes pastors go to greener pastures, whether it's out of New England or to a bigger church or to where you can get paid more or where you could have less to do directly with people.

You know, or it's just people always doing that. But Bauer has been in the same church his entire pastoral ministry, 21 years. I look up to that.

And I aspire to that. And that's a testament to your calling, God-given call, but your character, Bauer. We're grateful for you. So it's my joy to welcome you to our retreat to be our speaker.

Thank you. Please come. Thank you for that kind welcome, Sean. Sean, those are very meaningful words. One of my reflections on our history together, I don't know where we were when we had this conversation, but there was a phrase that was attributed to you as I was trying to understand more deeply our understanding of Scripture.

[2 : 44] And I think the phrase, Sean, I don't want to attribute something that doesn't accurately like you said, but in essence, what I took from it was that all Scripture is covenantal in nature.

And that phrase, like a key, like a master key that unlocks all the doors and houses, I just began to turn it both in the Old Testament and new after our conversation, and also in my reading and study, and began to look at Scripture over time from more as how Scripture operates on us in a dynamic way through King Jesus than simply me approaching the text and pulling from it.

And it was one of those inflection points in our journey. So I appreciate you taking what was a very thick understanding, kind of narrowing it down that I could start to...

Is that... Did you say that? Yeah. Yeah. Is that Jeff? And you were quoting Jeff? Well, Jeff Percival then, through his brother, Sean.

Jeff didn't say that, or I didn't listen when I was with Jeff in the same way. So that was a... Let me begin this way. I was praying on the way up, as I'm sure many of you were, taking in the beauty of the leaves and the less beauty of the traffic.

[4 : 06] And I was thinking about how best to begin a time with you on mission mindfulness, for I'm here to learn, too, and hear from the Lord and engage with you afresh this topic.

And I was thinking about, and we've been thinking about this as a church, what Paul meant when he said to the Corinthians in his second letter, in chapter 12, I know a man in Christ.

I know a man in Christ. And then he introduces 14 years earlier a vision he'd been given. When Paul speaks of being a Christian, he never says of himself, I'm a Christian, like we would.

It doesn't mean what we're saying is wrong. He never uses that phrase. When the word Christian came into use, you know, because you studied the Book of Acts as a church, it was in the church in Antioch where that word Christian first came into use.

But up to that time, people who were Christians were called people of the way, which is found in Scripture, or disciples.

[5 : 22] And Paul uses neither of those to refer to himself. He refers to himself almost without exception in terms of his identity as being in Christ.

And so I was reflecting on that as I thought about beginning our, and I thought 41 years ago, as a senior in high school, a man who was in Christ shared with me during a study hall in the cafeteria of our high school the message of the gospel.

And if you knew me as a senior in high school, there's no reason why I should have listened to anything George said in that moment. Except George was the individual who sold us our weekend supply of hashish and was a devout fan of, this will date me, but the Jackson 5.

And we liked the Jackson 5 in the 1970s. George had become a Christian earlier that month. And there he is with me in study hall at a cafeteria table reading from the Bible, from the Gospel of John, and calling me to repent of my sins and put my hope in Jesus.

And I shouldn't have been listening. But I know a man in Christ. And he, Christ, had my attention.

[7 : 01] Two weeks later, I'm in a meeting with, I don't know, probably 500 or more people, not much younger than you. And Phil Perry and the other pastor, Paul, who's, I forget his last name, gave a gospel message to primarily public school students there in the suburbs of Philadelphia.

This was a church plant, not unlike Trinity, and everyone had been invited by people like George to come to this meeting. And boy, the message was crystal clear.

There was a clear invitation given, and I didn't respond to it that moment. But I know a man in Christ who, when he went home that night, Jesus revealed himself.

And 41 years ago, I repented of my sins, tears flowing out of my tear ducts in my bedroom. And that next morning, I got up and greeted my parents, who at that point, I was alienated from my parents, even though I lived in their home.

And I said, Mom, Dad, brace yourself. This is the only language I knew. I'm a born-again Christian now. And I might as well told them I was a communist.

[8 : 15] I mean, they were, you're a what? And they didn't believe it, but I know a man in Christ. 41 years later, last story.

This introduced mission mindfulness. We shared the gospel with my parents, because all of my sisters came to the Lord by God's grace, different ways.

One through me, which is remarkable, since she hated me prior to Christ. And the other through John Stott's ministry there in All Souls Church in London, at a time when she was being proposed to by a very wealthy young Muslim man there in Europe who was in love with Bobby.

And yet she's sitting under the preaching of the gospel through John Stott, realizing if I choose this way, she didn't, she became a Christian, she's walking with the Lord now, as is my youngest sister Day.

But my parents both came to the Lord, and the reason I should share this is because my dad, who rejected Christianity for his entire life, and although loved his kids, would always say to us, I don't wanna hurt your faith, but I think what you believe is totally bananas.

[9 : 33] He said a little more strongly than that if you knew my dad. He was a lawyer, corporate lawyer in Philadelphia, big man, kind of a John Wayne sort of figure if you know who that is.

So the last summer before he died, we shared with him again, we all shared with him in different ways, the simple message of the gospel. We called him to believe in Christ. We said there's a, even mom believes now, dad.

Please. He got angry, he got abusive. We couldn't tell if it was the alcohol he was drinking, we couldn't tell if it was just, turned out that at that point, his lungs had deteriorated due to a 40-year habit of smoking Lucky Strikes, that's an unfiltered signal.

He had about 13% capacity in his lungs. He was basically suffocating. Couldn't, but we didn't know that. This physician on the main line, you'll have to edit this out, basically he lied to him about the condition of his health.

And I visited dad in the hospital there that fall and basically said goodbye to him. He was in and out of consciousness. We're putting him on oxygen, but he was fading, drove home.

[10 : 39] And my phone went off, and it's my sister Day who, and she says, you are not gonna believe this. And I said, what? I just drove six hours, and she said, dad wants to talk to you.

Dad wants to talk to me. He came too? And there's my dad without his oxygen on. And he says, Bauer, I wanna become a Christian.

And then my sister, you know, is doing this thing with the phone, you know. And I asked my dad in so many words, probably the wrong question, Sean. I'm not a very effective angel.

I said, dad, why do you wanna become a Christian? And why he was unconscious or in that, he was aware of eternity in a way that we had spoken to him for years about, but that his eternity was Christless and that our eternity was in Christ.

And so there on his deathbed, a man who was unconscious, coming to due to being oxygenated, he repented of his sins, confessed Christ for the first time as Savior, and he went on to live for another two or three weeks.

[11 : 53] And so we brought in every Christian we knew to really test his faith, to see if this was sincere. We'd read scripture to him. We'd talk about counting the cost.

We challenged him. And I know a man in Christ. It was my dad. So before conversion, we hear the invitation, come to me, all of you who are weary and laden, Matthew 11.

Come to me, Christ says, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for I'm gentle and lowly, humble in heart. My yoke is easy.

My burden is light. But then when you walk through that door by God's grace and you look back at Ephesians 1, it doesn't say come to me anymore. From beginning to end, from before the foundation of the world to when we're face to face with Christ.

If you're a Christian and you put your trust in Christ, it says you are in Christ. It's our identity. It's so mysterious and yet it's so gloriously gospel-centered that that really becomes the basis for me of standing here before you to talk about mission mindfulness, not because only I responded 41 years ago to a gospel call, but because I can say with the Apostle Paul, as can you, we know a person in Christ by God's grace.

[13 : 29] It's us. It's a miracle. So please open in your scriptures to Matthew 5. I'm gonna pray and then we'll look at the passage together.

Over the next three days and then again on Sunday, we're gonna look at this from some different vantage points. We'll use Jesus' Sermon on the Mount to get us started, both today and tomorrow, and then we'll consider one of his parables of the kingdom.

Let me read the scripture. I'm gonna read for the sake of context, Matthew 5, verses 1 through 16, but I'm gonna focus tonight on verses 13 through 16, which are familiar words to you and I hope makes a meaningful application for our small group time together.

As we go, this is God's word. May God give us his grace to listen attentively to it. Seeing the crowds, verse 1 of chapter 5, Jesus went up on the mountain and when he sat down, his disciples came to him and he opened his mouth and taught them saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

[15 : 03] Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 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. 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.

[16 : 21] Let's pray. Jesus, you call us to join you in your mission, and for those of us, I presume most of us, if not all of us, who have put our faith in you, Lord, it is not only a privilege, joining you in your mission is part of who we are.

So grant us, grant us, Lord, by your spirit of illumination, a deeper perspective, understanding, and vision for this mission you have joined us to and use us individually and collectively to call others into your glorious light.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. That's my main point. I'll repeat it again at the end of the message, and I'll introduce it again this morning as we'll look at the first 11 verses, first 12 verses of this Sermon on the Mount, is that Jesus calls us to join him and his mission in everyday ways.

And this evening, I just want to introduce this idea of salt and light, which I'm sure is familiar to many of you, but give you perhaps a fresh perspective on that, and then make some fresh applications through an illustration or two and then set you up for some discussion.

In verse 13, as we just read, Jesus says to his disciples, you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

[18 : 11] And so the question that we ask of scripture when we see a statement like that is what does Jesus mean by salt? It may surprise you.

One of the commentators I consulted when I did this message for Crossway at the beginning of the year, in the ancient world, there are actually 11 options for what salt could refer to here, 11 different options, which in light of the reductionist tendency of modern-day evangelicalism today, that number shocked me because most people assume it's one thing when actually in the ancient world, the original hearers could have heard preservation, which salt certainly functions as with meat, but it was also used in sacrifices.

Salt was added to Old Testament ritual sacrifices. It's a symbol for peace, friendship, even wisdom. So with that in mind, and without a lot of time to walk us through all 11, I think Jesus is quite clear in what he means when he says of salt that salt, to be salt, can be tasted.

It says if salt has lost its taste, it's right there in the text, how saltiness be restored. So, if we are to be salt in our mission mindfulness, then there must be something about our lives that's tasty.

Imagine I invited you, I'm having a hard time, Gary, with this mic, just because I'm very, I use a lot of mannerisms, so I apologize. Imagine if I invited you over for an Easter dinner, which we did with dear friends.

[20 : 07] I don't think it was your parents, Bailey, but it was someone like that, and we love having people in for meals, as I'm sure many of you do.

Hospitality is a privilege. And it got to be dessert, and Linda had made a type of, is it good? Awesome.

That's great. Thank you. Linda had made a casserole for dessert. I think it was, it was kind of like coffee cake. That's probably not what it was. She'll be here tomorrow, which she can correct me on my illustration.

And the individual, the male individual, dove into this before any of us had an opportunity to take a taste of it.

And he took a very large bite. I'm not sure he chewed it quite as thoroughly as he should have. And he swallowed it, and he started choking on our table, which I don't know any first aid.

[21 : 14] So I kind of looked at Linda like, if he's going to die at our table over your dessert, I'm not of any use here. And he spit out on the plate what he had been chewing, which that's usually a sign that it's, something's very wrong.

And he starts laughing. And we ask him, what's wrong? What are you laughing about? And he says, your coffee cake, your casserole, doesn't have cinnamon.

It's full of red-hot chili pepper. And Linda's jaw dropped and I was like, really? What a great prank.

So I took a big bite and I threw it in. I goes, oh my gosh. It's like, it was just throat-burning, flame-hot.

so the point is simple. If you trust in Christ, when people get a taste of your life, they should notice something very distinct.

[22 : 26] distinct. The world notices distinct flavors. So what is it about our lives that cause our coworkers or fellow students or Tony, the Uber driver, who if there's time, I'll share a story, which probably is what we'll wait till tomorrow.

Or, I'll change your name. Sarah, the classroom student. Or, someone in your family member that's belligerent when you share the gospel with them and is angry.

Or a neighbor who mistreats you. What stands out? It's when we obey the commands of Christ in ways that they recognize.

The point is simple here. There should be no diluted disciples. This is not a command. This is an indicative.

If you're a Christian, you are salt in Christ. I am salt in Christ. Trinity is salt in Christ. The red hot chili pepper is in us already.

[23 : 45] And when we obey the commands of Christ in relationship with others, they taste it. of course, there's a lot of things we can do as Christians that aren't explicitly connected to a command and they may sense it there too.

But there are those clear commands in scripture that when we obey it in our culture, in relationship with others, oh, they see it. And then they have to respond to it.

Jesus doesn't just call us salt here. He doesn't just tell us to be who we are. He says that we're also the light of the world.

Verse 14, you are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. And then he goes on to talk about a lamp, not putting it under a basket, but giving light to all the house.

So, so, Jesus calls us the light. He doesn't say be the light. He says this is who you are. You are visible. I have made you visible through my work of regeneration, big words, through my work of gracious gospel conversion, a new heart, a new mind, new affections, a new orientation, and then are growing into that identity.

[25 : 03] As Christians, we're visible and we are salty Jesus puts it this way in verse 16 then as he rounds out this brief teaching.

Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. So, the connection between our tastefulness and our visibility is our good works, grace, which gives glory to God the Father in heaven.

And the good works, I just want to suggest to us, are the good works of obedience to the commands Jesus gives us in this most fundamental of sermons like you must love your enemies.

You must love them and I must too. our friend Edward, Bailey knows Edward, is a Dominican. He moved to a neighborhood near where I live where although the Dominican is the largest minority group there in that community, they are not the majority race in that community.

He would be lower income but the way this community is laid out is you can have higher income across the street from lower income mixed neighborhoods missing income and it was trash day and my brother Edward put his trash out with his little recycle can and like me I love trash day.

[26 : 46] He was excited to see his trash carted away. Came home that night from work and someone had moved his trash can and put it where the trash truck wouldn't see it and there was still trash in the can and still a bucket full of recycles and he thought that's weird.

That would be very disappointing for me. I always look forward to coming home to empty trash cans and empty recycles. My wife says I have a trash fetish. Put him out again the next week.

Now he had two cans of trash and two buckets of recycles. Goes off to work, comes back 12 hours later and the trash cans have been moved again and the trash hasn't been picked up and now he's getting suspicious like who's messing with my trash, right?

I mean there's nothing more infurious to an American than messing with their trash. So the next week he decides to stay home from work. I don't know maybe he was sick. Now he's got three cans of trash and three things of recycles and he's watching in the window and there across the street comes his neighbor who is a different race and upper income and he moves Edward's trash and he moves it to the back where the trash truck won't see it and Edward who is a very godly man gets very angry and I don't know the Spanish language very well but I suspect his wife does and what she was hearing coming out of Edward's mouth in that moment was not bless you oh father for my neighbors but I am going to give that man the business and

Lillian says to her husband Edward I think you need to pray to the Lord before you go confront him because God brought us here not only this country but to this neighborhood to love our neighbors and to share the gospel with them and if you go into that conversation angry at him and hate him and begin a fight with him that's not why we're here and so he prays he's convicted of his anger because he's really angry like any American is when you mess with their trash and the Lord convicts him breaks his heart he then goes out to the man not as an angry you know trash defending but as a person who realizes I am salt and I am light and I am called to love my enemies and he confronts the man and he says you know I saw you move my trash and I was angry with you but I'm a Christian I'm an evangelical Christian and Jesus loves you he died for you and he wants me to tell you that and I want to ask you because I love you too why are you moving my trash you know what he said he said I've been watching your family every Sunday dressed up so nicely getting into your minivan and driving off to church and I've been saying to my radio audience I have a radio show on

[30 : 03] Sunday that I live across the street from a Christian from an evangelical and they're all hypocrites because they don't love their enemies they hate their enemies and I only need to mess with their trash to expose how hypocritical they really are that's convicting but he didn't stop there he said but now I have to tell my audience I met a real Christian someone who really does love his neighbor even when I was doing something that to him could have been hurtful can you imagine where Edward could have gone he could have said this man's moving my trash because we're a different race this man's moving my trash because we're a different income level this man's moving my trash because we don't agree politically this man's messing with my property for every reason that seems to fracture our culture and fracture the church today and instead he encountered a Christian who was who he was supposed to be salt and light and obeying

Matthew 5 verse 43 you have heard that it was said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy but I say to you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven for he makes his son rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust for if you love those who love you what reward do you have you therefore must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect there's no invisible Christians if you're a Christian you're on display and there's no Christians that don't taste differently because we are the song but the call here right Jesus calls us to join us in his mission in everyday ways is there any more any everyday than putting out your trash to join him in everyday ways in our relationship with others as those who are in

Christ I know a church in Christ it's Trinity Cambridge and the Lord providentially has put you in relationships with dozens if not more of non-believers in work in neighborhood and in life may God by his grace give us the ability to taste differently and look differently and obey Christ differently for his glory let's pray Lord as we begin this weekend of mission mindfulness first Lord we are humbled and grateful that you are mindful of us in calling us to yourself through the clear compelling transforming message of the good news of the gospel thank you Jesus for dying on the cross in our place you being the perfect obedient unique son of

God thank you Lord for in dying and being buried being raised again that we would not only be forgiven of our sins but receive Lord righteousness through faith an adoption into your family and a new identity as sons and daughters as part of your glorious kingdom help us Lord now as we go to our small groups to to not think so much about perhaps what the text means so that important but give us eyes to see what are the the little and maybe not so little ways that we are visible to others that our lives are are in a sense flavoring their experience of you and use us Lord to call them into your glorious kingdom courage us Lord as we meet in small groups to be missionally mindful we pray this in Jesus name and everybody said amen amen medici amen