

Salty Light



The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations – It is a picture of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is having His unhindered way with us.

(My Utmost for His Highest, July 25)

Several years ago, about the time we came here, our son became a volunteer firefighter in a small community just north of Tacoma, Washington.

There were several things he did in order to qualify to be a member of their team.

He began by taking an EMT course at the local Community College and started volunteering at the local Emergency Room.

He had to take numerous test – both mental and physical – to demonstrate his ability to handle the job. Once accepted, he took specialized driver’s training so he could drive a firetruck or ambulance.

Imagine what would happen if their team – all trained and ready – refused to go out on a call. They didn’t want to get their clean truck or their clean uniforms dirty. And, they thought it might just be too dangerous.

So, they answered the phone, carefully wrote down the information, but never left the station. They just sat around, played cards, told jokes, and – occasionally – worked out and took more training.

How valuable would they be to their community?

Salt

Jesus said to His followers:

“You are the salt of the earth ...” (Matthew 5:13, NLT)

Salt is something we don’t give too much thought to.

For us, it’s just a matter of finding the saltshaker. Sometimes our health forces us to think more about it, but generally we pretty much take for granted that we will have all we need – it’s not even expensive, unless you’re into the exotic varieties.

In ancient days, salt was more valuable than gold. It was one of the few ways to preserve meat – refrigerators are a fairly modern convenience.

The country that controlled the salt, always had the upper hand. Although it is seldom spoken of in our history classes, more wars have been fought over the control of salt than for any other reason.

It is also essential to life. If you don't have enough salt in your system, your body can shut down. Too much salt is also a problem.

Not only is it essential, it makes many foods easier to eat. It effects how things taste and can help enhance the flavor.

Jesus is telling us we are extremely valuable and have the ability to make a huge difference in our world.

Light

Jesus then said:

"You are the light of the world ..." ([Matthew 5:14](#), NLT)

We don't give light too much thought either, unless we don't have it.

Light is the most important element of life on our planet. The first thing God did in the creation story was to create light. (See [Genesis 1:1-5](#).)

On our planet, light from the sun is **the** source of energy for living things. It is converted and stored as energy in plants, the foundation of our food chain. Plants are eaten by animals who in turn are eaten by other animals – passing the energy on.

If the sun stopped shining, life on this earth as we know it would disappear.

Jesus was once again telling us how important we are to the spiritual life of this world.

The Christian Life

In the last sermon in this series, we looked what we commonly call *The Beatitudes* – those early sayings in the *Sermon on the Mount* that begin with "You are blessed ..." ([Click here](#) to read it.)

We noticed that each of these statements give us a picture of the stages of growth we go through as Christians. And all together they help us understand what a life totally committed to Jesus will look like.

The next thing Jesus said was:

"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.

"You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 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. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:13-16, NLT)

He showed us what a life with Him should look like and then He expressed the importance of this life to the world.

So, what can we learn from this passage?

1. **Both salt and light are the result of natural forces at work.** Both salt and light are the result of an outside force at work. Salt is formed through a chemical reaction. Light must have a source. How bright it shines depends on the strength of its source. We can only be salt and light as the forces of God's love and strength are active in our lives. It happens through a force outside of ourselves. (See [Jeremiah 31:33-34](#), [Ezekiel 36:26-27](#), and [Ephesians 2:8-10](#).)
2. **Salt acts as a preservative.** The presence of God's people in the world holds back the judgements of God against a sinful society giving more people and opportunity to experience God. (See the story of Abraham and Sodom & Gomorrah – [Genesis 18:16-33](#).)
3. **Light reveals the real condition of things:** When something is seen in the light, you can tell if it is good or not so good. The light of the purity of life Jesus gives us as we draw near to Him will reveal to others where they stand. It will show their need for Jesus and they may react by wanting to know more or by wanting to stop the light so their sin is not clearly seen. This will lead to people coming to Jesus or Jesus' followers being opposed and persecuted. (See [John 1:1-5](#), [John 8:12](#), [Philippians 2:14-15](#), and [1 John 2:3-11](#).)
4. **Neither salt or light does any good unless it is in contact with the world.** Salt in a salt-shaker or light that is covered up makes no difference to anything or anyone – it's essentially useless. It's like the firefighters who are all trained and ready, but never leave the station. We must be in contact with the world if we're going to make any difference in it. (See [Matthew 28:18-20](#), [John 13:34-35](#), and [John 17:15-19](#).)

What Now?

When Jesus used salt and light to illustrate what you and I should be to the world, He is referencing the same two senses – taste and sight – that David used in [Psalm 34](#):

Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! Fear the LORD, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need. (Psalm 34:8-9, NLT)

This is how you become salt and light to the world. You look at Jesus and take Him into your life. This is simply saying something we have often said – The only way you can grow spiritually is to spend regular time looking at and communicating with Jesus. And then, following Him wherever He may lead you.

As you do this openly, God will use your life as an exhibit of His love and care. He will use you to attract others to Him.

He wants your life to leave a “good taste” with the people you interact with. And then, as they look closer at you, He wants them to get a clearer picture of Jesus and be attracted to Him.

Of course we know that Jesus is the real Light of the world (see [John 1:1-5](#) and [John 8:12](#)). But, for some reason, He has chosen to shine this light through us. His chosen method of scattering His light to the world is through your life and mine.

This means that your life as His follower may be the only picture of God some people see.

He has chosen to make you and me this important to the plan of salvation!

The only way you and I can do this is to

Taste and see that the LORD is good ... (Psalm 34:8-10, NLT)

If you will do this every day, the salt and light God puts in you will find its way to the people you are around and it will help them to see God clearly.

Taste and see that the LORD is good ... (Psalm 34:8-10, NLT)

Notes

Text you find in [this color](#) is a link to more information. It may take you to the Bible verse in context and/or in several different translations utilizing [BibleGateway.com](#). In some cases, it may take you to a website where there is additional information. And, it may take you to a PDF copy of previous sermons in this series.

Previous Sermons in this Series

- July 20, 2019: [Seek Ye First \(The Sermon, Part 1\)](#)
- July 27, 2019: [Blessed \(The Sermon, Part 2\)](#)

Scripture References

Psalm 34:1-22 (NLT): *I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. ²I will boast only in the LORD; let all who are helpless take heart. ³Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness; let us exalt his name together.*

⁴I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. ⁵Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. ⁶In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles. ⁷For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.

*⁸**Taste and see that the LORD is good.** Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! ⁹Fear the LORD, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need. ¹⁰Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will lack no good thing.*

¹¹Come, my children, and listen to me, and I will teach you to fear the LORD. ¹²Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? ¹³Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! ¹⁴Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

¹⁵The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help.

¹⁶But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil; he will erase their memory from the earth. ¹⁷The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. ¹⁸The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

¹⁹The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time. ²⁰For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken!

²¹Calamity will surely destroy the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

²²But the LORD will redeem those who serve him. No one who takes refuge in him will be condemned. (Psalm 34:1-22, NLT – emphasis mine)

Psalm 37:1-7 (NLT): Don't worry about the wicked or envy those who do wrong. ² For like grass, they soon fade away. Like spring flowers, they soon wither.

³ Trust in the LORD and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. ⁴ Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires.

⁵ Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you. ⁶ He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.

⁷ Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. (Psalm 37:1-7, NLT)

Psalm 147:7-11 (NIV): Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp.

⁸ He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills.

⁹ He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.

¹⁰ His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of the warrior; ¹¹ the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

(Psalm 147:7-11, NIV)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NIV): "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

³³ **"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.** ³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34, NIV – emphasis mine)

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT): And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

(Ezekiel 36:26-27, NLT)

Matthew 5 – 7 (NLT): 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.

The Beatitudes

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.

Teaching about Salt and Light

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.

¹⁴ "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. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Teaching about the Law

¹⁷ "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

²⁰ "But I warn you – unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

Teaching about Anger

²¹ "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' (Exodus 20:13) ²² But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

²³ "So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, ²⁴ leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

²⁵ “When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶ And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.

Teaching about Adultery

²⁷ “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ (Exodus 20:14)

²⁸ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ So if your eye – even your good eye – causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your hand – even your stronger hand – causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Teaching about Divorce

³¹ “You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’ (Deuteronomy 24:1) ³² But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

Teaching about Vows

³³ “You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’ (Numbers 30:2) ³⁴ But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. ³⁵ And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black. ³⁷ Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

Teaching about Revenge

³⁸ “You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21) ³⁹ But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. ⁴¹ If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. ⁴² Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.

Teaching about Love for Enemies

⁴³ “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ (Leviticus 19:18) and hate your enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the

good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. ⁴⁶ If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷ If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. ⁴⁸ But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Teaching about Giving to the Needy

6 *“Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. ² When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do – blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. ³ But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴ Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

Teaching about Prayer and Fasting

⁵ *“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. ⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

⁷ *“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸ Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹ Pray like this:*

Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today the food we need, ¹² and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. ¹³ And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

¹⁴ *“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

¹⁶ *“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷ But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸ Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

Teaching about Money and Possessions

¹⁹ *“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.*

²² “Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. ²³ But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

²⁵ “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?

²⁶ Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

²⁸ “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, ²⁹ yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

³¹ “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

³⁴ “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Do Not Judge Others

7 “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. ² For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

³ “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? ⁴ How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

⁶ “Don’t waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don’t throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.

Effective Prayer & the Golden Rule

⁷ “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ “You parents – if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰ Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹ So if you sinful people know how

to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

¹² “Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

The Narrow Gate

¹³ “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. ¹⁴ But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

The Tree and Its Fruit

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. ¹⁶ You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. ¹⁹ So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

True Disciples

²¹ “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. ²² On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ ²³ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

Building on a Solid Foundation

²⁴ “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵ Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶ But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷ When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

²⁸ When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ for he taught with real authority – quite unlike their teachers of religious law. (**Matthew 5 – 7**, NLT)

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT): Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (**Matthew 11:28-30**, NLT)

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT): *Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18-20, NLT)

Luke 6:20-29 (NLT): *Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said,*

"God blesses you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours.

²¹ *God blesses you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied.*

God blesses you who weep now, for in due time you will laugh.

²² *What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. ²³ When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.*

Sorrows Foretold

²⁴ *"What sorrow awaits you who are rich, for you have your only happiness now.*

²⁵ *What sorrow awaits you who are fat and prosperous now, for a time of awful hunger awaits you.*

What sorrow awaits you who laugh now, for your laughing will turn to mourning and sorrow.

²⁶ *What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds, for their ancestors also praised false prophets.*

Love for Enemies

²⁷ *"But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.*

²⁸ *Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. ³⁰ Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. ³¹ Do to others as you would like them to do to you.*

³² *"If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! ³³ And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! ³⁴ And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return.*

³⁵ *"Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. ³⁶ You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.*

Do Not Judge Others

³⁷ “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full – pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

³⁹ Then Jesus gave the following illustration: “Can one blind person lead another? Won’t they both fall into a ditch? ⁴⁰ Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

⁴¹ “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? ⁴² How can you think of saying, ‘Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

The Tree and Its Fruit

⁴³ “A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. ⁴⁴ A tree is identified by its fruit. Figs are never gathered from thornbushes, and grapes are not picked from bramble bushes. ⁴⁵ A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

Building on a Solid Foundation

⁴⁶ “So why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say? ⁴⁷ I will show you what it’s like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. ⁴⁸ It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built. ⁴⁹ But anyone who hears and doesn’t obey is like a person who builds a house right on the ground, without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins.” (Luke 6:20-29, NLT)

Luke 11:1-13 (NLT): Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

² Jesus said, “This is how you should pray:

“Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. ³ Give us each day the food we need, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation.”

⁵ Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, ⁶ ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ ⁷ And suppose he calls out from his

bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.'⁸ But I tell you this – though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

⁹ "And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ "You fathers – if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? ¹² Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! ¹³ So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." (Luke 11:1-13, NLT)

Luke 11:34-36 (NLT): "No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be seen by all who enter the house.

³⁴ "Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when it is unhealthy, your body is filled with darkness. ³⁵ Make sure that the light you think you have is not actually darkness. ³⁶ If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight were filling you with light." (Luke 11:34-36, NLT)

Luke 12:22-34 (NLT): Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. ²⁴ Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! ²⁵ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁶ And if worry can't accomplish a little thing like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things?

²⁷ "Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ²⁸ And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

²⁹ "And don't be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don't worry about such things. ³⁰ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. ³¹ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need.

³² "So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

³³ "Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can

steal it and no moth can destroy it. ³⁴ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Luke 12:22-34, NLT)

Luke 12:57-59 (NLT): “Why can’t you decide for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸ When you are on the way to court with your accuser, try to settle the matter before you get there. Otherwise, your accuser may drag you before the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, who will throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ And if that happens, you won’t be free again until you have paid the very last penny.” (Luke 12:57-59, NLT)

John 6:28-29 (NLT): They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?” Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:28-29, NLT)

John 13:34-35 (NLT): 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.” (John 13:34-35, NLT)

John 17:1-26 (NLT): After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. ² For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. ³ And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. ⁴ I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

⁶ “I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, ⁸ for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

⁹ “My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. ¹⁰ All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. ¹¹ Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. ¹² During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

¹³ “Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. ¹⁴ I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ **I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.** ¹⁶ **They do not belong to this world any more than I do.** ¹⁷ **Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which**

is truth. ¹⁸ *Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.* ¹⁹ *And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.*

²⁰ *"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.* ²¹ *I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one – as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.*

²² *"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.* ²³ *I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.* ²⁴ *Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!*

²⁵ *"O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me.* ²⁶ *I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."* (John 17:1-26, NLT – emphasis mine)

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT): *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.* (Romans 12:1-2, NLT)

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT): *Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All 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.*** (Ephesians 2:1-10, NLT – emphasis mine)

Philippians 4:4-7 (NLT): *Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again – rejoice! ⁵ Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.*

⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

([Philippians 4:4-7](#), NLT)

Philippians 4:4-7 (the Message): Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life. ([Philippians 4:4-7](#), the Message)

E.G. White Resources

To get some additional insights into the Sermon on the Mount, you may find the book [Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings](#) helpful, as well as the [Desire of Ages, Chapter 31](#).

Other Resources

My Utmost for His Highest, by Oswald Chambers, [Am I Blessed Like This? \(July 25\)](#): Blessed are ...
([Matthew 5:3-12](#))

When we first read the statements of Jesus, they seem wonderfully simple and unstartling, and they sink unnoticed into our subconscious minds. For instance, the Beatitudes initially seem to be merely soothing and beautiful precepts for overly spiritual and seemingly useless people, but of very little practical use in the rigid, fast-paced workdays of the world in which we live. We soon find, however, that the Beatitudes contain the "dynamite" of the Holy Spirit. And they "explode" when the circumstances of our lives cause them to do so. When the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance one of the Beatitudes, we say, "What a startling statement that is!" Then we must decide whether or not we will accept the tremendous spiritual upheaval that will be produced in our circumstances if we obey His words. That is the way the Spirit of God works. We do not need to be born again to apply the Sermon on the Mount literally. The literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount is as easy as child's play. But the interpretation by the Spirit of God as He applies our Lord's statements to our circumstances is the strict and difficult work of a saint.

The teachings of Jesus are all out of proportion when compared to our natural way of looking at things, and they come to us initially with astonishing discomfort. We gradually have to conform our walk and conversation to the precepts of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit applies them to our circumstances. The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations – It is a picture of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is having His unhindered way with us. ([My Utmost for His Highest, Am I Blessed Like This? – July 25](#))