

“THE KEYS TO A BLESSED LIFE”

Big Idea . . . Part 10: Blessed are the Influencers

Matt. 5:13-16

INTRO: We conclude our study on the Beatitudes, the keys to a Blessed Life. Jesus names 8 blessings that describe the Christian life.

ORDER: Roots (vv. 3-5) lead to life (v. 6) to fruits (vv. 7-9). Consequences of this life are highlighted in vv.10-16. Negatively, persecution (vv. 10-12). Now, positively, INFLUENCE (vv. 13-16)

PASSAGE Matt. 5:13-16 addresses every Christian’s role and function in the world. Jesus tells us how to use our influence to make a difference in the world. A Christian’s relationship with the world can be confusing. We are called to be *in* the world but not of it (1 Jn. 2:15-17; Rom. 12:2; Jam.4:4). We are *sent* into the world, but must never love it. Two facts about this world: it is decaying (needs salt) and dark (needs light). See in many areas... But how? Jesus shows us using two familiar domestic metaphors: salt & light, two of life’s most familiar images or commodities. Each must mingle, yet remain distinct to do its work. *Jesus provides three insights in how to gain influence in a decaying and dark world.*

I. WE MUST *RECOGNIZE* OUR INFLUENCE (vv. 13, 14 “You are”)

- A. We ARE salt & light – both influence (vv. 13, 14).
 1. Present tense verb – salt & light are not something we become or should be; but we are—issue of effectiveness not identity.
 2. Emphatic – you “only” – highlighting the importance of our responsibility to be involved. We are His plan!
- B. Everyone has influence—no exceptions—stop and reflect on your influence with family & friends, at work, social media, etc. Each has own world God has entrusted to impact. A very introverted person influences 10K.
- C. We are salt & light because of our relationship to Christ (Jn. 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:6; Phil. 2:15). He is our Source; we reflect. Once accept our God-given responsibility of who we are, what do we do?

II. WE MUST *EXERCISE* OUR INFLUENCE

To be salt & light we must make our presence felt! How?

- A. *We must shake the salt* (v. 13)—more invisible influence.

Salt (called “theon” = divine) had great value in Jesus’ day. Soldiers paid in salt, English word “salary” comes from “salt money.” Salt preserves and seasons. Salt must make contact to influence. Can salt become tasteless? We can’t change what we are, but we can waste it by contamination and/or isolation!

B. *We must shine the light* (vv. 14-16)—more visible influence.

1. Two examples: “city set on a hill” & “lamp on a stand”—Hard to miss. Easily seen. Influence is not just felt, also seen—never hidden. Light must shine to penetrate darkness. Shine first “in the house”.
2. Jesus personalizes things in v. 16:
 - Mandate “Let it shine” – command “If you are a light, then shine!”
 - Method “see your good works” – To “see” is to experience. Not perfect, just attractive (solid, believable—based on character (vv. 3-12). Suggestions: (1) service (2) generosity (3) compassion.
 - Motive is not for us to be seen, but for God to be glorified (v. 16c).
3. Warning – Light, like salt, can also be wasted if hidden.

III. WE MUST *MAXIMIZE* OUR INFLUENCE – How grow my influence?

Tips for shaking your salt and shining your light.

1. Don’t *hold back*. Exit the salt shaker! Be intentional. Risk getting involved. Salt & light must contact to influence. Every interaction is a chance to influence. When God gives you influence, the enemy gives you attention.
2. Don’t *overdo it*. Make your presence felt, but... too much of either can be hurtful and offensive – even dangerous. Tomato...
3. Do *build trust*. How? Trust sequence...
4. Do *steward well* what influence you have. Get more? The best way to increase your influence is to give it away.

CONC: When we intentionally, lovingly, and faithfully shake the salt and shine the light, God is glorified. “Influence” is our responsibility. As Christians we must recognize we have influence that must be exercised—even maximized. Close with this question: “Who needs your salt and light influence for Christ?”