



GROW AT HOME

DAILY DEVOTION

DAY 3

READ

MATTHEW | CHAPTERS 5 + 6

FOCUS

¹³ "YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH. BUT IF THE SALT LOSES ITS SALTINESS, HOW CAN IT BE MADE SALTY AGAIN? IT IS NO LONGER GOOD FOR ANYTHING, EXCEPT TO BE THROWN OUT AND TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT. ¹⁴ "YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A TOWN BUILT ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN. ¹⁵ NEITHER DO PEOPLE LIGHT A LAMP AND PUT IT UNDER A BOWL. INSTEAD THEY PUT IT ON ITS STAND, AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO EVERYONE IN THE HOUSE. ¹⁶ IN THE SAME WAY, LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD DEEDS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

REFLECTION from PASTOR DOYLE SURRATT

Hey, everybody, I pray that you are well (and these days that's not just a salutation) and that you are hanging in there. Please know that we are praying for you every day and that we are available if you need anything from us. Just call, text, email... We'd also like to remind you to pray for us as well. We desire your prayers more than you know.

Today I'd like to explore with you a contrast that I see set up in the teachings of Jesus found in Matthew chapters 5 & 6. It seems that the primary opposition to Jesus and His mission was found among the religious leaders--who were rule keepers: outwardly very pious, but inwardly corrupt. Jesus sets up a contrast between this and true righteousness.

The issue is not conduct but character. The religious leaders we meet in Chapter 5 made a great show of their strict adherence to the law but their hearts seem to not reflect the character of God very much. I remember when I was a kid we used to visit my grandparents who lived in the Ozarks in Missouri. They had a group of Christian neighbors who called themselves "Back to Holiness" believers. This group set out to fight some of the sinful tendencies of the modern world by keeping some very strict (and often just weird) rules that would keep them "set apart" from the world and therefore maintain their righteousness. The problem was that almost all their rules dealt with external issues like women not cutting their hair, wearing makeup, letting their hair down in public, and many more. The men were to keep their hair short and no facial hair if I remember right. Now that I think about it, the women had many more rules than the men (go figure).

My grandparents had known many of these people all their lives and liked them, but the breaking point came when the "Holiness" believers began to judge how others dressed but tolerated attitudes in their own hearts that were clearly un-Christlike. In the first part of chapter five Jesus lays out what a truly righteous person will have in their heart--this list is called The Beatitudes. In verses 13-16, He lays out the kind of impact people whose character is formed to be like Christ will have in the world--I might call these folks "Salty, non-bowling." In the remainder of the chapter, He says that folks who are truly righteous (rather than just religious) will do more than what the law requires because of their Christlike character. When a person has a relationship with Christ their subconscious attitudes about violence, sexuality, marriage, truth-telling, justice, and even people they can't stand will be shaped by Him. I would call these folks "Beyonders." The point is to let Him shape you into a truly righteous, salty, non-bowling beyonder.

As we read on into the next chapter, we see that Jesus calls out the religious types because they are so much more about the externals of image and wealth than the heart issues of true righteousness. At the beginning of the chapter, He points out that even their religion is mostly just to impress others--the way they give, pray and fast are all calculated to show how (outwardly) pious they are. You might say that they are very "image-conscious." He again contrasts this outward piety with the righteous. So, in verses 19-24, we find that the truly righteous are "long-term investors" (very long term). In this economic climate I'm starting to doubt the old advice to just "ride it out," and it's getting harder by the day. But Jesus is saying that those who live



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only for what they can have in this life are going to be sorely disappointed. Money can't buy you a blessed life, but it can become a horrible master. I might call folks with this kind of mindset "short-term investors".

The final few verses of Chapter 6 really hit home to where we are today. As I read them, it seems that there is a test we can give ourselves to see which side we are on or are leaning toward at this moment. The choices we have as we face this incredibly uncertain time is:

1. To embrace the reality that God is our ultimate provider, or
2. To waste away with worry

Jesus is showing us that that true righteousness leads us to choose to trust God, anything else puts us in a different category altogether. I hope and pray that we will trust God every day, let Him shape our hearts, and that because of His righteousness, love, and grace, we will live blessed lives.

Love you guys. Thanks for letting me give you my quick take on these two wonderful chapters of scripture. And again, know that we are praying for you every day. God bless you.

QUESTIONS

- THINK ABOUT THIS ONE BEFORE YOU ANSWER. IN WHAT WAYS IS YOUR FAITH TRULY RIGHTEOUS? IN WHAT WAYS IS IT FOCUSED ON OUTWARD APPEARANCE MORE THAN INWARD HEART CHANGE?
- HOW HAVE YOUR WORRY LEVELS BEEN OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS? HOW DO TODAY'S PASSAGES SPEAK TO THAT WORRY?
- IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK YOU NEED TO DO OR CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO THIS READING TODAY?