

05-14-17 – Christian: It’s Not What You Think! – Showing Up – Mt. 5:1-16

Happy Mother’s Day – Fact: Everyone has a mother – She may not be with us anymore, but we all have had a mother. Today is a day we are to honor our mothers. If we are married and have children, we are to honor our spouse and mother of our children. There are Mother’s Day cards to help us do just that.

My 3 Mother’s Day cards to Corinne these last three years...

Today’s sermon has nothing to do with Mother’s Day, but is the forth in our series called:

Christian: It’s Not What You Think! By Andy Stanley – Today’s Sermon – Showing Up! Mt. 5:1-16

We’ll take the Scripture in chunks, but first a little background that you have heard each week so far, so I’ll abbreviate it for you. And everyone said: AMEN!

There is no definition in the Bible for **Christian**, specifically. The word Christian only occurs 3 times in the Bible and each time it is used by those outside and mostly in a derogatory way. Jesus never called his followers Christians, in fact the term came into being way after His death. So now, here we are, Christians, and it means something different to virtually everyone you ask.

As we heard a few times already, Jesus called His followers **DISCIPLES**, which is defined. Here is the definition again for you to contemplate...

Jn. 13:34-35 - So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

A Godly Love for one another is the characteristic of a true disciple of Jesus – or learner of the Master.

Persecution took place under Nero ~65 AD.

Couldn’t stamp out this movement as small as it seemed because... They were serious to follow Jesus

He called them DISCIPLES not Christians – followers were being persecuted and killed

Within 300 years – Christianity would become the religion of the “world.”

Crosses were displayed everywhere in Rome – buildings – walls – everywhere – in honor of Jesus Christ.

How could something like this happen? Not because they decided to be Christians.

They took seriously Jesus’ teachings and the label He gave them – DISCIPLES

This small cult of Jesus followers made all the difference in the world. This band of followers of Jesus who many thought would bring political change, even military change – a militia – would not become what they thought it would become – Why Not?

They took seriously what Jesus taught them... So what did Jesus teach them?

He taught them not to rebel against governing authorities – BUT – to submit to governing authorities.

He taught them not to cheat the empire of unfair taxes, but to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's.

He taught them things contrary to what they expected and even what didn't make sense to them at the time.

A Disciple is a learner, so they needed to be taught. They didn't intend to set a world record, but that's exactly what they did.

Over time, they changed the world.

What did they do about all of this? What are we doing about all of this? Why would we settle for being Christians when we could be so much more?

Here is Jesus' speech that started this entire movement – This is the value system that would turn the world upside-down.

Mt. 5:1-12 - *One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ² and he began to teach them.*

What did He teach them? This would be the secret, revolutionary teaching that got the entire movement going. They expected a teaching that would bring deliverance from Roman oppression. Hundreds, maybe thousands gathered to hear what Jesus had to say.

³ *“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him—
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

⁴ *God blesses those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

⁵ *God blesses those who are humble,
for they will inherit the whole earth.*

⁶ *God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice
for they will be satisfied.*

⁷ *God blesses those who are merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

⁸ *God blesses those whose hearts are pure,
for they will see God.*

⁹ *God blesses those who work for peace,
for they will be called the children of God.*

¹⁰ *God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right,
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

¹¹ *“God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way. (NLT)*

Disciples – Teach them – Meek? – In their world – Peace-makers? – we want a revolution and you’re talking peace?

This is the start of something new? So – we are the: ...

POOR, SAD, MEEK, RIGHTEOUS, MERCIFUL, PURE, PEACEFUL, PERSECUTED, INSULTED PEOPLE WAITING FOR A REWARD IN HEAVEN.

What did this mean? But... 300 years later, Jesus would be the model – Crosses everywhere in Rome.

Mt. 5:13 - *“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.”* (NLT)

SALT is a preservative. What is a preservative? ...

A substance added to food to prevent decomposition due to chemical change or bacterial action.

Without a preservative things rot – things stink.

YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH – the preservative.

You are the preservative of the entire world.

You/we are the preservative of the earth...

If we give up – wait and see how bad things can get!

The world – human trafficking – slavery – etc. How can this be?

They (out there) don’t see this world the way you see it – they don’t see the world the way Jesus intended!

We all (men, women, children, etc.) are made in the image of God.

We were taught to see things the way we see them.

Jesus taught us to pray – Our Father – not Jupiter, not the pantheon of gods – but a personal God who loves us like a perfect Father.

Jesus said – “By this one thing, they will know you are My disciples... How you love one another.”

Mt. 5:14-15: *“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.
15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand,
where it gives light to everyone in the house. (NLT)*

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD – A town placed on a hill cannot be hidden.

You are a strategically placed entity.

NOT ME! I’m strategically placed where I am? I don’t think so. But it’s true.

If you are my follower, you ARE a strategically placed entity for God.

Mt. 5:16 - *In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

What we do for God makes all the difference.

Witness to our community – We are workers; we are bosses; we are church members; we are members of a gym, or a part of social media...

People will start to say about you... What’s up with this guy/gal?

Our actions outshine everything else. Who are we? What are we to be?

We are SALT and LIGHT – salt and light. Jesus said so.

We can’t speak to the world by preaching or teaching (that’s for the church – insiders) – We have to demonstrate our sincerity by our actions. How well do we love those around us?

We are to be SALT and LIGHT – How do you demonstrate this every day? How do I?

Don’t settle to be a “Christian.” Be Salt and Light!

This doesn’t mean we have to bow to everything that comes our way to be His disciples.

We may have to stand up to error or sin to show the world that we follow a different standard.

We may have to occasionally stand up for what is “right,” but..

You are a follower because someone was salt and light to you ... They didn't know it or tried to be, but they were. It was unintentional living that moved them toward you by divine appointment.

God puts us next to others – to be salt and light to them.

People influence our children and our families as salt and light.

We are the salt and light of all we come in contact with everywhere.

Salt Always Preserves and Light Always Shows the Way.

Jesus is saying, “You’re the world’s preservative. Without you, everything rots, and culture stinks.”

He also told them and us that we are the “light of the world,” like a city on a hilltop, visible all around, day or night. He was saying, you have been strategically placed – You are where you are by God’s design – it is not by accident or circumstances. It is part of God’s plan for you.

Wherever you are, “let your light shine before others, that they might see your good deeds and **glorify your Father** in heaven.” (5:10) It’s not about us and what people think about us. They shouldn’t be saying, “What a nice person.” It has to be more. They should see our good works as something so extraordinary that it has to be God not us.

Be salt; be light. Let your lifestyle point the way to Jesus.

Each of us has a story of how someone was salt and light to us, and that’s what led us to Jesus. That person may have not even known it, but that’s what they were. Salt and Light – to us.

Salt always preserves, and Light always shows the way. “Salt works even when you can’t see it working, and light illuminates even when you aren’t thinking about it.” (Andy Stanley).

“No matter where you are in your daily life, Jesus has you there as the salt and light of the world,” even if you don’t realize it; live so others can connect the dots between your lifestyle and God. It’s not good preaching, not good teaching, but a powerful life that always shows the way to Jesus.

Andy tells a story about a couple married for 45 years. He spoke to them about this successful marriage. She wanted to get out of her parent's house and married someone just to be free. She got pregnant, and her husband left her to move in with his girlfriend. She was devastated and very negative. She built walls around herself, so she would never to be hurt this way again... She delved into business to absorb herself in anything but relationships. Then she met Dave – a Christian man, and they hit it off. Dave had been praying to find a woman that he could help – and God answered his prayer. They got married, but it was another disaster. This went on for nine years. She said, she was so unhappy, she was not going to allow anyone else to be happy. (nice) – She tried to make everyone she was around be just as unhappy as she was. Dave resolved to be happy regardless of how his wife acted and felt. She was determined to make him unhappy for nine long years. She was so annoyed by his behavior but she would never share with him what was going on in her head. Inside she couldn't believe how he could maintain this inner joy. It lead her to a place where she realized this was bigger than she could understand. Because **Salt always preserves and Light always shows the way**. She finally broke and came to the end of herself. He just was who he knew God wanted him to be. She noticed – and it made the difference for her. They were married for 45 years. Because Salt always preserves, and Light always show the way.

So let's not settle to just be Christians, but to be Salt and Light to the world around us. Who is around us – who is around you – that may need a touch from God – a person who will reach out to them? Salt always preserves, and Light always shows the way.

Jesus said, "You are the Salt of the earth. You are the Light of the world."

So let us grasp this concept and allow God to use each of us to be salt and light in our world, community, work place, and be silent witnesses of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Conclusion: *Jesus gives us our identity and calling as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It's our privilege and obligation to be godly influences in the world through our loving acts of service. We're to live in such an extraordinary way that people are drawn to Jesus, the source of life.*

(Andy Stanley)

