# The Impact of the Kingdom

## 1. INTRODUCTION

a. In previous weeks we have looked at what I have called the core values of the Kingdom, often called the Beatitudes. We have established that these are Jesus 'personal value system and are a clear expression of His own personality. As such they are also the attributes He desires to manifest in us. They are what He is like and what He likes. As we come to know and embrace the values of His kingdom, we actually come to know His heart and embrace Him.

b. If we choose to live our lives allowing Jesus by Holy Spirit to bring this transformation to our lives then we will be evidently different to our society. Jesus goes on in Matthew 5 to talk about us being salt and light.

c. Jesus used the metaphors of salt and light to describe the impact on society of God's people who walk out the 8 Beatitudes (Mt. 5:13-16). Jesus sees the world as filled with moral decay and spiritual darkness. He describes believers as salt and light and unbelievers as the earth and world.

***Mt. 5:13-15*** *13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.* *14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.* *15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.*

i **Salt**: Salt is a preservative and it causes food to taste better. God's people are to function spiritually as salt that hinders decay in a sinful society and makes people thirsty for Jesus. Before refrigeration was invented, salt was rubbed into meat to prevent it from decaying.

ii **Light**: Light exposes darkness and gives direction. God's people are to reveal the truth about Jesus by our words and deeds to a world filled with darkness.

d. In other words we are not to live according to the "spirit of the age" but according to the culture of the Kingdom. Whether we realize it or not, there are powerful forces competing to influence all of human activity in the world. There is the influence of the kingdom of God upon the hearts of men, and there is also the sway of the wicked one.

***1 John 5:19*** *19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

## 2. THE SWAY OF THE ENEMY

a. The "sway" is referring to Satan's influence upon the world. At all times, the enemy is attempting to sway men's hearts and minds to agree with and act out his evil desires. When men give themselves over to Satan's influence, a course or pathway of wickedness becomes established in the earth. This pathway is identified in Ephesians 2 as "the course of this world."

***Eph.2:1-3*** *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

b. The enemy does not need to get people to bow down and worship him in order to influence and destroy their lives. He simply needs to get them to embrace a course of life that will draw them

away from the value system of the kingdom of God. If the enemy can influence people to embrace his value system, also known as the "spirit of this age," then he can control their lives.

***Eph.6:12*** *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

c. We must understand that we are fighting against principalities and powers who exert their influence upon men. These demonic hosts continually attempt to persuade men to resist righteousness and embrace wickedness. The influence that principalities and powers initially exert comes as thoughts and concepts in the minds of men.

d. Because men are given to follow their carnal desires, the idea can become the norm for the masses in a very short period of time. Once men begin to embrace the influence of the enemy, momentum builds for the continuation of his plan, and men are left to join in or be rejected by society.

e. We must intentionally resist the sway of the enemy and pursue the culture of the kingdom of God if we are going to combat the course of this world.

***Rom.12:2*** *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

f. We must understand that our warfare is against the principalities and powers that influence people to embrace the course of the world system. In order to confront these principalities and powers, the principle issue becomes coming out from under their sway and the influence they exert in the earth.

g. In order for us to have authority over the principalities and powers, we must be free from the spirit of the age ourselves. So many of the things we embrace as normal in our western society are actually the sway in operation in our culture. What is tragic is that the sway of the spirit of the age influences us in the Church as much as it influences the world.

h. No one will manifest the authority of the kingdom without being submitted to the value system of the kingdom. The question remains: Who will stand against the sway of the spirit of the age, at the risk of ridicule, in order to see the reality of the kingdom of God released in power upon the earth?

i. Only when a community of believers will give themselves in abandonment to the value system of the kingdom of God will it be in a position to demonstrate the authority of God to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. The community of believers that will get out from under the course of this world system will affect the culture of their society.

j. Unless we embrace the kingdom of God and resist the spirit of the age, our society will never experience the manifest power of God. However, if we truly live as citizens of the Kingdom then we will be the salt and light that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 5.

## 3. CONTRAST OR CONFORMITY

***Matt.5:13*** *"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.*

a. After He lays out the core values, Jesus then calls those who are followers of His value system "the salt of the earth." Salt is a purifying and preserving agent. It is used to cleanse and to keep things from rotting. Jesus was calling those of His kingdom to embrace His value system and then live it

out in the world. He was looking to create contrast between those who live His value system and those who embrace the spirit of the age.

b. Notice He said "You *are* the salt of the earth." This is a statement of fact not a command to be something. This is what we are as kingdom people.

c. Jesus is speaking in the context of the persecution of his disciples. Like salt we may seem small and insignificant in society and yet we are able to influence every segment of it and permeate the whole. Salt is cheap, its value is minimal but it has unusual properties that far exceed its "value".

d. Salt is also a vital preservative. If our lives exhibit the qualities of the 'blessed' we will have a preserving impact upon a society that, if left to its own devices will rot and deteriorate. This requires a radical and costly lifestyle that is willing to pay whatever the cost in terms of the world's response.

e. Salt was also used to render ground infertile for future use (Judges 9:45) Similarly, as we take our stand we make it more difficult for works of darkness to take the ground. This is a foundatoonal principle of the house of prayer. As we worship and pray, as we come into agreement and declare the truth of the Kingdom so we displace the works of the enemy.

f. Salt also seasons. Our presence in our communities and society should 'increase the flavour'. Everything about us should express the attractiveness as well as the holiness of God. Paul tells us that our speech in particular should be seasoned with salt (Col 4:6, Eph 4:29)

g. Jesus said that salt that has lost its flavour is worthless. The same is true for those of us who profess to be Christians. Cease to be different and we cease to have any impact. (John 17: 14,17) The idea of blending into the secular scene with music, fashion, movies, etc. to win people by becoming like them is a great mistake. Jesus taught that believers who are indistinguishable from non-Christians are useless in bringing real change to the world.

h. The call to be salt and light is a call to make a relevant impact on society. We can only do this as we are true to the message and refuse the temptation to distort it by removing difficult aspects. Jesus' teachings are offensive to the carnal mind and so different from the values of the world.

## 4. YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

***Matt.5:14-16*** *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. [15] Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. [16] In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

a. ***Light a lamp:*** If we ask the Spirit, He will give us ideas for service and truths to speak out on. In this way, He "lights our lamp." We must follow through on these ideas and stand for these truths. He will often give us very simple assignments to help people in practical ways, or to start a Bible study, or to reach our neighbours. To let our lamp shine means to act on these directives from the Spirit. Many refuse them because they reach only a few people and are routine and mundane.

b. ***Let your light shine before men:*** We must speak up and follow through in service. We must not hide the truth deliberately out of fear, or neglect to act because of lust or laziness.

***Matt. 25:25-28*** *[25]I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground…[26]His lord answered, "You wicked and lazy servant…" [28]Take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten."*

c. ***A city that cannot be hidden:*** This is one of the most extraordinary statements that Jesus made about His Church. Jesus asserted that a city set on a hill could not be hidden. A city of lights is made up of many individual lights that shine together. It is glorious when many work together, each making a small impact, but collectively making an impact that cannot be hidden. The city is seen when many individuals are faithful to speak up and follow through in service.

d. ***Glorify your Father:*** We are to speak and act with humility, tenderness, and faithfulness to truth. Jesus talked about the spirit in which we serve and make the truth known. We are to live, speak, and act in a way that draws attention to God and others, without drawing attention to or promoting ourselves. The disciple is to do all things in meekness (v. 5), without showmanship.

## 5. CONCLUSION

a. After calling us to walk in the 8 Beatitudes (v. 3-12), Jesus encourages us by giving us the assurance that pursuit of a costly and demanding lifestyle will impact others (v. 13-14). He is saying, "I have a glorious plan to change the world through people in relationship with Me." His people are His primary change agents and world changers. We fully embrace this great privilege.

b. The main weapons in this spiritual war include the 8 Beatitudes, our words, and good works. We are in the minority and our message is often scorned. What good can meek people who mourn over their sin do? It seems that we are too weak and too few in number to change the earth. Jesus called a few young fishermen to be the salt and the light of the world. Martin Luther said, *"With His Word I can be more defiant and boastful than they with all their power, swords, and guns."*

c. Jesus calls His disciples to be salt and light in a world filled with moral decay and spiritual darkness. The world cannot stop itself from rotting or descending into greater darkness. Only salt and light introduced from outside the world can prevent the decay and dispel the darkness.

d. What message do we have for people who feel hopeless in the face of the political, social, and economic forces which seem to control them? Jesus is raising up revolutionaries who are dedicated to changing the world by spreading His revolutionary love, truth, and righteousness.