



Part 28: A Unique Calling & Lifestyle
Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus calls us to embody a lifestyle that leads people to worship the Father and desire His beautiful Kingdom.

I. The Necessity of Purpose

Story of Meriweather Lewis:

“Deep in our hearts, we all want to find and fulfill a purpose bigger than ourselves. Only such a larger purpose can inspire us to heights we know we could never reach on our own. For each of us the real purpose is personal and passionate: to know what we are here to do, and why.” – Os Guinness, *The Call*

Human beings are storied creatures who seek meaning and purpose in our lives. We all need to have a deep sense that our lives matter – we’re making a difference, we’re here for a purpose in God’s larger Story.

For Christians – disciples of Jesus – we look to him for our meaning and purpose. He is our Creator, Savior, Lord, Teacher, and Guide. We listen to his voice above all the other noise. Our Scripture today reveals to us our most basic purpose as followers of Jesus. We can and should find our unique role on God’s Kingdom and Church, but here Jesus gives us our most basic calling as his disciples.

These verses serve as a bridge or transition between the Beatitudes and the rest of Jesus’ Sermon.

A word about context...

"...it was Matthew's gospel which created the climate of ordinary Christianity." – R.T. France, *Matthew, Evangelist & Teacher*

"The greatest issue facing the world today with all its heartbreaking needs is whether those who are identified as Christians will become disciples – students, apprentices, practitioners of Jesus Christ steadily learning from him how to live the life of the kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence. That's it. Jesus is not looking for converts to Christianity. He is looking for apprentices to the Kingdom of God." – Dallas Willard

II. Our Calling as Disciples

Jesus uses the metaphors of salt and light to describe the way we are called to live.

A. Salt of the Earth

Salt had a variety of uses in the first century including the preservation of meat without refrigeration. Jesus is likely saying that we are to live in such a way that slows the moral decay of our society.

This interpretation would seem to fit best with Jesus' warning. We are not to lose our potency, meaning our witness to an alternative way of living.

B. Light of the World.

Light dispels darkness. In Scripture light is a metaphor for God's revelation of Himself to people who do not know Him. Matthew picks up this imagery from Isaiah and applies it to Jesus (Matt. 4:12-17; Isaiah 9:1-2).

We are to live in such a way that we serve as light in darkness; we provide a clear witness to the God revealed in Jesus.

Our lives are to be a witness to the beauty of God and His Kingdom so that His beauty moves people to desire Him and worship Him (Psalm 27:4; 1 Peter 2:9-12).

"Dear friends, I urge you to you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the Day he visits us." 1 Peter 2:11-12

III. The Father's Beautiful Kingdom

"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

For the first time, Jesus introduces the idea that those who belong to Jesus get the privilege and joy of having God as their Father. We get invited into the love and joy that has existed eternally between the Father and the Son. We get to rest in the security of knowing the Father and the Son will never forsake us or reject us. We get a new power to live in a radically new way. It's a new identity, power and purpose.

This lifestyle is expressed in Jesus' Sermon, which we will dive into next week. These are the teachings concerning the deeds we are to do so that our light shines and others see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

There is no better way to live than the way of Jesus expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. This is the heartbeat of what it means to live as a Christian. This is the way that is full of Life, wisdom, love, joy, and peace. This is the way of the beautiful Kingdom ruled by a beautiful King.

“Calling is the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion and dynamism lived out as a response to his summons and service.” – Os Guinness, *The Call*

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you agree with the first quote by Os Guinness? What has been your experience searching for meaning and purpose?
2. How do these words of Jesus encourage or challenge you?
3. Read 1 Peter 2:9-12. Peter is saying the same thing as Jesus in Matthew 5:13-16.
 - a. What challenges or opposition have you faced as you've tried to live as a faithful disciple of Jesus?
 - b. Do you have a story of a fruitful conversation you've had with an unbeliever arising from your relationship?
4. As we get ready to launch into the heart of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, what questions do you have that you hope to get answered?