

Nettleham Methodist Church - Cell Material

Week beginning: 27th July 2008

Theme: Commands of Jesus 3 - Matthew 5:16

To Get Us Started: Have you ever been in a situation where you have been plunged into darkness unexpectedly? What were the circumstances and how did you feel about the experience? Are you frightened of the dark? Discuss.

Worship: Focus on the light of Jesus in your worship and how He is able to drive out fear and spiritual darkness from our hearts and minds.

Word:

Please read Matthew 5:13-16. If you've got a decent translation of the Bible you will note in verses 13 & 14 the contrast between the two sentences spoken by Jesus, i.e. 'You are the salt of the earth' & 'You are the light of the world'. The differences are salt & earth + light & world. The sense is that we are to be people 'earthed' in the reality of life whilst also being shedders of the spiritual light of Jesus - a practical as well as a spiritual task. We are all called to be agents that preserve and promote the character of our Heavenly Father in our daily lives at work and at play.

How can you do that practically in the situation you're in at the moment? Are you succeeding? If so, what evidence do you see, if any? Be honest re. Your failures and successes, because, like Noah, we're all in the same boat! (Discuss)

Salt was used to flavour food - like today - chips are not the same without lots of salt! In olden times salt was also used to preserve meat. It was rubbed into the meat, which slowed down decay. Hooray for refrigerators & freezers! There are similar advances in technology since Jesus first spoke these words from Matthew's Gospel regarding light too. Most homes would have the one main source of light and it was put in the most prominent place so everyone could benefit from its source. Today we have loads of light all over our homes - think of how many light-bulbs/ fluorescent strips are in your home? How many do you actually need? Each modern light bulb on its own would provide more light than most homes would have had in the whole property during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. Light is a precious commodity and when light is removed - we're done for! Similarly in spiritual terms when there is no light of Jesus shining there is terrible spiritual darkness and so many people are lost in the thick spiritual darkness without Him. Even more sad is the fact that they don't know they have been blinded by the evil one so that they can't see the light (see 2 Corinthians 4:4). That is why it is up to us to shine for Jesus as per Matthew 5:18 - please read this verse again.

Witness:

What good works are you shining out before men so that they can 'glorify your Father in heaven'? Or to put it another way - what needs to change in your life for you to be able to do this more effectively? Spend some time talking through any issues you may have and pray for one another for God to help you to be salty and so full of light that it shines out. Inner light is ok, but we're not meant to be selfish with the light of Christ. Christianity is not a 'personal religion' but public truth to be declared and demonstrated. For others to know Him it must shine out from us. Like the children's song says, "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine!" Pray for one another that you will be given opportunities over this summer period to be light-shiners and salt-makers wherever you go - even on holiday!