

02 - INWARD AND OUTWARD SINS

7.) Blessed Are the Peacemakers

- ✓ Jesus isn't speaking to politicians or world diplomats in this verse. He's talking to Christians! When are Christians "peacemakers"? When they're bringing *others* into peace with God! (Rom. 10:15, Eph. 6:15). What's the blessing? We'll be known as the (huios) mature sons of God. Partners with Him in the Gospel.
- ✓ (The persecution in the *next* Beatitude is likely the result of the witnessing we did in *this* one.)

Jesus' Definition of Witnessing

- ✓ When I say the word "witnessing", everyone gets a different mental picture. Some probably imagine a guy standing on the street corner preaching thru a megaphone. Others picture someone knocking on doors or passing out tracts. (For most of us, those things aren't very appealing ... which is why a lot of us don't witness.) But Jesus paints a *different* picture of sharing our faith.

John 3:11 – "We **speak what we know** and **tell what we have seen**, but you don't receive our **witness**."

- ✓ According to Jesus, witnessing consists of two things: Speaking what you know, and telling what you've seen. That's true in a court of law! If you're a "witness" in a court case, nobody expects you to be a detective or a forensic expert! They just want to know two things: "What did you see?" and "What do you know?". ("Thank you. You may step down".) Witnessing for God deals with the same 2 things.

The Holy Spirit Takes It From There!

"When the Holy Spirit comes, **He will reprove (convict and convince)** the world about sin, about being right with God, and about judgment." (John 16:8)

- ✓ Who does the **convicting**? The Holy Spirit. (You're *not* called to convict people of their sin! I've seen Christians try! It's never pretty.) Another Question: Who does the **convincing**? It's still the Holy Spirit! (It's not your job to do *that* either!)
- ✓ Sometimes Christians Think: "I've got to **convince** people that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He died for their sins and rose again." No, you don't! Your job is to tell them what you've seen and what you know. The Holy Spirit takes it from there. He does the convicting. He does the convincing. And He draws the sinner to Jesus (Acts 6:44 Amp.). He does the bulk of the work. (But He can't do *His* job until you do *yours*.)

There Are Two Elements in Our Witnessing

Matt. 5:13-14 – "You are the **salt** of the earth ... You are the **light** of the world ..." (Those are both symbolic.)

- ✓ "Salt" represents your words (Col. 4:6) and "light" represents your actions (Mt. 5:16). You need both! Neither one is effective by itself.
- ✓ If all you do is *preach* at people (with your **words**), but your **actions** don't line up, people will call you a "hypocrite", and they'll reject what you say. On the other hand, if you just **live right** (but you never open your **mouth** and tell people about Jesus) ... they can't get saved that way, either. You need words *and* actions to be effective!

"HOW" You Share Your Faith is Important

- ✓ Isn't it interesting that He chose two elements that, when you overdo them, they become obnoxious? (Too much *salt* ruins the food. Too much *light* blinds the eyes.) You don't have to overdo it! When it comes to witnessing, the strategy is simple: When it comes to the salt, "Shake don't pour".

Col. 4:5-6 – "**Be wise** in the way you act toward unbelievers. Let your speech be always with grace, **seasoned** with salt ...")

- ✓ When it comes to the light, “Shine, don’t blind”. To say it another way: Your witnessing should be winsome!

A Warning About Your Lifestyle:

Matt. 5:13 – “You are the salt of the earth; but **if the salt has lost its savor (become tasteless)**, how can it be made salty again?”

- ✓ What does it mean to “lose your savor”? (Or “become tasteless”?)
- ✓ That phrase is one word in the Greek – “Moraino”. (It’s where we get the English word “moron”.) That’s the best witnessing advice I’ve ever heard! And it comes straight from Jesus: “Don’t act like a moron”. If you get caught sinning, you’ll lose your witness.

“How can it be made salty again? It’s no longer useful for anything, but to be thrown out, and trodden underfoot of men.”

STRATEGIES TO “WIN OVER SIN”

Switching From “OT Thinking” to “NT Thinking”:

- ✓ There’s a difference between “sin” in the OT and “sin” in the New Testament.
- ✓ In the OT, sin was an ACT. Take the example of adultery. He said, “Thou shalt not **COMMIT** adultery.”
- ✓ The word “commit” refers to an *action*. When you “hopped into bed” with someone that wasn’t your spouse, and had sexual relations with them, THEN you were guilty of adultery. Not before. (In the Old Testament, you were guilty when the ACT took place)
- ✓ In the NT, sin is determined at the point of DECISION (or intention).

Matt. 5:27-28 – “You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not **commit** adultery (the act): But I tell you, if anyone looks at a woman in such a way as deliberately to awaken within himself, the

*forbidden desire for her, he has already committed adultery with her **in intention**.” (Barclay’s Translation – parenthesis mine)*

- ✓ In the New Testament, you’re guilty at the point of *intention* – when it’s in your heart to do it. (“Boy, if I could, I sure would!”)

The Same Is True With Murder

- ✓ In the OT, murder was an ACT. When I took out my sword and slashed you up, and you bled out & died – at that point, I was guilty of murder. (Not before.)
- ✓ But look at John’s words in the NT: “Whoever **HATES** his brother is a murderer.” (1 Jn. 3:15). In the NT, when I reach the point of hatred, and say in my heart, “I wish you were dead”, God says, “You’re guilty”.
- ✓ In the OT, I was guilty when I *did* it. In the NT, I’m guilty when I *wished* you were dead. Now, let me ask you: WHICH IS BETTER? (You’d almost think the Old Testament was better. “At least I wasn’t guilty until I did it!” But *think* with me.)

OT & NT – It’s the Holy Spirit That Convicts of Sin:

- ✓ But He doesn’t convict until a sin has taken place. So, in the OT, I get angry with you. I take out my sword and slice you to pieces. At that point, a sin has been committed. So, the Holy Spirit moves in with conviction. I look down at you and go, “Oops!” (I might *regret* my actions at that point. But it’s a little late! You’re dead.)
- ✓ But, in the NT, I get angry enough (and hate you enough) to wish you were dead. A sin has been committed. So, the Holy Spirit moves in with conviction. I can *respond* to that conviction and repent before the outward act ever takes place. (Now, which is better? The NT!)
- ❖ **Strategy # 1** – **Deal with sin while it’s on the inside**. (If you deal with sin while it’s on the INSIDE, it’ll never get to the OUTSIDE.)