

Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

5:13-20

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

THESE verses teach us, in the first place, the character which true Christians must support and maintain in the world.

The Lord Jesus tells us that true Christians are to be in the world like "salt." "Ye are the salt of the earth." Now salt has a peculiar taste of its own, utterly unlike anything else. When mingled with other substances it preserves them from corruption; it imparts a portion of its taste to everything it is mixed with. It is useful so long as it preserves its savour, but no longer. Are we true Christians? Then let us see here our office and our duties!

The Lord Jesus tells us that true Christians are to be in the world like light. "Ye are the light of the world." Now it is the property of light to be utterly distinct from darkness. The least spark in a dark room can be seen at once. Of all things created, light is the most useful: it fertilizes; it guides; it cheers. It was the first thing called into being. (Genesis 1:3.) Without it the world would be a gloomy blank. Are we true Christians? Then behold again our position and its responsibility!

Surely, if words mean anything, we are meant to learn from these two figures that there must be something marked, distinct, and peculiar about our character, if we are true Christians. It will never do to idle through life, thinking and living like others, if we mean to be owned by Christ as His people. Have we grace? Then it must be seen.--Have we the Spirit? Then there must be fruit.--Have we any saving religion? Then there must be a difference of habits, tastes, and turn of mind, between us and those who think only of the world.--It is perfectly clear that true Christianity is something more than being baptized and going to church. "Salt" and "light" evidently imply peculiarity both of heart and life, of faith and practice. We must dare to be singular and unlike the world, if we mean to be saved.

These verses teach us, in the second place, the relation between Christ\

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