

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 76

October 16, 2020

Section 54 The Sermon on the Mount A. T. Robertson's Harmony of the Gospels

Welcome to the next edition of the Mind of Christ. We're happy that you have joined us. We are well into this study that is based on a 7-year study I did that took me through every word that Jesus said and every action that He ever did that's recorded in the Bible. I had some real time to reflect, to think and write in 21 journals over that seven year period. So, what you are getting is some very raw material that I found in the study of the mind of Christ. The whole idea is to take us down deep into that mind so that we can understand Jesus more completely, and hopefully, as a result, we may gain the mind of Christ for ourselves and have the same kind of responses that He had when He walked on the earth.

I am grateful that you are with us. We are in the midst of The Sermon on the Mount. We have covered the beatitudes, thus far; we have done a couple of summaries, videos that try to help bring us up to date and keep us focused on what we are learning in the Sermon on the Mount. It is the greatest sermon that Jesus ever preached.

Now, we are moving on to another section. This section will include **Matthew 5:13-20** but we will only get down through around verse 16 today, and then next week we will try to finish it up with 17 through 20. So we'll take this particular section in two videos.

A. T. Robertson is the guide that we're following. He wrote "Harmony of the Gospels" and he believes that is the "theme"... that this section is really the *theme* of the entire Sermon on the Mount. Well, maybe so; and here's why he says that. Quoting A. T. Robertson, he says "Christ's standard of righteousness in **contrast** with that of the Scribes and the Pharisees is what is being talked about in this section."

I believe that he has something here. We can understand this quite well if we do compare the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees with the righteousness of Jesus. And we can *contrast* those two things throughout the Sermon on the Mount, and we are going to get into the first section of that today. So let me read the text starting in **Matthew 5:13-16**. This is through the New American Standard Bible.

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor do men light a lamp and put it under the peck measure {a basket}, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

So that is the text that we are going to consider today.

This is what I have written about that section:

So let's talk about "salt". Salt, this chemical compound that we call 'salt' has properties that make it helpful to do several things. One is to heal, to preserve, and then to flavor.

And I asked the question as I began this section, "Should I make application to *all* of these uses, or is Jesus confining His use of salt to a very *specific* application in this context?" Well, let's see how this works out.

Is the application in contrast to the effects that the Scribes and the Pharisees have on the earth or in the world, as used in verse 14 of **light**, because He says, [the light shines into the world](#), the salt as to do with the earth ... or 'the house', where the [light is put into a house](#), as used in verse 15 of light, or [before men](#), he says in verse 16? In other words, what is the influence of the Scribes and the Pharisees on the earth, in the world, in the house, or before men? What is that influence that *they* have, and perhaps He is saying that *we* should have a *different* kind of influence?

There is an *intended* effect that **salt** and **light** are to have on others, not just simply inanimate objects obviously because salt and light has an effect on other people. If these agents maintain their potent properties, then they can have the *intended* effect, but if they lose the power intended in their design, then they are less than useless; they are deceptively harmful by creating an expectation that they cannot deliver ... and they **do** not deliver.

So, salt and light, if they lose their saltiness or they become darkness, they not only are *ineffective*, but they give a *false impression*. They don't deliver on what they were designed to be.

Salt can become tasteless ... but how? One [blogger](#) posed this question. He points out that salt, which is 'table salt' he is talking about, is very stable and does not break down easily. There are two ways to affect the taste of salt. One is you can dilute the salt. If you put a grain of salt directly on your tongue, you're going to taste it. It is going to be very salty. But if you put that same grain of salt into a gallon of water, you won't be able to detect it. The second way that salt can break down, other than by dilution is by electric shock that breaks down the bond of the sodium and the chlorine. There is a trauma that is applied to it that breaks down the compound, and he suggests that this is the application of Jesus' words. Well, maybe so. We'll see.

Donald Getz, in May of 2000, points out that the two elements making salt are both unstable by themselves. Sodium is flammable in water and chlorine is poisonous. On this question he says that the Jews put salt under their cooking tiles and over time that salt would break down and need to be replaced. They put it under the cooking tiles because it would lower the boiling point of water. They didn't have to have as much fire ... use as much wood or some other fuel to burn because the salt would lower the boiling point. You could see that if you are boiling water ... if you add salt to the water it will boil more quickly.

The word 'salt' is often associated in the New Testament with fisherman because traditionally, and they still do today, is because salt preserves the fish. That's how it got associated with fisherman.

The word “*tainted*” here is actually a word which comes from the root word, “*moros*” (μωρος) which means ‘moron’ or ‘fool’. It means to be dull, to be senseless, and can even be applied to wickedness. The NASB uses the words, “has become tasteless”. So salt can become tasteless, and that seems to be the emphasis that Jesus is placing on the idea of salt. **Matthew 7:26** says that “a person who does not put Jesus’ words into practice is *foolish*.” So ‘tasteless salt’ is moronic salt; it’s *foolish* salt. In **Matthew 23:17** He refers to the Jewish leaders as *fools* and this is one of the reasons why we believe that He is contrasting the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees with the righteousness that Christ teaches. **2 Timothy 2:23** says, “But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations knowing that they produce quarrels.” And often the Jewish leaders were caught up in these kinds of quarrels. In **Matthew 5:22** calling someone a *fool* is forbidden. This is later on in the Sermon on the Mount. In **1 Corinthians 1:20** God made *foolish* the wisdom of the world. It means to make foolish or convict of folly, to incur the character of folly on people even though they seem wise. In **Romans 1:22** “Professing to be wise, they became fools...”

Do you see what is happening in the context here is that things that purport to be wise are often foolish. That’s exactly what happened with the Scribe and Pharisees. The purported to be wise, but they were, in fact, *foolish*. Their *salt* had become *moronic*! It had become *foolish* {tasteless} in **Matthew 5:13** and *insipid* in **Luke 14:34**. Therefore, salt is good, but if salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? How can you ‘season’ tasteless salt? How can you make a wise person out of a fool? In this context, He’s talking about being a disciple of Jesus in all seriousness, devotion and commitment.

But what if one, as a disciple of Jesus, loses his dedication to truly obey and follow? In **Luke 14:35** it says, “They become useless”. In **Matthew 5:13** it says it is “good for nothing”. So, the disciple who doesn’t stay dedicated to His calling becomes a *useless* disciple. He becomes salt that is worth nothing.

From these passages, the way salt retains its property of being ‘salty’, as applied to Jesus’ followers, is by putting into practice what we learned from Jesus. In other words, how do we keep the salt, salty? How do we make sure it does not turn into something moronic or tasteless?

Well, to merely ‘hear’ Jesus and not ‘obey’ makes us a fool which ‘taints’ the salt. *To profess a thing and live another way causes our salt to lose its flavor rendering it useless and good for nothing*. Spending our time arguing about technical points of the teachings of Jesus also ‘taints’ the salt because we are not putting into practice all the things we know to do. We just argue about things that really are meaningless, when we ought to be spending our time putting into practice the things that we already know to do.

As to the effects of salt, flavor, ability to preserve etc.; they kind of all go together...that if you lose one property, you lose them all. Salt which is tainted becomes moronic or foolish will neither flavor, nor preserve and it will not heal anything. We must keep our salt salty or risk becoming simply ‘ground cover’ to be thrown out, it’s useless. It doesn’t do anything. Note the idea of salt being ‘good for nothing’. Literally, it means it loses its power; it loses its strength or its might. It loses its ability to do anything good. Some salt is, in a sense, ‘out of service. It’s not efficient. It’s not effective. It’s invalid. It’s out of shape.

Some **Christians** you can count on, and others you cannot. Some are useful and some are useless! Some are in shape and ready to go, and others are not. The literal phrase is “strong no longer”. Strong no longer describes many Christians who lose their saltiness. They are strong ... no longer. Hypocrisy is the byproduct of foolishness and it causes the salt to break down. *Hypocrisy is one of the ways that salt* (the salt of Christians) *breaks down*. The solution is to be and act according to “who you are in Christ”.

In the next section, **light** is discussed in the same way. Of salt, it was talked about the ‘salt of the earth’ and here it is the ‘**light** of the world’. The word, “light” is “phos” (φως) in the Greek. There are lots of words that come from the word “phos” ... photo, phosphorescent, so many words. But the third application in the Lexicons says this: “Figuratively, it is moral and spiritual light and knowledge which enlightens the mind, the soul or the conscience, including also, the idea of the moral goodness, purity and holiness, and of consequent reward and happiness.”

In the prologue of John’s Gospel, **light** is the theme found there. **John 1:4-5** says, “**In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.**” The life or the light of Jesus is the light of every man. In verse 5 it says, “**The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.**” In verse 7, John bore witness to the **light** though he was not the **light**. And in verse 9 **Jesus** is the true **light** in the world to enlighten every man.

Now, the focus is on **Christ** being the light, not John, and that He also is the true **light**. But now Jesus speaks of others as being the light; the disciples, the followers of Jesus, being light. Just as we are salt, and we have the properties of salt in relation to who He is, because Jesus is always the “active ingredient” in every life giving us efficacy to influence others for the good; so we can shine into the lives of others because we ourselves have been enlightened by the true **light** who is Jesus Christ. Our mind and our conscience have been changed by Jesus. Where darkness existed in the heart, He has illuminated our darkness and dispelled it so that we can see clearly, and by this **light**, we can help others see clearly.

The idea of the “city” that is ‘set on a hill’ ... The word “set” is kind of important here because it indicates a kind of a ‘**deliberate**’ placement of the city on the hill. Of course, there was an advantage to building a city on a hill because it was defensible if it was up higher as opposed to being in a valley. **Matthew 28:6**, about the place where Jesus was lying in the tomb, it says that He was “set” in the tomb. In **Luke 2:12**, when baby Jesus was lying in a manger, He was “set” or “placed” in that manger. In both cases, He was placed there by others. In **John 2:6** the six water jars were “set” there for purification. At the cross, a jar of sour wine was “standing” there. It had been “set” there; it had been “placed” there. In **2 Corinthians 3:15** the veil lay over the heart; it had been placed there. In **1 Corinthians 3:11**, the foundation was “laid”. It had been set; it had been placed. But in all these cases, the object was “placed” there.

So when He talks about a city being “set” on a hill, and He is using that as a metaphor for us Christians, He is saying to us that *we, as Christians, have been “set” in place by Him* in various places on the earth.

As a city with lights, we too, have been **placed** on the hill. God **put** us in a place to be seen by others so **our lights** can shine. And once that city is **on** the hill, it should not and cannot be hidden.

Was Jesus thinking of the city of Jerusalem...because we go “up” to Jerusalem ... it was on a hill? Perhaps He was thinking of the hill called Golgotha, or perhaps the new heavens and the earth, or the New Jerusalem in **Revelation 21**, or perhaps Mount Zion (**Hebrews** chapter **13**) or perhaps He was talking about Rome itself.

Once the city is “planted”, or “placed” or “established”, it has a responsibility to shine.

The lamp on the lampstand or under a peck or a measure or a bushel basket is now contrasted. So you could put a **light** on a lampstand and you can lift it up so you could put it in a higher place, or you can put something over that. But why would you light a lamp only to cover it up? The point of **light** is that it's there to shine! In my house, if I don't want **light** I turn it off! ***I do not cover it up.***

The bushel that is used here is a word that means “a measure” for things. It is equivalent to a peck. In **Luke 11:33** Jesus says, ‘in a cellar’. There He talks about you can put the light in a cellar so that it can't be seen from the outside. In the United States a peck here is eight dry quarts, or about a quarter of a bushel. So the basket is about a quarter of a bushel. It would be something big enough to place over a candle or some oil that was burning. Size here is not really important. The proper place for a light is to be seen, and to do its job on the lampstand. It's to **illuminate**. It's used in **Revelation 1:12, 13, and 20** talking about the seven churches of Asia. Each of them has a lampstand, and for some of these churches, He threatens to remove their lampstand from their place unless they repent! Though they were giving off some light, it was **not** the **light** of the Gospel. It was a false **light**. Like salt, it was no longer salty; it was no longer positively effective. It reminds me of **2 Peter 1:3-8** where he says if you have these traits or characteristics in increasing measure, you will **not** be ineffective or unproductive in your knowledge of Jesus Christ.

You see, God wants things to be productive and effective. He wants our **lights** to be effective, He wants our **salt** to be effective. As seen elsewhere, Jesus could be talking about the effect of the Jews on the Gentiles. President Reagan often spoke of the “shining city on a hill” of America's influence in the world, and he was cautioning that America needed to be careful not to lose its influence. Of course his focus was on freedom and democracy, not so much on salvation.

Jesus' focus was on truth and the Gospel; of people knowing the Father through Him. In **Acts 13:47** Paul quotes **Isaiah 42:6** and **Isaiah 48:6** where he said, I have **placed** you as a **light** for the Gentiles that you should bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Originally, that was talking about the Jewish nation being a **light** to the Gentiles.

It came to be that the new Jewish nation, the Christians, should **also** be a light to the ends of the earth. Note the word '**placed**' here. He says, '**I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, that You may bring salvation to the end of the earth.**' “Placed” is the same word that is said that you have been “set” as a city on a hill, or you have been “placed” as a light on a lampstand.

So God strategically placed the Jews at the crossroads of the world. Think about where the Jewish nation was given the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. Notice where it is ... it's right where, really at the crossroads of the world. He placed them in just the right place. It's the pathway between East and West. If you come out of Africa you have to go through that area. It's right there on the Mediterranean Sea. It is in a **prime** location to be "set" for the **light** of the world...for the moral and the religious **light** of the world. Just as people came from all over to see Solomon for his wisdom, so the world *could* and *should* have come to Israel's door in order to know God.

Perhaps this is why the Prophets were so tough on the Jews, why they would often preach against the practices of the Jews, because the Jews were not fulfilling their obligation to be the light. They exploited their relationships with other nations for the purpose of security and wealth ... things that they could *get* from these other nations instead of the purpose for which they could *give* the other nations the **light** of God. In other words, the Jews, instead of giving *off* light that people would come to them and *benefit* from them, they tried to see how **they** could benefit from the protection, security, and the wealth of all of **those** nations. They turned this thing *upside down!* And the Scribes and the Pharisees of Jesus' day were doing the *same thing!* They *could have been a light* to the Romans, but they found ways to *benefit* from the Romans being there. In fact, these nations did a better job importing their Gods into Israel than Israel did in exporting **her** God, **the** God, the *one true living God*, to these nations.

The phrase "all who are in the house" in this section of **Matthew 5:15** means 'all the world'. So, this is what Jesus is getting at ... that the **light** of Christians should be different from the **light** that was given off from the typical Jewish person before the cross, because they should have been a light to the world but they were not.

It is not enough for the **light** to merely shine, but it must do so in *such a way* that men may see the good works ... reminding us of the points of light that George Bush (number 1) taught us about ... and glorify the **Father** who is in heaven.

How must we shine to be seen, but not to be **seen in such a way** as merely to be admired? You see, there's a little tension here between letting your **light** shine before men so they can see "your good works", because we're told elsewhere in the Sermon on the Mount, *don't do* your praying before men to be seen of men; don't do your fasting before men; don't give your gifts to be seen of men ... because you *will* have your reward if that why you do it.

But *here*, Jesus is saying you *should* let people see your good works *so that they can glorify your Father* in heaven. The Scribes and the Pharisees were being seen but **not** to bring glory to **God** but to themselves. We must take care, not to be seen "in the wrong way" and "for the wrong reasons". The test is the end ... who gets the glory? We should always do the works but defer the glory to God.

The glorification of the Father is the "chief end of man". The word "glory" is doxa (δοξα). It means to render glorious, to honor, to magnify, to render conspicuous the divine character and attributes. In other words, *we need to be showing how wonderful God is* by the things that we do.

The Son glorifies the Father by living out the qualities of the Father and showing the world Who God is because of How He lives His life. **John 12:27-28** Jesus was making clear He was not to be saved by the Father from ‘this hour’ but rather, He says, “but for this purpose I came to this hour” in order to glorify His Father. Then Jesus addresses His Father and says, “Glorify **Thy** name.” The reply comes, “I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

Jesus explained this glorification in two ways. Here is the way Jesus explains the glory that is to be given to God. First of all, the rulers of the world will be cast out; there is going to be judgment. This is the word used to describe “salt” which *cast out*. It’s amazing here how the similar words are used. He said the salt that has lost its saltiness will be *cast out*, it’s good for nothing, and **one** of the ways that God is going to be glorified is by the casting out of the Jewish rulers who have become “good for nothing”. They are like the salt that has lost its flavor. And then the **second** way that God will be glorified is the lifting up of Jesus from the earth in order to draw all men unto Himself. So God is glorified by both of these and Jesus used the same **light** metaphor even in this context in **John 12:35-36**. So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the **Light** is among you. Walk while you have the **Light**, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. ³⁶ While you *have* the **Light**, *believe* in the **Light**, so that you may become sons of Light.” I don’t have time to explore this anymore but see the connection between **John 12** regarding verses **27** through **36** with **Matthew 5** in the section we’re talking about.

In **John 13:31-32** Jesus speaks words that are difficult to understand. Here he says God is glorified in the Son and God is glorifying the Son in Himself. “Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; ³² if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.” That terminology seems a little difficult to understand. But compare it with the unity idea in **John 17**. We’re trying to get at this idea of “*what does it mean to be glorified.*” The merging or the intertwining of **Deity**, the merging of the Father and the Son in this case, is an opportunity for glory. To allow us to participate **in** this relationship is truly amazing, because He calls us **into His glory**. He says that we can participate in the Divine nature! We can become **one** with the Father and with the Son.

There is a sense in which we can share in the *divine glory* because we have been invited into it by God Himself! In **John 14:13** Jesus ties the apostles asking for things ‘in His name’ to the glorification of the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son. *It’s the outcome*, which is acts of service; whether our serving or obeying God, or Him serving us by meeting our needs, we *participate* in the **glory of God**.

So, how does glory get generated? It’s by us serving God, obeying God, putting into practice the things that God has said; but also we participate by Him serving us...by Him doing things for us. So, in that corresponding relationship that we have with Him, the transactions between us and God ... there is a glory that we can participate in.

In **John 17:1- 4** this theme of inter-mutual glory continues between the Father and the Son. Jesus states plainly that the means of glorifying God on earth was by ‘doing what God had given Him to do’...by completing the task.

John 17:1-4 “Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, ² even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ³ This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴ I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”

To understand the way glorification operates within the Godhead helps us to understand how we can share in it. The aim is to work in such a way that when others see your good works, instead of glorifying you, they will glorify the **One** who *motivated* and *directed* your service.

Now, how do we insure that, and what if we are acknowledged and honored for service? I think it is very important ★ that we get this straight. How do we deflect recognition and see that our Father gets the credit and He gets the glory for the things that we do or the things He does through us?

We observe, at awards ceremonies for instance, people thanking God, or Jesus, for empowering them to win the award, or at least, to perform well enough to win. Is this sufficient? Is this good enough, or should we decline the award, and say, “No. Don’t give me any awards? If you have an award to give, give it to God.”

Well, Jesus must be our example here as in all things, but with one exception. When **He** received compliments, being God, it was *deserved* and it was *acceptable* to be so acknowledged. But what about us?

In **Matthew 19:16** and following, and **Mark 10:17** and following, and **Luke 18:18** and following, when Jesus is called “good” by the rich young ruler, Jesus immediately deferred to **God as being the only One** who is good. But *this could have been a way of Jesus saying that He was God* because being God He is good. Certainly, at the triumphal entry of Jesus He accepted praise and He said it *must* be given or the rocks will cry out. But often in the teachings of Jesus, he routinely spoke of the One who sent Him, and how, without Him He could do *nothing*. So, Jesus often gave glory to His Father as being the One who was working through Him. But in **John 5:23** Jesus says that “he who honors the Son also honors the Father”.

Back in **John 5:44** Jesus warns of receiving glory from one another instead of seeking the glory that is from God. So, if we defer glory to God when we are honored, then He will give us glory. In other words, we end up getting glory, not because we seek it, but because if we give God the glory, then He will glorify us. We still receive glory. It’s only a question of *who* you want to get it from. Do you want it from man or do you want it from God?

Jesus will take this up again in Chapter 6 of the Sermon on the Mount regarding prayer and fasting and giving so we’ll have to revisit that again when we get there. Do we do what we do to be ‘seen of men’ or to ‘bring glory to God’? We may not be able to prevent others from giving glory, but we can defer it to God.

The idea of “good works” in the New Testament is plentiful; it’s talked about quite a bit. This is not to be confused with works of righteousness or attempting to make oneself right with God through our own good works of the law or keeping the law. But works, because of the salvation that we have is essential to the Christian life. **James 2:14-24** says that our good deeds confirm or prove our faith. John says the same about love and good works in **1 John Chapter 3**. We prove our love by what we do. What is *in* the heart should be manifested in one’s life.

There has to be a strong correlation between *profession* and *expression*. The type of expression is important to God. How we express what is in the heart is important to God. One type is big on form, appearance and ritual and outward expressions. The other type is big on service, concern for others, productive labor that improves the quality of life for us and for others, and focuses on sacrifice. Many people spend a lot of time trying to get some ‘form’ right while they should be expending their energy in serving the least of these.

In **1 Peter 2:15, 20**, in the face of persecution, our primary response is to continue to do right. In **1 Peter 3:10** quoting Psalm 34, Peter says one way to see good days is to do good. If you want to have good days, do ‘good’ to other people. Our days should be filled with good deeds. Do we think of others and what we can do to serve them? Do we consciously think of the needs of others and put them above our own interests? Can we count at the end of each day ways we sacrificially served others? Do we regularly do good deeds that no one knows about except the One who will one day reward that deed?

“Jesus went about doing good,” the Bible says. His life can be measured by one good action after another. But doing a good deed does not make one ‘good’. The good deed, if done because on one’s relationship with Christ may *prove* that we have been ‘made good’ by Him. Our good deeds are really Christ expressing His goodness through us to others. **He loves through us**.

The essence of what we are learning here in this section is if we’re going to be salt and light, if we are going to maintain the effectiveness of the salt and the light, then we have to have a consistency between who we *claim to be* and who we *actually are* by *what we do*, by putting into practice the things that we know to do. Because simply “presenting” ourselves a certain thing as a Christian does not mean that we are really salty. It is only by putting it into practice.

You see, the Scribes and the Pharisees were often called hypocrites because they *looked* like **salt**, they *looked* like **light** but they had no flavor to them. They were actually ‘fools’ and they were called fools by Jesus. They had bushel baskets over them because they did not really become a **light** to the Gentiles and so fulfill what God’s intention was for them. In that way, they were useless ... good for nothing ... to be thrown out ... to be walked on by men, and Jesus, of course, was to be lifted up because His **light** enlightened every man.

We will finish this section next week, God willing, and I hope you will join us here on that occasion. If you would like to find other things we are doing, feel free to go to our website <https://www.centralsarasota.org/> where you will find many materials there and we look forward to seeing you again real soon. God bless.