

Introduction

So far in our study of Matthew's Gospel, there have been two main points.

1. In Matthew Chapter 5: v. 1-12, Jesus taught people the great blessing of being in the Kingdom of God.

These blessings included being in God's Kingdom, being comforted when they mourn, being filled with God's Holiness, obtaining God's mercy, and much more.

It is important to note clearly here that these blessings are promised to believers who are already in God's kingdom.

The list of blessings are NOT entry requirements to enter God's Kingdom.

Many people today like to think that by obeying a set of rules, they will then be O.K. and go to Heaven when they die. This is not the teaching of Jesus.

Our entry into Heaven is all of God's Grace, through faith in Jesus.

This is a stumbling block for many people.

2. In Matthew Chapter 5: v. 13-16, we are taught the importance of discipleship within God's kingdom.

We are ambassadors for Jesus Christ. We shine the light of the Gospel and seek to live Holy lives.

Jesus gives a good illustration by using light and salt.

In the society of this day these two things would have been fully understood.

Today we understand light, which destroys darkness.

If we share the gospel message about Jesus with somebody, it has the ability through God's Holy Spirit to shine light into the darkness of a persons' heart.

However, we might not all understand the illustration of salt.

Salt was a very precious commodity when Jesus spoke these words. It acted as a preservative for food, and it also gave food its flavour.

However, if the salt was in any way contaminated with any other mineral, then it would be worthless. Jesus said that you might as well through it on the ground.

What Jesus was trying to tell the people was that they needed to live Holy lives in obedience to God's word.

If they did this, then by their distinctive life –style people would notice a difference in their lives.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones a famous preacher from Wales, U.K. said this;

“The glory of the gospel is that when the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first.”

This is so important, and one of the main reasons why I believe the Holy Spirit has convicted me to teach on “sanctification” at this years’ retreat

We now come to the explanation by Jesus Christ concerning the relationship between the Old Testament Law and His teaching about Salvation.

The first thing that we need to notice is a phrase that Jesus repeated 9 times between v. 18-44.

Whenever Jesus repeats anything in the Bible, it is always to stress its importance.

In the original Greek translation, the word is the same, but in many English translations it sometimes differs.

In the N.K.J. translation the phrase that is used is “For assuredly I say to you...”

This phrase speaks of the authority of Jesus.

There are three things that the authority of Jesus wants to teach us today.

1. Jesus wants to change our thinking about the Old Testament v. 17-18.

The phrase, the Law and the Prophets is the Jewish way of describing the whole of the Old Testament.

It is clear that the thinking of the Pharisees and Scribes was wrong and Jesus wanted them to change their mind-set.

The Jewish leaders thought that Jesus was not following the teaching of the Old Testament Prophets and the first 5 books of the Bible.

Jesus tells the Jewish leaders that He had definitely come to fulfil, or complete the teaching of the Law.

In fact, Jesus was so strong in his teaching that He promised that until heaven and earth pass away not one tiny little word in the Old Testament would be changed through His teaching.

In actual fact all of the teaching of the Old Testament is relevant to Jesus, or points to Jesus and Salvation in some way.

If you want to change your thinking on the Old Testament, you need to study it with Jesus Christ and Salvation in view.

In the E.S.V. study Bible they have noted in nearly every verse in the Old Testament, a reference to Salvation in Jesus.

Jesus said, I am not against the Old Testament, I am promoting it.!!!

2. Jesus wants to change our thinking about sin and Salvation – v. 19-20.

Firstly, we need to understand what the thinking was about sin and salvation in the minds of the Pharisees and Scribes of that day.

The reason we need to understand their thinking is that many people think the same way today.

Jesus is telling the Jewish leaders and teachers of the Law that their righteousness is not enough to enter into the kingdom of God.

The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees was based upon the Old Testament Law, but they had added many other laws, that obscured the true message about the coming of Jesus.

They had become what we call “legalistic” in their teaching.

This means that if you obey all their rules, man-made and Bible rules, the way in which they interpret them, then you can go to heaven.

Jesus clearly tells them that they are wrong.

There is a righteousness that you can receive that is better than our attempts to obey God’s Law and man –made rules.

This would have made the Jewish scribes and Pharisees very angry.

A lot of people’s thinking is exactly the same today.

Let me give you an example.

If I went up the road to the Roman Catholic Cathedral and said to the Priests and leaders of this Church that their teaching of Roman Catholicism was not enough to get people into Heaven, then they would get mad and angry.

They would say, we use the same Bible.

The problem is that they interpret it wrongly and add rules and regulations that are not found in the Bible.

So we must ask the question, what is the righteousness that exceeds the teaching of the Old Testament Law and that of man -made regulations.

The answer is simple.

The answer is the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus left the glory of heaven to come to this earth to fulfil the requirements of the Law.

Jesus came to give us “**HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS**” because we will **NEVER** be able to obtain forgiveness, cleansing, and get to heaven without it.

Quote 2 Corinthians 5: v. 21. In N.L.T.

²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Quote Ephesians 2: v. 1-10 in N.L.T.

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ²You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.^[a] He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.

⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

The gospel destroys legalism. You can’t earn your way to heaven.
It is ALL of God’s grace, love and mercy.

Q. The question we all need to ask today is, have we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and what He did for us through His death on the cross 2,000 years ago?

Q. In other words, have you received God’s love and mercy yet?

Q. Are you willing to change your mind about your own ideas and believe what Jesus teaches concerning your Salvation and eternal life?

You can start today, let us pray.

(I will then pray a prayer, as I feel led at the time. After this we will take Communion)