

LESSONS TO LIVE BY #4

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Matthew 5:1-12

1. How we view our world and those we rub elbows with impacts how we relate to people.
2. The Bible does not mince words when it speaks to this issue.
 - a. "As it is written there is none righteous, not even one." Romans 3:10
 - b. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23
 - c. On the Day of Pentecost the following is written about Peter. Acts 2:40
"And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them saying, 'Be saved from **this perverse generation.**'"
 - d. Paul admonished the Philippians to, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a **crooked and perverse generation**, among who you appear as lights in the world (shine as luminaries)." Philippians 2:14-15
 - e. Jesus declared the following in John 3:19-21
19 "**This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.** 20 "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."
3. If I were to paraphrase some of Jesus' words in Matthew 5:13-16 I would do it as follows.
 - a. "You are the salt of the earth, and you will definitely make your presence known if the qualities I just mentioned are realities in your lives."
 - b. "You are the light of the world and I expect you to manifest your light for all to see."
4. Now the verses we are looking at today reveal quite clearly that those who are salt and light will not be appreciated by most of the people we rub elbows with.

I. "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

- A. In other words those who belong to the kingdom of heaven should not expect to have an easy go of it in this present world.
- B. Paul pointed out, "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (just like I have been)." 2 Timothy 3:12
- C. Jesus revealed that one of the reasons we are to love one another is that the world will not. John 15:17-22
"This I command you, that you love one another." If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 20 "Remember the word that I said to

you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me."

II. "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me (because you have identified with Me, represent Me, and reveal Me through you words and lifestyle)."

A. Those who misunderstood or opposed Jesus often drew wrong conclusions about Him or actively sought to discredit Him.

1. Mark 3:20-21

20 And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal. 21 **When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."**

2. Mark 3:22

22 The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and " He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

B. The key word here is "falsely." 1 Peter 4:12-16

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 **Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;** 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

C. The Devil is referred to as a liar and the accuser of the brethren and those who belong to the domain of darkness will be like him.

1. John 8:44

44 (Jesus said,) "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

2. John 8:54-56

54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; 55 and you have not come to know Him, but **I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you,** but I do know Him and keep His word. 56 " Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

NOTE: At the end of this exchange "they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple." John 8:59 You and I are to faithfully represent and speak for God the way Jesus did. If we do we can expect the same treatment He received.

III. “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

A. Somewhere along the way the church in America and the West has lost sight of its prophetic role in the world.

NOTE: We are to be prophetic rather than pathetic.

B. Rather than confronting the culture we cuddle up to it and coddle it.

C. Jesus made it clear that the only way we can get along with this world is to surrender our prophetic calling to be salt and light. Luke 6:26

26 "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way."

APPLICATION

1. We need to be careful that we do not develop some sort of persecution complex.
2. Rather we must confront the world's animosity with God's sacrificial love.

Luke 6:27-27

27 "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

3. We must be sure that it is God's love we are manifesting and not some misguided form of human love.
4. God's love will motivate us to speak the truth of God in love just like Jesus did, and in keeping with Paul's admonition in Ephesians 4:15