

The Sermon on the Mount
(Lesson 4)

Introduction:

1. To help us in "*understanding what the will of the Lord is*" (Ephesians 5:17), we are studying the Lord's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).
2. In Matthew 5:3-9 Jesus began His sermon by presenting 7 special Beatitudes.
 - a. These Beatitudes contain 7 traits that the Lord wants His followers to possess.
 - b. Those who possess these traits will enjoy tremendous blessings.
3. As a result of developing and practicing these traits, 2 reactions may be expected.
 - a. Those who practice righteousness may be persecuted (Matthew 5:10-12).
 - b. Doing the will of the Lord will lead some to glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16).
4. We need to practice the Beatitudes for 2 reasons:
 - a. so we can receive a blessing from the Lord
 - b. so we can have a positive influence upon other people.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.13) CHRISTIANS ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH
 - A. Salt influences things that it contacts.
 1. It is used as a preservative [it prevents spoilage].
 2. It is used as a seasoning [it enhances the flavor of foods].
 3. As a preservative and seasoning, salt is certainly valuable.
 - B. (vs.13a) Jesus compared His followers to salt to show that we are to have a positive influence upon the world.
 - C. Vs.13b emphasizes the need for having the right kind of influence.
 1. Salt that has lost its saltiness is good for nothing.
 2. (See Luke 14:34-35) If we hear what Jesus said, we realize that a Christian without proper influence is of no benefit to His kingdom.
 3. We can influence others for good if we will practice the Beatitudes.
- II. (vs.14-16) CHRISTIANS ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
 - A. Light is also very useful and influential.
 1. It dispels darkness.
 2. It causes plants to grow.
 3. Sunlight can change a person's disposition for the better.
 - B. Jesus used this comparison to teach His followers to have a positive influence upon the world.
 - C. (vs.15-16) We must not hide our lights -- we must let them shine before men.
 1. This is accomplished by doing good works.
 2. Our good works will lead others to glorify God.
 - D. The Lord warns us to make sure that the light in us is not darkness (Luke 11:33-36).
 - E. See Philippians 2:12-16
- III. SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE OUR INFLUENCE MUST BE SEEN
 - A. We influence our associates and neighbors.
 1. We must conduct ourselves as the Lord teaches so we will not be a hindrance to anyone.
 2. We need to speak positively about the church and its work.
 - B. We influence our family members.
 1. Parents have a special influence upon their children.
 2. Children often form their attitudes toward the Lord, the Bible, and the church because of what they see in their parents.
 3. Fathers have tremendous responsibilities in this regard (Ephesians 6:4).
 - C. We influence other members of the church.
 1. Later, Jesus touched on having proper priorities (Matthew 6:33).
 2. Our priorities will influence others in the church as well as those who are not in it.
 - D. Let us practice the admonition given in 1 Corinthians 15:58.