

Message for February 24, 2019

God Loves People

Matthew 5:13-16 The Message (MSG)

¹³ “Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ “Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Some of my messages are lighter than others, some seem quite heavy at least to me. This one we want to gain some insights to culture, both secular and church culture, and then as believers connect to the Matthew 5 text we just read.

Apatheist

You heard two words here “apathy” and “theist”

Apathy... we don’t really care.

Theist... has to do with god.

Apatheist, is not interested in accepting or rejecting any claims that god(s) exists or doesn’t exist. Simply put: Don’t care, one way or another.

During a survey adults were asked what they believed about God, and Christian beliefs.

A third of all surveyed responded “I don’t know” to many of the questions.

Example, “There is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit,” 29% agreed, 39% disagreed and 32% replied “don’t know.”

Another question: “Biblical accounts of the bodily resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate. Only 20% agreed, 46% disagreed and, 34% responded with, they didn’t know.

An article on the study concluded that “I don’t know’ was the top response to many of the questions about Jesus and Christianity.

These matters of life and death are also matters of eternal life and eternal death.

So what to do with all those “I don’t knows” in our culture?

Maybe when they say, “I don’t know” they really mean “I don’t care either”.

That statement: “It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior,” should return us back to Matthew chapter 5, about “salt and light”.

Because we need to care about people, it’s part of the Great Commission”.

Matthew 28:18-20 Good News Translation (GNT)

¹⁸“I (Jesus) have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples... teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.

We are to make God known. We are to be the ones who communicate God’s awesomeness.

Why don’t people light a lamp and put it under a bowl... because it’s wasted effort. We are to bring the light of Christ to those around us. Through our good deeds we are bringing light to others.

Matthew 9:37-38 tells us there is a big harvest but not many workers.

In a world full of hungry people, it’s heartbreaking to see spiritually starving people but few to tell them about Christ’s love.

Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel. Along with that be on the lookout for the opportunities that God is going to open for you.

Make sure your conversations are winsome and reflect the grace of the Gospel.

You may feel you don't have anything to share, but that's not true. You have many life experiences that God wants to use to bring others into his family.

Your testimony is the story of how Christ has made a difference in your life. Peter tells us 1 Peter 2:9 Living Bible (TLB)

⁹...you have been chosen by God himself—you are priests of the King, you are holy and pure, you are God’s very own—all this so that you may show to others how God called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.

This is the essence of witnessing – you share your personal experiences with the Lord.

In a courtroom, a witness doesn’t argue the case, or press for a verdict; that is what an attorney does.

Witnesses just tell what happened to them. Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses." (Acts 1:8 NIV)

Jesus wants you to tell your story to others. Your story is unique. There's no other story just like yours, so only you can share it.

You don't have to be a Bible scholar, but you are the authority on your life, and what Christ has done and continues to do in your life.

When you share your personal testimony people will see you as a satisfied customer. Personal stories are easier to relate to than principles, and people love to hear them. It's how to capture the attention of a "I don't care culture".

Remember who you are and to whom you belong.

AMEN