

## UPPER ROOM SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Living the Life of the Beloved/Belonging: Matthew 5-7

Pastor Jim Otte

Spring-Summer, 2018

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### Lesson 5 – (April 22, 2018) Matthew 5:13-16

#### From Last Session:

- a. Persecution for your faith can be direct or indirect. Be prepared!
- b. The Beatitudes reveal the level of confidence you can have in God's promise that you are His beloved, and that being loved does change with circumstances.
- c. If you are not confident you are loved, a soul-level pressure permeates your life:

#### Matthew 5:13

**“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.**

- a. **“salt of the earth”** – salt was a treasured commodity in Jesus' day. It offered at least three benefits (which serve as word pictures for you):
  - a. **Purity** – The Romans believed that salt was the purest of elements having come from two of the most primal sources: sun & sea.
    - i. **The Beloved Life Principle #13:** You are “*salt*” in the earth, when your belovedness with Jesus makes such a distinctive impression, other people may \_\_\_\_\_ about the source of your inner strength.
    - ii. How would you answer the question, “What difference has, being loved by God, made in your life?”
    - iii. **1 Peter 3:15.** *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*
  - b. Somber reverence can, sometimes, give a confusing example of Christian joy: *“I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers.”* Oliver Wendell Holmes (Barclay).
    - a. Various Christian denominations and individuals struggle with the tension between ‘reverence’ and ‘entertainment’ focused worship:
      - i. Clapping in church
      - ii. Pastors telling stories in sermons

- iii. Praise bands up front on the chancel
  - iv. Video screens
  - v. Ornately decorated churches
  - vi. Plainly decorated churches
  - vii. Highly vested clergy
  - viii. Non-vested clergy
  - ix. Traditional Liturgy
  - x. Praise Worship Style
  - xi. Hymnal Singing
  - xii. Bulletin Singing
  - xiii. Organ-led accompaniment
  - xiv. Guitars-led accompaniment
  - xv. Others: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What people grew up with, for the most part, dictates their threshold of reverence/entertainment.
- c. In your experiences, growing up, what did reverence or respect in church look like?
- d. Lutherans approach these tensions from an “adiaphora” point of view.
- i. “Adiaphora” – things neither commanded (by Scriptures) of forbidden.
  - ii. Good order and decency
  - iii. Each congregation can decide for itself
  - iv. Respecting the culture of the people
  - v. “Style and Substance” debates
  - vi. Many a young pastor has made the mistake of...
- e. **Preservative & Flavoring Agent** – kept meat from spoiling & brought the best flavor out in foods.
- i. **The Beloved Life Principle #14:** When you use the distinctiveness of your life to help prevent evil & to bring out the \_\_\_\_\_ in people, you are salt of the earth!
- c. **“except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot”** – the Romans used rock, which had formerly been mined out of salt mines, as the foundation beds for road (some of which are still intact today!)

- a. Nothing God creates goes to waste!

<sup>4</sup>“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

- a. “light of the world.”

- a. Jesus called Himself the “light of the world,” so as believers you are lit up by Christ.

- b. **John 9:5**. *While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*”

- b. “let your light shine before others” –

- a. Your “light” is meant to be seen, not shuttered.
- b. The seen “light” will invite scrutiny and testing of its trustworthiness.
- c. The seen “light” marks the way to the true path while warning of the false path.
- d. “Light” often shines the brightest – in the darkness.
- e. **The Beloved Life Principle #15**: When you let your light shine, be prepared to handle mixed reviews: Welcoming & opposing. Don’t give up; \_\_\_\_\_ shining!

- c. “see your good deeds and glorify your Father”

- a. People don’t automatically glorify God when you do good deeds.
- b. You give witness to God, when you tell people why you do the good deeds you do.
  - i. Common assumptions people give for doing good (which don’t necessarily witness for Christ):
    1. *“I like helping others.”*
    2. *“I’m been given much, and I want to give back.”*
    3. *“It feels good to do good.”*
    4. *“I was raised to help others.”*
  - ii. What you can say to others (as a witness to Christ) when they ask:
    1. *“Thank you.”*
    2. *“God’s done so much for me; I’m happy to serve.”*
- c. Beware of limiting your witnessing to only those times when something good happens; include when something bad happens, too!

- i. **Example:** In sports events, when the winner is being interviewed, he/she will often say, *“I want to start out by saying that I give all glory to God for enabling me to do this.”*
- ii. When bad things happen, or your performance falls short, you can witness by saying, *“I’ve found that God’s peace fills me, even when things don’t go well. It gives me the power to stay focused on being better prepared.”*