

Matthew 19-05-19a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're conscious of your presence, whether you are here or there, and it is a wonderful thing to have the communion of the saints and to have the shared enthusiasm that we have as a group for the Lord Jesus and God our Father, the presence and ministry of God's Holy Spirit and the wonderful truths of God's Word. And these are the things that define us, that direct us, that give us purpose, that give us a sense of momentum and destiny.

Without those things that God has provided to us, we would be of all people most miserable. We are going to continue on this 19th day of May, 2019, in the Gospel of Matthew, in chapter 5, we will be picking up in verses 13 through 16, where the Lord Jesus discusses salt and light. We saw the Beatitudes, as they have been called, or this introductory section of what has historically been known as the Sermon on the Mount.

I think it's better termed perhaps the Teaching on the Hill. This is for the disciples, those who were willing to climb a little higher to hear a more in-depth presentation of the teaching of the Lord Jesus than those who were simply willing to wander into the plain or sit down on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. You had to climb to hear some of these things, and they are consequently more susceptible to misinterpretation or misapplication or just general confusion.

And so we're hoping to not be confused as we look at them together. And we have quite a bit to say on that front, but we'll be focusing this morning on the salt and light section, as I said, Matthew 5, 13 through 16. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study and we'll get started.

Father, it is such a wonderful privilege to know that there are believers that share our hunger and thirst for your truth, for your good estimation of our service, our desire to live our lives in a way that pleases you despite our failures and our seemingly ever-present shortcomings. By your grace, we can be cleansed, we can be renewed, we are restored, and we are energized for learning and for growth and for more fully following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our goal. We thank you for him and for his work on the cross.

We thank you for his life and example in showing us that human beings can in fact live in the light of your word and the power of your spirit. And we're anxious to follow that example and to take up our cross and follow the Lord Jesus in that way. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word this morning that your Holy Spirit will guide us to a right understanding and impress it on our hearts in such a way that it will make a positive effect on our thoughts and actions in the time that remains to us in this life.

We pray for those who are traversing difficult terrain and are facing challenges. We pray

for those who are in a period of prosperity and blessing. In either case, we are challenged to maintain our focus and our eyes on the Lord Jesus, who as the author and finisher of our faith has showed us the way to keep our eyes on the joy that is set before us to endure whatever comes our way in this life and prepare ourselves for eternal service and function in your kingdom.

We pray that this passage will contribute to that goal, our understanding of it, and our endeavor to make application. And we pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's begin by reading our passage. You'll remember that the first section, the blessed are the, and then the various categories here in verses 3 through 12, began by looking at the third-person people. We've seen this in the Psalms, where the psalmist would look at those who were dedicating themselves to God and endeavoring to live their lives to please Him, and recognizing the virtue in that and expressing a desire to be one of that number.

And in the same way, the Lord Jesus presents here the poor in spirit who are possessors of the kingdom. We've talked about the general meaning of this and its universal application. It is never a bad thing to recognize the poverty of our own resources, the inadequacy of our own internal equipment.

We are conceived in iniquity, born in sin. We have a propensity to go our own way, to trust our own judgment, to leave behind things that we ought to know better. But the key to success is similar to that of a person suffering from other kinds of addiction, and that is to acknowledge our inadequacy in and of ourselves.

And this is to be poor. The parallel saying over in Luke on a different occasion, Jesus simply says, blessed are the poor. Here He says poor in spirit.

He's saying the same thing in both places. It's a little bit more clear here because it is recognizing our need, recognizing, acknowledging our need. Not only that, but going to the source where it can be remedied.

You can recognize that you have a problem. That's a great first step, but it's not the only step. Recognizing the problem does not solve it.

It is the first step in solving it. I have been trying to figure out how to make a lawnmower run properly. It acts funny.

Sometimes it will start and run for a short while, and then it just quits. And to fix the thing, you have to first of all identify what the problem is. The three things that make a standard small engine run are, most any gasoline engine, are fuel, spark, and air.

And so you begin by saying, well, do I have a spark? Troubleshoot for that. See if the mechanism is sending electricity to the spark plug and pulses that are appropriate to

ignite the fuel-air mixture. Then you check the air cleaner and the path for air and see if the choke is working properly so that you have the right air.

And then look at your fuel supply. Check, and in this case, replace the fuel filter. And keep working that problem and checking those things until the thing begins to run.

But you have to know where the problem is to fix it. And I freely admit there is a lawnmower problem. I don't have any problem acknowledging that.

We typically don't have a problem recognizing poverty in ourselves, in our inner resources, our inner guidance system, and our judgment and so on. But that is not enough. There are many possible solutions that are offered.

Just check the Internet. If you have a problem and you go to the Internet, you will find all kinds of solutions being offered. It might be herbal.

It might be procedures on a DIY site, do-it-yourself site. It might be a YouTube video. And many times they are at cross purposes and completely different approaches and contradictory remedies.

Go to the doctor. No, don't go to the doctor. Take an herbal remedy.

No, that's all quackery. Try this. No, that never works.

Try this. I saw somebody make a farcical YouTube video where how do you get into a locked car using a tennis ball or a lemon or some such thing. And they were just showing, you know, people have got some answer for everything.

And it's not necessarily effective. And by the way for the tennis ball thing, they said how to unlock your car using a tennis ball. And they said cut a slot in the tennis ball.

And then they stuck their key in the slot and used it to unlock the door. So it's, you know, they were being facetious. And we need to understand here that when Jesus says blessed are the poor in spirit, it isn't just recognizing the poverty, but in the spiritual realm recognizing that and going to the source of the answer which is God.

Right? You can't just say, I mean, Gandhi might have thought he was poor in spirit. That didn't get him anywhere. Why can Jesus not explain this more fully or why does he not need to explain it more fully? Who has climbed up to listen to him give this instruction? It is the disciples.

It's not the crowd at large. He doesn't have to explain this because the people listening to him are the people who already understand that. And hopefully we are in that number.

So we saw that in the last week or two, blessed are the poor in spirit. They possess the

kingdom of heaven. Those who mourn shall be comforted.

It doesn't say they are comforted now. They are still mourning. Their comfort is future.

Those who are poor in spirit currently possess the kingdom. But there's a lot of things you can possess. You can spend money on Amazon and you own a thing, but you don't have it yet until the free two-day shipping kicks in and somebody delivers it on your porch.

I understand now they've got drones delivering Amazon packages. While I'm digressing, let me just say that I was amused by a second report. This is the second time I've seen a report.

You know how people think they have a better idea and progress is always good and modernity and the new youthful solution is always better than the old tried and true? I saw again last night even in the city of Tulsa and I saw a similar report down in Dallas. You know how it used to be public transportation, you hire a taxi and they used to have trolleys or the city provides transportation. Then some years ago they started providing these bicycles that you can just pick up and ride somewhere and drop them off.

You just leave them in place. That was a pretty good solution that you would see them everywhere in downtown. Saves traffic, reduces pollution.

It's a convenience and that was working great. But of course you can't leave well enough alone because now they've got little electric razor scooters and you can make money off of those because you can swipe your credit card and have an app on your phone and your phone will show you where they are and where the nearest one is and you get it and you swipe your card and you pay and then you go somewhere. Well, think about the difference between a scooter with wheels the size of hockey pucks versus a bicycle with air filled tires and so on.

Think of the maintenance, think of is it charged. You know, with my luck I would buy mine, I would go 14 feet and the thing would die because it hasn't been on the charger in two days. But here's the biggest thing.

The little scooters, the injury rate and the emergency room visits for people using those have skyrocketed. People are getting concussions, they're breaking arms, they're having abrasions and bruises because the little things are hard to control. What happens if you hit even a small curb or ledge with those smaller wheels? You are going to keep going and it is going to stop.

It has virtually no mass of its own. It's got no ability to climb anything bigger than a small rock and so injuries are all over the place and they're scratching their heads saying what can we do about all of these injuries and people want to sue the city for its contract with the scooter providers. What's the matter with the bicycle? Bicycles were fine but bicycles

are old.

They're not trendy. You can't use an app with a bicycle and such. Well, new ways are not always the best ways and there's all kinds of new ways to try to solve problems.

The only way that actually solves poverty of spirit and the hunger and thirst for righteousness is God, going to God. That's where the solution is. Neither is there deliverance in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be delivered.

Anytime you see salvation, try just substituting deliverance to get a little bit of a fresh take because the Bible seldom talks about heaven and hell salvation. It most often talks about deliverance. We need deliverance from ourselves.

We need deliverance from each other. We need deliverance from being enmeshed and overcome by circumstance, by things that are beyond our control. Deliverance is in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because He is the way to the Father and He is the sender of the Spirit.

Relationship with God in three persons, blessed Trinity, is genuine deliverance. That's where it comes from. We saw all of that last time.

I'm not going to review all of it, but you saw him shift from the third person looking at the category of those who are challenged in various ways to the second person, blessed are you, when men revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Falsely is an important clue there. If men are speaking evil of you because you are really a rascal, you're in need of a different teaching set.

But he says rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Exceedingly glad is a wonderful word. It comes from *ana* plus a Greek word that means to dance and it means to leap up, to dance around by bobbing into the air.

That's rejoicing. If people are talking bad about you and it makes you want to dance a jig, that's the level of joy. It's just exuberant celebration.

Celebrate exuberantly when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Two qualifiers there, not because you've done something dumb, but because you are adhering to your faith under adversity and you're falsely accused of doing it for other reasons. Rejoice and celebrate exuberantly for great is your reward in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

And one thing I did not point out last time as we move forward into verse 13, at the end of verse 12, why does Jesus say this? Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, that's what they did to the prophets before you. There's a lot of people that have suffered unjustly or unfairly or been persecuted because they were doing what God wanted them to do. Why

does Jesus single out the prophets? What was the function of the prophet? He is a representative of God on earth.

He is a representative of God and he has a message from God to surrounding people. In the Old Testament, who was that message to? Sort of a trick question. A lot of the prophets address Edom and Moab and surrounding nations, but did they go to Moab and Edom and surrounding nations and deliver that message? Who did the prophets talk to in the Old Testament? With the exception of Jonah going to Nineveh, the prophets without exception prophesied to God's people in Israel, right? And what did they get for their trouble from their fellow people of God? Persecution, denigration.

The point being this can come from within and when Jesus says, blessed are you, rejoice and be exceedingly glad, when they say all kinds of evil, who is they? He's not saying if the Greeks or the Romans, some Roman soldier mocks you for righteousness sake, for my name sake, who is it? Who's the they? It's their fellow Jews, their fellow Israelites. It could be family members, it could be neighbors. If they accept who Jesus is and what he says, they can expect persecution and this is persecution for my sake, capital M. So there are people of God in Israel and then there are people who are following the Lord Jesus and the other people are going to bad mouth them for it.

That's what they did to the prophets who had a similar relationship. There are the people and then there are the actual spiritual people of God. You know, all children of Abraham are not the seed, it's those who follow in faith like Isaac and Jacob did.

So that's important to understand as we come into verse 13. So they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Those who are doing what they do for the sake of the Lord Jesus are a much smaller number than those who claim to be people of God.

Those who may be people of God but are not living like it, are not pursuing it, are not pressing on that narrow road trying to go through the straight gate that leads to life. Wide is the gate and broad is the way. You remember that.

So they persecuted the prophets who were before you. They were persecutors. Why did they persecute the prophets? More so than other people who might also have had a heart for God and wanted to live their life to please God in Old Testament days.

Why did they persecute the prophets? Why does Jesus single out the prophets? What was the function of the prophets? To represent God and communicate His word. What is your function? Fill in your name here. My oft quoted Admiral Stockdale introduction to himself.

Remember that? He was Ross Perot's vice presidential pick and in the first vice presidential debate the other guy spoke first. Then they turned the camera on Admiral Stockdale. You remember the first words out of his mouth? Who am I and why am I here?

It's a great question.

Who am I and why am I here? Well you and I are here for the same reason that God sent the prophets to Israel. If we do our job we're going to get the same reception from time to time. The prophets weren't universally and constantly persecuted, but there were occasions and times where they stood up as representatives and they said their piece and they got dropped into miry cisterns.

Read Hebrews 11, the latter part of that chapter after all of the notables. Time fails to tell me of others who were sought into and of whom the world was not worthy. Well the reason Jesus mentions the prophets here is that's our job.

I'm going away, but I will send you a comforter. Why? Because you are now my body on the earth. My short term corporeal body that went to the cross and was resurrected is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

The representation of the Lord Jesus on earth is you and me. And you can expect that if we do our job right, if we represent the Lord Jesus and His Word the way the prophets did the Lord God in heaven in Old Testament days, from time to time and at specific occasions and certain circumstances you are going to get the reception of those prophets. There were some times when prophets were honored.

What did Jesus say about the honor of prophets? A prophet is not without honor unless he's with his own, his own family, his own town. Remember that? That's the way they treated the prophets. Well that idea of representation of God and communication of God's truth is the subject there, isn't it? Does that seem pretty clear? Well now look at verse 13.

We're going to read 13 through 16. Think about this idea of representation and communication. If you represent and you communicate, your presence makes a difference and it's not on your own behalf.

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. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify the one you represent, the one for whom you communicate, just like a prophet. You can see the connection here. They say, oh well, the Beatitudes end in verse 12 and now we have the similitudes and you are this and you are that and these are metaphorical mini-parables and such.

This is stitched together much as we saw the beautiful union in Psalm 119 when you go from the letter HE to the letter WAU. Although the first five letters have a function and

then a new kind of symmetry and a new kind of structural beauty begins with the letter WAU. There is this transition and this unbreakable bond between those two letters, those 16 verses.

They connect and they unite and they have this symmetry so that you can't separate it. Same thing here. If you want to understand salt and light, and trust me when I tell you there have been such a, there are as many interpretations of you or the salt of the earth as there are grains of salt in the salt shaker on that table in there.

People, let me just read you a few of these right quick and see if any of these are your last known recognition and understanding. There were so many articles I could not canvass them all so I restricted myself just to Bibliotheca Sacra, which is the theological journal of Dallas Seminary, my old school. And I can't even tell you all of these.

But of 14 results in 14 articles, no two say the same thing. So in volume 92 there is an article on will the church pass through the tribulation and the application of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The believers of this age, as of every age, are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, our passage.

And so if there's going to be darkness then the salt and the light must be gone. So it's an article for the pre-tribulation rapture, an article arguing in that way. There is an article in volume 106 on church reform in the late Middle Ages, teaching the word of God to common people so that they read it, live it, and spread it.

They were the salt of the earth in an age of immorality and sin. They were the tillers of the soil out of which the light was supposed to spread and shine and so on. And so this is a social influence observation that it should have made a difference in the morality of the time.

There is an article on the teachings of Christ incarnate and there is one on perspectives on social ethics, Christ's teaching on social ethics. There is one on missions, missions in cultural perspectives. As salt of the earth and light of the world, the church must continuously and energetically pursue missions.

Another one is talking about metaphors of spiritual reality, metaphors of purpose. Two specific metaphors of our purpose and function are given here. And there's another article on the new man and immoral society.

And of course the idea is clear that it's something to do with light shining in darkness, something to do with the unpalatable being made more tasty or the quickly spoiling being preserved by the presence of salt. That's sort of the big idea. But you can take that and run, you can advance in almost any direction.

It's like they said in the, over in Korea when they were surrounded, they told the commanding officer they were surrounded. He said, well great, we can advance in any

direction. This is a good thing.

And that's what people tend to do with this. So my question to you is what do we do with this? Because there is also a strong argument to be made and this, one of the articles I mentioned in BibSAC here, the one about the teachings of Christ incarnate makes a powerful case which you may have heard before, I've certainly heard before that this whole section is teachings of the kingdom and that they don't apply specifically now. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

Well, don't expect that now. That's going to be a future fulfillment and that's something for the kingdom. And theirs is the kingdom.

You start with the very first one, blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Well, the kingdom of heaven is the millennial kingdom, kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God. These are the millennial kingdom.

And so these are, look at the audience. Jesus is in the Old Testament age talking to Old Testament saints, the disciples that have come up. And so you can't take these to the bank as a church age believer because we have a new destiny founded on new and better promises.

You've got to look at this dispensationally and be careful about appropriating them when Jesus is speaking to Jews in the Old Testament age of Israel. And he is presenting the kingdom and saying here's how you get ready for the kingdom and if you are this way, here are your promises. And this article makes a strong case for that.

In fact, I'll just read you a paragraph here. This sermon opens with a proclamation of the blessedness of those who in personal merit meet certain requirements. To the poor in spirit there is promise of the kingdom of heaven.

Listen now, the Davidic messianic earthly millennial kingdom. The agencies of human authority will not then prevail in that kingdom. A vast change will have come over this world when the humble in spirit will be honored by the possession of the kingdom.

Through Isaiah, Jehovah anticipated this priceless characteristic when he said, this is Isaiah 66, two, for all those things hath mine hand made and all those things have been, saith the Lord, but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word. Isaiah 66, two. Those that mourn shall be comforted.

Doubtless this is a constant provision throughout that glorious age, but it is especially true that Israel, when saved into that kingdom, will be saved from that mourning which is theirs in the tribulation. The king himself at his second advent will comfort all that mourn. And this is a quote from Isaiah 61, two and three.

He, the king, will appoint unto them that mourn in Zion to give unto them beauty for

ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Again, Isaiah 61, two and three. This mourning is described by Christ when in relation to his return he said, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Of course, that's Matthew 24, verse 30. Matthew 24 is the great description of the tribulation and the Lord Jesus' second coming, not the rapture. Of the meek Christ said that they shall inherit the earth.

This again is far removed from the earth conditions of today. The meek and poor in spirit arise to honor and to authority over men, but such a reward does not concern the Christian who has no right or citizenship on the earth. This is the author talking here in this article.

Let me say that again. This is how I was taught. The meek and poor in spirit arise to honor and authority over men, but such a reward does not concern the Christian who has no right or citizenship on the earth.

It would be thought-provoking if Christians who repeat the Decalogue and the Beatitudes with application to themselves should be required to designate, quote, the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, Exodus 20, or to defend their title to the earth. An instructed believer is not looking for long life. He is waiting for his Lord from heaven.

He is not looking for a land or a place in the earth. His citizenship is in heaven. The Jew alone can respond to the promise of Psalm 37.3, which reads, Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

The meek among Israel shall inherit the earth. Hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be the experience of those in the kingdom upon whose hearts Jehovah has written his law. See Deuteronomy 30, verse 6. See Jeremiah 31, verse 33.

And that hunger and thirst shall be satisfied. This is the promised tranquility of the children of the king. The proclamation that the merciful shall obtain mercy introduces one of the strongest contrasts between the governing principles of law and grace.

And the persistent determination to retain this portion of this discourse as applicable to the Christian has, next to Matthew 6.12, wrought more confusion among believers than almost any other misapplied scripture. Matthew 6.12 is, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. A subject unto itself will be there soon.

So you can probably find this article online or whatever. What is the upshot of this? Have you ever heard that the Sermon on the Mount in general and the Beatitudes in particular are kingdom preaching, Jesus presenting the kingdom to Israel and it is not directly applicable to us because we're in a different dispensation in the same way that we would

argue the Ten Commandments. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy does not specifically and literally apply to us even though we are about to see Jesus say something that would argue to the contrary.

Aren't we? We just read 13-17, I'm sorry, yeah, 13-16, but look at verse 17, just skip down below the section we're looking at this morning. Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

For, as it would say in the King James, verily, assuredly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, one yod or one tittle will by no means pass from the law until all is fulfilled. One jot and one tittle, smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet is yod. It looks like an apostrophe in our typeface.

Whoever therefore, verse 19, breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, you don't have to go to synagogue on Saturday. I don't go and I've said to you that we don't have to go to synagogue on Saturday. Am I under the condemnation of this verse? It's a sobering thought.

Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Now, why have I gone further than my designated passage here? Does and teaches.

How did we begin at the end of the beatitude section? So, they persecuted the prophets who were before you, the prophets who fulfilled the function before you who are now fulfilling a similar function, right? And what is that function? Representation and communication. You want to title your notes, representation and communication. We don't have to say of or for God because we are disciples, we've climbed the mountain and we know what we're talking about here.

Representation and communication is the theme that provides the constant thread through this section. Jesus has moved from the attitude and the approach that you have personally to your role and function, and in the world, on the earth. Now, what is the answer to my question? Is this guy right? That the Christian has no business making application? I would wonder why it is we're studying it if that's the case.

But does he have a point? Is there some aspect of what he says that is true? Well, it's no different than the Ten Commandments specifically or the Law of Moses more generally or the entire Old Testament and Gospels in their entirety when it comes to us as church age believers. There are those who pretty much spend their time in church in the epistles. Anything after Acts in the New Testament, which is less than half of the New Testament, which is less than 15% of the entire Bible.

It's a rough guess. I am an English major. You can check my math.

But you see my point. If all we do is concentrate on Paul and Peter and John, Acts and following, and say, well, this is the church and the rest of this, that's for Israel, we've missed something, haven't we? And yet at the same time, we do not follow all of the injunctions and statutes and precepts and ordinances that Psalm 119 is talking about in the Law, in the Old Testament. What is the reconciliation of those two ideas? Why do we spend so much time in the Old Testament? Always somewhere in the Old Testament.

Week by week, we are never not in the Old Testament somewhere. For lo these many years. We're coming up on 27 years, I want to say.

It's a long time. GTBC started quite a while ago. Formally as a church, I think we're coming up on 25 years.

But in all that time, we've constantly studied the Old Testament. What is the reconciliation of these things? Do we do or do we don't? What is the purpose of that which has gone beforehand? So they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Jesus assumes that the disciples know who he is talking about and what he's talking about, doesn't he? So what is the end game here? We can study the Old Testament, we can study the Gospels, we can study what Jesus is in fact saying to an entirely Jewish audience about the imminent kingdom and observe in it those timeless principles.

Is there ever a time when being poor in spirit is not a good idea or not necessary? Is there ever a time when being merciful is not an attribute and a quality that is prized by God in us? Is there ever a time when he is not going to honor those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and will fill them? There is an overall timeless principle. By timeless, I mean it pertains in every different phase of fallen human history. But there are specific applications.

Jesus is making application of these truths that are always true to a specific audience that are in a specific situation. It's our job to separate what pertains only to them from what pertains to us all. Now, we talk about the prophets who were ill-spoken of in verse 12.

What pertains all the time? Does God always have a non-divine representation on this earth? He's occasionally sent angels, he sent the Lord Jesus in a brief moment of time in history. But in every age and at every time there have been those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, those who are going to be salt and light. The rewards for a specific group at a specific time are going to be specific.

But the fact that there is reward and there is praise from God, well-done good and faithful servant, is timeless. I may not be able to claim living long in the land which the Lord God gave to Israel, but can I claim an analogous reward for having that same heart and that same spirit? God does not change. His desire to honor those who honor him never changes.

So it is a matter of perception and discernment. Yes, of course. So the answer as is so often the case is, is this only for Israel or is it only for the church? Well, the answer is yes.

But we have to be perceptive enough to see those parts, the specifics that apply to them. I don't expect to have title to the dirt of the earth in the millennial kingdom, but I do expect that because my citizenship is in heaven that there will be an analogous quote-unquote mansion or ownership in the new earth, the new Jerusalem perhaps. The principle is the same.

The manifestation and application of it may be transcendent, may be different. So you can read these articles with great profit. There is a lot of wonderful insight in them.

But if someone is going to limit the scripture and say it only applied to so-and-so, how many times have we studied the law and seen injunctions and statutes for Israel in terms of dress, in terms of diet and so on. And while we don't have to follow those restrictions materially and physically, they have a spiritual component that does apply to us. Take the Sabbath as the most notable example.

People always want to say, well, I believe in nine of the commandments, but not remember the Sabbath day. I'm not going to worship on Saturday unless I just tuned two pianos at the Church of God's seventh day. So I have a heart for those folks.

They have a zeal for the law of God. And listen, those people may find a greater reward than people who say, well, I know you don't have to worship on Saturday, but then they don't do anything about it. You can make an error in application, but if you are endeavoring to make application, it's the heart that God honors.

And you don't have to worry so much about the specifics. It's, are you living your life to the best of your ability to please God? If my understanding and application differs from some other person's understanding and application, but we both have a zealous desire to please God, the Lord will sort that out. Is he actually going to say, well, you know, I know you were really trying to please me and you lived a wonderful life and you studied the word of God, but you know, you were meeting on Saturday and I'm sorry, but that just negates the whole thing.

No, it doesn't. Sometimes we strain over gnats and swallow camels, and it is not so much that we might differ on non-essential applications. We can have wonderful fellowship.

I meet people from every stripe, every denomination under the sun when I go to churches to tune pianos, and almost universally the people who are there to meet the piano tuner are people who care about the church and care about worship and love to worship the Lord in music. They're often the piano player themselves. And I defy you to tell me that God is not going to bless them now and in the future, regardless of the day,

regardless of what's hanging on the wall, regardless of what specific doctrines they do or don't understand, those people are living their faith and we want to be those people.

However, the specific permutations of these rewards and blessings are distributed. They are genuine rewards and they are genuine blessings and they always go back to the same attitude of heart. And that's what we cultivate.

That's what we want to pursue. That's what Jesus is encouraging. That's the reason he didn't tell Matthew, don't write down that teaching on the hill.

Don't write down that sermon on the mount because as soon as this generation perishes, it's not going to apply to anybody. Matthew was an apostle to the church and he wrote this down. Why? Because it manifestly is important and an encouragement to us.

Well, we're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to get into the specifics. Why does Jesus pick this? This salt thing has so many understandings and people trying to pick different things out of it.

What's going on with the salt? And honestly, what's going on with the light? Because there are other passages that talk about light that almost seem to contradict this one. So, we'll try to sort some of that out when we come back.