

SALT AND LIGHT LIVING – Architects of Culture Prt 2

Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

1. Maintain Relational wholeness in the middle of broken relationships

Matthew 5:21-24

2. Maintain Sexual purity in a sexually charged culture

Matthew 5:27 - 30

3. Respect the marriage institution

Matthew 5:31 - 32

4. Remain integrous in the face of double standards

Matthew 5:33 – 37

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' 34 "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

- Jesus is challenging us to be a people of integrity in the middle of double standards.
- The word integrity comes from the word integri which means wholeness –
- It therefore derives from this meaning that integrity is the inner sense of "wholeness" deriving from qualities such as honesty and consistency of character.
- A person of integrity is the same in public as well as in private – what you see is what you get.
- Paul struggled with what Peter was doing – he was living a double standard and was creating confusion among believers.

Galatians 2:11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

SALT AND LIGHT LIVING – Architects of Culture Prt 2

- Paul teaches us on how to reproof or correct someone on issues of importance:
 - There must be a clear wrong done
 - It must be done openly, and with truthfulness.
 - The reproof must be addressed to the offender himself.
 - Do not undermine the influence and authority of the person by insults
 - It must be done timeously and frankly stating your views
- Paul exemplified what it means to speak the truth in love – Ephesians 4:15
- We have too many people who speak with a forked tongue, you don't know what they are really saying.
- Today we are in a society that lacks wholeness – people lie even on affidavits; people lie in courts of law.
- A good character is better than much wealth – people of character are people of their words. This stems from the condition of their heart – there is no amount of swearing that can make you a person of your word if your heart is not in the right place.
- That is why Jesus is saying let your light so shine for all to see your good deeds.

Proverbs 22:1 (NLT) - Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.

- We should be more careful to do that by which we may get and keep a good name than that by which we may gain wealth.

5. Maintain goodness in the face of evil

Matthew 5:38 – 41

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 'But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 'If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 'And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

- It is in the heart of a man to always want to level up and to pursue justice at all cost.
- Naturally we want to see justice done and yes, we must see that justice is done. However, it is possible to step over the line when we want to administer justice in our own ways.
- The context of this scripture was around personal interactions with people in your community – it was not in reference to major acts of criminality. It was with regards to personal insults, legal contention, forced labour and requests for gifts or loans.
- As a father, you cannot stand by when your family is under threat for instance.
- But surely if someone borrows a book and you have tried to get it back without success – what do you do.

SALT AND LIGHT LIVING – Architects of Culture Prt 2

- If your neighbour makes noise right through the night, do you ignore them the following morning.
- If someone jumps the queue in front of you, how do you handle that situation – there is a way to talk to people.

Colossians 4:5-6

5 Act wisely toward outsiders, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

- The bible further teaches us how to respond to evil

Romans 12:17-19 Living Bible (TLB)

17 Never pay back evil for evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honest clear through. 18 Don't quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone, just as much as possible. 19 Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it. Don't take the law into your own hands.

6. Give unconditional love in the face of fickleness/fake love

Matthew 5:43 - 46

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 'But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 'that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 'For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

- Jesus was talking about what He lived – He went to His own but His own rejected Him.
- In the middle of persecution, Jesus said “Father forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing”
- It is easy to love the loveable, to give to those who can give back, to forgive those who deserve to be forgiven.
- The calling of a Christian is to change the narrative – this happens when we love the unlovable, when we forgive those who don’t deserve forgiveness.
- In this world, people will love you if they know that they can get something from you –
- How do you show love towards your tormentors?
 - Speak blessings over them, both in their presence and in their absence
 - Extend acts of kindness towards them
 - Pray for them
- Jesus said our righteousness must go above the that of the pharisees and tax collectors. What is today’s tax collector and pharisees?

Matthew 5:20 (Living Bible)

SALT AND LIGHT LIVING – Architects of Culture Prt 2

20 *“But I warn you—unless your goodness is greater than that of the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders, you can’t get into the Kingdom of Heaven at all!”*

- Though the world is in a fallen but it can still recognise genuine love when it sees it. No one can resist genuine love.
- The world is starved of pure love – that is why it feels uncomfortable when it is shown the real deal.
- God so loved the world that He gave – we have experienced the love of God and the world wants a piece of it.
- The “love” I am referring to is agape love, a self-sacrificial love that works for the benefit of the loved one.
- Agape love is love without a hook

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 New International Version (NIV)

14 For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.