

Foundations Bible Study – Sermon on the Mount  
Lesson 2

**Scripture Readings:**

- **Matthew 5:13-48**
- **Mark 9:50, 10:11**
- **Luke 6:29-36, 12:57-59**

**Lesson**

From the Beatitudes Christ moves quickly into an important matter, our influence on the world. (verses 13-16) The church and Christians are called and commanded to impact the world for good. Here Christ states the matter as seasoning and light. It seems to me that most of us in today's world are very busy and concerned about our own spirituality. By the time we get our work, play, and a few prayers said, our day is done and we are very tired. But here Christ says we are the salt and light. We simply can not be so busy as to lose out on our calling as believers. Salt the earth!

A second point Jesus makes here is that the salt can lose its flavor. Some foods are just not too good at all without salt, but if your shaker is empty or the salt is not good, then how can I eat tomatoes? (I have to have salt on them.) What does Christ mean by saying the salt can lose it flavor? I find at times that Christians are living their lives so similar to the rest of the world, that one can not tell the difference between Christians and those folks who haven't claimed Christ yet. The Christians and the unbelievers act the same. Folks, when this happens the salt has lost its flavor. Can people tell you are a faithful follower of Christ by your words, attitudes, or actions? Is the Church lighting the world or has our bulb burned out?

Next, Jesus moves backward to the past ways of religion, the religion of the laws and all their trappings. In the next verses 17-20 Jesus addresses His divine purpose as a part of the Law and our lives in the Law. He came to fulfill the Law, to complete the Law. Others accuse him later in his ministry of tearing the law apart and disgracing the Law of Moses. Christ never intended to dismiss or refute the Law of Moses, but he did come to teach and show us all that the Law can never work in this world we call life. Oh, it can and did work for a chosen few, but not for all people. Christ came down to this earth to offer freedom from sin and connection to the Almighty to all people. That is the total fulfillment of the Law of Moses.

The final part of our lesson this week deals with the remainder of the 5th chapter. Here Jesus addresses the Law and tradition by stating how the ways we are accustomed to are changing in this new beginning in the faith. These teachings all begin by stating something like,

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“You have heard it said, but I tell you.” Or maybe something like this, “You have always thought this way or that way, but now, I am giving you a brand new way of living and thinking; a new way to live the love of God and relate to others. Oh, it is strange and different, but please give it a chance; it will change your life, your community, your nation, and the world!”

Of the 5 “You have heard” sayings I want to address two. First “You have heard it said do not commit adultery, but I say if you lust after another you are committing adultery in your mind and heart. (Verses 31-37) Wow, Jesus takes this teaching to a whole new level, maybe up two or three levels. Christ deals with our minds, attitudes, innermost desires, for they lead us to commit these acts that endanger our most intimate relationships.

With the rampant onslaught of internet porn, adultery has entered into our very homes, 24-7. Be very careful, all of you, with this tool for sharing information. Also the point Christ is making is very true. That being that all adulterous action is first given birth in the eyes, mind, and heart of at least one of the persons involved. Guard your hearts, if you have already become involved with adulterous thoughts or actions, stop, pray and get help from a trusted friend or professional.

Pornography addiction is a big and growing problem in our society. If you are looking at porn every night, or even several nights each week, you have a problem. As your spiritual guide (at this moment at least) I ask you to get some help quickly. This addiction will very soon wreck your marriage and all relationships you have, so please get some help.

The second saying I would like to address is the one about our enemies. (Verses 43-48) The world today is full of hatred and fear, and enemies are everywhere. It also seems to me that all around me are people telling me who I should be afraid of. The message of Christ wipes out fear; the message of Christ is No Fear. We are in the midst of a fearful and hateful world, but as Christians we should be standing for love and peace. Our faith and our lives should be that of hope, trust, peace and love... to everyone, everywhere!

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**Questions for Thought and Discussion**

1. Is the Church salty enough to impact our communities? Can you explain your answer?
2. Are you shining the light of God into a dark world? Are you adding to the darkness? Or are you just staying in the middle, neither light nor dark?
3. In your opinion which of three conditions in question #2, shining light, adding darkness, neither, is the most dangerous to the Church and Christianity?
4. Can we begin to love our enemies? Where should we begin to live out this teaching of Christ?