

TEXT: Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty {again?} It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does {anyone} light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven"

Matthew 5:13-16, NASB

INTRO:

We have seen the evil government in Iraq fall and we have helped rebuild it to some degree.

There is another nation that needs to be rebuilt spiritually, morally, militarily and economically—the United States.

Donald R. Howard, PhD, preached a very appropriate sermon years ago on *Revival, Regeneration and Reform*

. I have borrowed from his insight for this sermon
whose time has come

.

1. REVIVAL

Muhammad did not see a good example of a Jew or Christian, according to Dr. Harold Carpenter. Mahatma Gandhi apparently did not see a good example of a Christian, either. How history might have been changed if these two leaders had met a dedicated, born-again Christian! *May we become stepping-stones to Christ for the spiritually hungry, rather than stumbling-stones to those seeking Christ!*

A. Judgment begins with the House of the Lord:

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; 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. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 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. *For {it is} time for judgment to begin with the household of God;* [italics mine] and if {it} {begins} with us first, what {will be} the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 1 Peter 4:12—17, NASB B. Let all Christians repent and seek the Lord.

The Church must get its house in order. The Church of Christ consists of all of God's people, past, present and future. However, in this message, we are addressing every born again person who is living today. Again, this is not the same as denominational churches. There are born again people in all Christian denominations, but everyone who is enrolled in a local church is not born again. Also, some who are not affiliated with an institutional church are born again. We—the Church—must turn to God with our whole hearts, repent of sin, walk in love and live holy lives. Only then, are we fit to do effective evangelism of the lost.

2. REGENERATION

A. Jesus said that we must be born again. Jesus was speaking to a religious man who apparently had not been born again:

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God {as} a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

"Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit" John 3:1-8, NASB Those who reject Christ will spend an eternity in hell:

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:15, NASB B. We must allow the love of God for the lost to motivate us also: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8, NASB C. God has commanded us to reach the lost with the Gospel. Jesus gave us this commission:

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20, NASB

So when they [the apostles] had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Acts 1:6-8, NASB People who have not accepted Christ as their personal Savior need to be reached with the Gospel. Everyone must hear the Good News of Jesus Christ at least one time. Then God can claim his elect—they will be born again by the Spirit of God and become a part of Christ's Body—the Church.

What does evangelism entail? It means that every Christian be led of the Holy Spirit in reaching the lost, worldwide. In the narrow definition, *it means reaching the lost with the Gospel in order that they will accept Christ as their Savior.*

In the broad definition, it means *the whole Gospel, for the whole man, to the whole world.*

But, what about those who do not accept Christ as their personal Savior?

3. REFORM

When Christians live the life of Christ, their lives fulfill the function of salt and light. Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount:

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty {again?} It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does {anyone} light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5:13-16, NASB

A. Salt

Christians will serve as salt. Salt preserves and heals. If salt is diluted or polluted, Jesus said that is good for nothing and must be thrown out.

B. Light

Light exposes evil, but more importantly, *it reveals truth*. Jesus is the Living Truth:

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

John 14:6, NASB

The written word of God—the Bible—is abstract truth that the Holy Spirit inspired, protected down through history and led specially-equipped people to translate into various languages. The Holy Spirit *illuminates* or gives understanding of the Bible.

We become the conscience of the nation. We must always speak the truth in love:

And He gave some {as} apostles, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as} pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but *speaking the truth in love* [italics mine], we are to grow up in all {aspects} into Him who is the head, {even} Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:11-16, NASB

God calls the five-fold ministry to prepare believers to fill their places of ministry in the Church. Then, believers become productive as they minister to the lost.

As we maintain a Christian testimony in all strata of society, our influence for Christ effects a positive change in our society. As we vote our biblically-educated conscience, God's people are elected to office. They effect positive change in society. This is the scriptural way to rebuild our nation, the United States of America!

This national reform will have a ripple effect in international affairs, which will result in the reform of other nations.

CONCL:

Let all who name the name of Christ wake up spiritually and become serious in our service to the Master!

© John E. Russell 2003-2012

In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity—Peter Meiderlin 1626.

You have permission to copy, email or print *unedited* Power Articles.