



Empowering People to Change the World

Kingdom Influence: Letting Your Light Shine

Steve Holt

***God can move mountains in my life
I will build up my faith with God's Holy Word
I will come alive in the power of the Holy Spirit
With Jesus, nothing will be impossible***

Introduction:

- We are moving through the book of Matthew and we have come to the most powerful sermon Jesus ever preached—the sermon on the Mount.
- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6 and 7) is what I am calling “The Kingdom of God Manifesto.”
- Jesus came not to start a religion but a revolution on earth.
 - To make the earth look more and more like heaven.
 - Through His Kingdom citizens.
 - Jesus came with a new world order.
 - This is why He instructed us to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”
- We have just finished our study of the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1-12.
- We have spent the past month looking at these VALUES of the Kingdom of God—the character of the citizenship of the Kingdom of God.

When we are living the values of the Kingdom of God three things happen to us:

1. We are living a joyful happy life—we are blessed! This is the Character of the Kingdom.
2. We go against the grain of society—we are persecuted!
3. We become salt and light to society—Influencers of the Kingdom of God on earth.

It is as GK Chesterton, the great writer, poet and dramatist, who once said, “Jesus promised His disciples three things: that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy and in constant trouble.”

The Influence of the Kingdom of God - Leaving the Old Life Behind

- The background: Jesus is preaching and demonstrating the Kingdom. People are flooding upon Him. The crowds are large. They are leaving the religious leaders behind and leaving the Religious Center and flocking to Galilee. The tax collectors are leaving their offices and pouring into Galilee. Fishermen are leaving behind their fishing companies and flocking to see Jesus—farmers have left their fields behind. All kinds of people are coming—they are hearing the preaching and seeing the power of God.
- When you get the radical nature of the King and His kingdom into your heart, you will leave things behind—prejudices, exclusivism, judging.
- Jesus showed them that all race, status or cultural prejudices did not matter. They were leaving behind cultural differences. They saw that Jesus treated the prostitute, the tax collector and the leper all the same!!
- Jesus is focused on the heart of people. Jesus is tearing down their ideas of the Kingdom and showing them that this culture is a different culture with a different character.
 - We look at everything from our own exclusivism.
 - Our own materialism.
 - Our own status.
 - We are exclusive about race, religion, wealth, where we live, where we are from.
 - But when Jesus talks about the Kingdom, He never talks about our status, how much we own or material stuff. He only talks about our BEING.
 - Society is always looking for the right social order—even during the time of Jesus.

- We are still looking for it; in our inner city, in our government, in our classrooms, in our families.
 - We want order but we do not want to talk about God's order.
 - We want to save the spotted owl but kill babies; we do not want any STD but we want everyone to be free to do whatever they desire sexually. Our order is always on what we design.
 - Our own rules and our own regulations.
 - But the order of God is the Kingdom of God.
- The real issue is the heart. Jesus knew that. He is talking about the heart.

Matthew 5:3-12

- The change is right here (the heart). This is where the change must start.
- Blessed are those who know they have poverty of spirit.
 - If you are tired of your hypocrisy, Jesus has given us a new social order from the heart. Hypocrisy is destroyed when we realize we are hypocrites.
 - Acts 1:8 “you shall BE My witnesses.”
 - It is being a witness—it is something you are.
 - You do not go witness, you ARE a witness.
 - Your being/your character/your lifestyle is a witness.
 - The word “witness” means martyr. It does not mean that you become a martyr by dying but rather, you so believe in your heart that you are willing to die for it everyday by the way you live.
 - It is not the dying that bothers me; it is the lens of time between when I start dying and when I do die that bothers me.
 - You started dying the second you accepted Christ.

It is as we live the Kingdom Values that the influence in society begins to take shape.

Matthew 5:10-12

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

“A Kingdom of God Revolution” is the governing influence of The King (Jesus) over His territory (earth), through His Citizens (us), who are expressing His culture and values, reflecting the nature of the King.

- America is rapidly changing.
 - You and I are now the problem! Being moral is defined now as bigotry.
 - Upholding a moral standard is being a bigot among the perverted.
 - Isaiah prophesied it “Woe to a nation that calls evil good and good evil.”
 - You may not be burned at the stake but you will be burned at the office, burned in your school, burned in relationships as you stand up for Christ.
 - You do not get drunk with the guys; you do not sleep around to get that promotion; you tell the truth, live the truth and believe in the truth and the promotions do not come. You are a martyr.
- Is it for Jesus—saying the right things? No, doing the right things. We are not lacking for knowledge we are lacking for action. Let them see it, not hear it. We need Action! The way we live.
- You cannot infect people if you do not have the disease—you do not give measles if you do not have measles. You have to be infected with the real disease.
- You are now in the CIA - Christ Intelligence Agency. You may be the only salt and light they come across at work.

- We live it by our being! The only compliment the culture can pay you is persecution.

Matthew 5:13-14

¹³You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

- Lenski, the great commentator translates this: “You ALONE are the salt of the earth.”
- “You ALONE are the light of the world.”
- We are talking about influence in the world.
- You alone are the salt of the earth!
 - No one else is the salt of the earth. It is not the Buddhists, it is not the Scientologists, it is not the Christian Scientist—it is only you!
 - I have been to many nations of the world and I have yet to see a Buddhist Hospital, a Scientologist Hospital.
 - We are the salt of the earth. We alone are the answer to the problems of this world.
 - When the Black Forest fire hit, it was Samaritan’s Purse with Franklin Graham, that set up and helped families.
 - When our family and my church went on two occasions to tornado disasters in Oklahoma, it was churches and Christian ministries everywhere helping.

Very familiar term in Jesus' day: Salt was used as a preservative and even Magdala (where Mary Magdalene was from) nearby was known for its salt mines and was used exclusively for salting fish. The largest business in that area was salting fish and meat.

- There were no refrigerators or freezers, so salt preserved for longer periods of time the fish and meat from decaying.
- The obvious meaning is that it is going to rot sooner or later but with salt it takes longer.
- There was an amazing amount of salt in the area.
- This salt comes in layers and the top layer, because of the sun and bleaching, loses its flavor. They would take that salt in huge amounts up to the Temple area.
 - In the outer court was the Gentile Area. Then there was the Court of Women with four large compartments or rooms. In one compartment there was a place for wood for the burning of sacrifices. In the other compartment there was a place for the taking of vows and you could go there and sit in silence. In the third compartment was where you could go to dialogue with the scribes and this probably where Jesus went as a boy and was found by his parents.
 - And the 4th room in the Court of Women was filled with salt. It was the salt that had lost its flavor. In the winter this was used to throw over the huge slab limestone outdoor rocks that lined the Temple area to melt the snow or ice.
 - Sometimes they would use that kind of salt up in Galilee to melt the ice or snow. They understood exactly what Jesus was talking about—there was a salt that was just used for throwing out on walking paths that had no flavor but could be walked upon.

But then there was the good salt which was underneath this old salt and it could be used as a preservative, and for flavoring on food.

- Each month, Roman soldiers received a bag of salt. It was called the salarium. It is where we get the word salary.
 - They would use it for their food, for flavoring.
 - They would use it for a battle field wound for healing.
 - They would use it for preserving their food.
 - This is where we get the term “this man is worth his salt.”
- The salt does not do any good if you put the meat on one shelf and the salt on the other.
 - You have to rub the salt into the meat!
 - That is what Jesus likes to do with us. He takes us and rubs us into our decaying world we live in.
 - Rub us into our families, our jobs, etc.
 - Man is looking for the social order. He wants it but he does not want to give up the things that make him rot.
 - We are the only ones who can bring the truth, rub it into society to preserve it.
 - It begins with a broken and contrite spirit—being poor in spirit.
- Be worth your salt!