

Sermon Reflections

The Difference Heaven Makes (Matthew 5:11-16)

Summary: Our lives on earth must testify to the transforming work of our Father in heaven.

1. We need to demonstrate a joy that looks to heaven (vv. 11-12)

- In verses 5:11-12, Jesus begins to *personalize* his Sermon on the Mount message by the repeated use of the word “you.” Do these expressions of “you” apply to us?
- Read 1 Peter 4:14; God’s promise of “blessings” come at a personal cost. What are the words used to describe this “cost”? In light of v.10, do you think it’s worth the “cost”?
- How is James 1:2-4 helpful in understanding the joyful promise made to us in Matthew 5:12? In light of our temporary existence, does this future hope instill joy in you?

2. Preserve the Heavenly that remains on earth (v. 13)

- Take note of the word “you” again and read through the other Gospel renderings of the word “saltiness” found in Mark 9:50 and Luke 14:34-35. Consider: At some point, we have all lacked this saltiness within our walk of faith. When looking back on these particular times or perhaps a particular incident, why do you think you lacked this “saltiness”? What value does Jesus give to your *lack* of saltiness?
- What are His commands to us from the verses in Luke and Mark? How might a humble attitude help us to better preserve our “saltiness” – especially within our interpersonal relationships?

3. Do good that points to your Father in heaven (vv. 14-16)

- Keeping in mind that v. 14 begins with “you,” what are you being compared to? Carefully consider: What is the importance of Jesus using the word “city” and the link to you ... why do you think He chose the word “city” versus say “town” or “village”? Is there any significance? Why or why not?
- It is clear in verse 15 that our faith is not to be hidden. In a sinful world filled with ungodliness, does God give you the option to withdraw and pull away from society? Why or why not?
- In v.16, to whom are the good works you do to be clearly visible (hint: see v.14)? What is your ultimate purpose as a believer ... and does it include a strong desire for others – believer and non-believer – to give glory to your Father? With this ultimate purpose in mind, does “give glory to your Father in Heaven” make the first part of the verse “let your light shine” a command?