

Sun night – 9-12-21 – The distinction of a Christian

Turn to Matthew 5 and Ephesians 4

Matthew 5:13 – “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

- “ye are the salt” – those that are saved.

- salvation is the point when you own up to your guilt as a sinner and trust Christ as your Savior

- are you saved tonight?

- “if the salt have lost his savour” – a Christian should be Christ-like

- if you claim to trust Christ, do you act like a Christ?

- think, act, believe, speak like Christ in all circumstances?

- very interesting object illustration - salt loosing it's flavor

- salt makes certain foods extra good

- corn on the cob with butter and SALT

- hot greasy French fries with SALT

- hot potato with butter and SALT

- hot pretzel with SALT

- Ramen noodles with chicken seasoning that is loaded with SALT

- what if the salt you used on all of these foods had no added flavor?

- if would just be bland and you would throw the salt away

- “it is thenceforth good for nothing”

- salt with no flavor is good for nothing

- a Christian that is not Christ-like is also good for nothing

- Jesus Christ is making a very bold statement in this common passage.

- someone who claims allegiance to the name of Christ but does not represent a life dedicated to Christ is good for nothing

The distinct flavor of salt is what makes salt useful and desirable.

- Salt has to be different from everything else in order for it to make an impact.

- What are the distinct differences of a Christian that allows them to make an impact in those around them?

Title: The distinction of a Christian

Passage for tonight: Ephesians 4:30-5:2

3 Distinctions of a Christian: Striving, forgiving, loving

1. Striving for Christ-likeness

Eph 4:30-31

[30] And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

[31] Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

“Grieve not the holy Spirit of God” – God will be prodding you to live with excellence

- Every Christian ought to be striving for excellence in every area, especially spiritually.

- striving for excellence requires doing what you don't feel like doing

- striving for excellence means doing right when others are not

- striving for excellence means giving your best when it is most inconvenient

- Don't give God your good but give God your best

- Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good becomes better and your better becomes best!

- It is very difficult to live like Christ in our godless society

- making no effort to be different will result in Christians losing their flavor

- In what ways should a Christian be striving?

1. Strive to be holy

- 1 Pt 1:15 – “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation”

- Eph 4:22-24 - put off, put on principle

- remove sin, add righteousness

- The key is in verse 23 with what you “put in” you

2. Strive to stay connected with God

- takes effort to read, study, meditate and memorize God's Word

- John 15:3-5 - Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.[4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.[5] I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

- illustration: baking soda and vinegar need to be mixed together in order to make a reaction

- Truth of Bible in your mind mixed with the Spirit in your heart causes a reaction that will change you from the inside out

-a Christian that relies on the church for their only spiritual growth will eventually wither away like leaves on a limb cut from a branch

3. Strive to share the gospel

-Jude 21-23 - [21] Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

[22] And of some have compassion, making a difference:

-we live in a day filled with negative news everywhere.

-share the good news of the gospel

What makes a Christian distinct from other people?

-They strive for excellence – holy, abiding, sharing

2. Forgiving the undeserving

Ephesians 4:32 - “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

-If saved, God forgave you of all your sin

-YOU ARE GUILTY OF SIN BEFORE GOD

-bad attitude, bitterness, gossip, pride, sowing discord...

-GOD FORGAVE YOU when you confessed your sin

-we need to forgive others like God has forgiven us

-it's easy to forgive people for small offences when they are begging to be forgiven

-everyone can forgive the easy ones

-What about the hard one?

-How about big offences?

-How about offences when they don't ask for forgiveness?

-How about offences when they don't even care that they offended you?

-How about offences when they are glad they hurt you?

-Only a Christian depending on God can forgive like God.

-There is no sin Jesus can't forgive

-With God's help, you can forgive any offense

-In fact, you can't be right with God until you get right with others

- Matthew 6:14-15 – God will only forgive you if you forgive others

- Matthew 5:23-24 – seek out forgiveness from others you know are mad at you

What makes a Christian distinct from other people?

-they forgive the undeserving

3. Loving the unlovable

Eph 5:1-2

[1] Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

[2] And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

-Christ demonstrated the ultimate example of love

-we are to love others as Christ loved us

Gal 5:13-15 – For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

1 Cor 13:4-7, Romans 12:9-21 – examples on how to show love

-patient

-kind

-want what is best for others

-selfless

-thinks good of others

-give the benefit of the doubt

-bearing hardships

-believing

-hoping

-genuine (not hypocritical)

-hate evil

-love good

-prefer others over self

-pray for others

-give to the needs of others

-hospitality

-meet people where they are – happy or sad

-be humble

-don't be a know it all

People know you are a Christian by your love for each other

John 13:34-35 – A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.

Matthew 5:43-48 – love your enemies

- love enemies
 - bless them that curse you
 - pray for those that take advantage of you and attack you
 - “what do you more than others?” if you just love those that love you
- It’s easy to love those that are nice, kind and giving

Romans 12:19-21

[19] Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

[20] Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

[21] Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

The distinction of a Christian is one that will love the most difficult to love

Conclusion:

- Are you a Christian that has lost their distinction?
- Are you just like everyone else?
- Would God consider your life “good for nothing” in the cause for Christ because you are no different from the rest of those around you?
- If we are going to make a difference in our families, church or community, we need to have the distinct characteristics of a Christian.
 - Striving for excellence when it is hard – holiness, abiding, sharing
 - what sin do you need to confess?
 - what part of your walk with God have you been neglecting?
 - who do you need to be sharing the gospel with?
 - forgiving the undeserving
 - who are you bitter towards or holding a grudge against?
 - who do you need to forgive?
 - who do you need to ask for forgiveness?
 - loving the unlovable
 - who do you hate?
 - who do you need to love?