

**“You are the light of the
world”**

The Christian and the Social Order

Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the light of the world”

Matthew 5:13-16

13 “You are the salt of the earth.

But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. 14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

“You are the light of the world”

“All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society.

Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ.”

“You are the light of the world”

John 3:3

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

“You are the light of the world”

Mark 12:29-31

29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **31** The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

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“...love of neighbor requires that we genuinely care about the shape of our society-its laws, its customs, and its moral texture.”

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The Establishment of Righteousness

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“The good of the commonwealth is necessary a matter of Christian concern. Thus, when Christians oppose sin, both in its individual and cultural terms, we are motivated by Christian love and concern. Furthermore, we do not speak of sin as if we were not sinners. We speak to the larger society as sinners who have been redeemed and reborn by the power of Christ.”

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The Improvement of Society:

“In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography.”

We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.”

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Racism:

“This sin has been a blight in our nation’s history, and Christians bear a particular responsibility to identify racism as a sin that violates the character of God and the unity of humankind as made in God’s image.

Racism is a grievous sin that Christians are commanded to oppose. Furthermore, racism lies about God's purposes and God's glory."

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Revelation 7:9-10

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

10 And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

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Greed:

“Every generation has been guilty of the sin of greed. In our own day, driven by material ambition and a pervasive consumer culture, greed is an ever present temptation.”

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Luke 12:15

Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

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Sexual Immorality:

“The misuse, abuse, and corruption of sexuality are tragic hallmarks of modern times. We live in an increasingly pornographic society that celebrates the erotic at the expense of biblical sexuality and marriage.”

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“Adultery, homosexuality, cohabitation, premarital sex, and a seemingly endless variety of perversions and sexual sins are celebrated in the larger culture, are featured in entertainment, and are promoted as healthy to the young.

Christians must stand without apology against the corruption of God's gift of sexuality, and must speak specifically to the Bible's condemnation of sexual sin in every form."

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1 Corinthians 6:12-20

12 “I have the right to do anything,” you say — but not everything is beneficial.

“I have the right to do anything”— but I will not be mastered by anything.

13 You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”

17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. **18** Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. **19** Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20** you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

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Homosexuality:

“One of the greatest challenges today is to speak the truth about the sin of homosexuality. This requires Christian candor, compassion, and courage. We must be clear as the Bible about the true nature of this sin, even as we reach out to those who are trapped in sinful patterns of behavior with the grace and mercy of Christ.”

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Romans 1:24-27

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. **25** They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. **27** In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their [perversion] error.

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People in need:

“Christians also bear a responsibility to reach out to the less fortunate. The church and individual believers are to minister to the abused, the sick, the poor, and the outcast.”

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Luke 4:18-19

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

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Micah 6:8

**He has shown you, O mortal,
what is good. And what does
the LORD require of you? To
act justly and to love mercy and
to walk humbly with your God.**

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Isaiah 1:17

**Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed. Take up
the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.**

“You are the light of the world”

James 1:27

**Religion that God our Father
accepts as pure and faultless is
this: to look after orphans and
widows in their distress and to
keep oneself from being
polluted by the world.**

“You are the light of the world”

James 2:14-17

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? **15** Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food..

16 If one of you says to them,
“Go in peace; keep warm and
well fed,” but does nothing about
their physical needs, what good
is it? **17** In the same way, faith by
itself, if it is not accompanied by
action, is dead.

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The Defenseless:

“In our culture Christians must speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. One important dimension of this task is the church’s opposition to abortion. Based on our conviction that all human life is sacred from conception until natural death,

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Christians must oppose abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide, human cloning, and any technology or research that involves the destruction of a human embryo. Christians should be at the forefront of efforts to preserve and protect all human life, including the life of the unborn, the aged, the sick, and outcasts of society.”

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Genesis 1:27

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

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Psalm 139:13-16

13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. **14** I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. **16** Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

“You are the light of the world”

Isaiah 44:24

**“This is what the LORD says —
your Redeemer, who formed you
in the womb: I am the LORD,
the Maker of all things, who
stretches out the heavens, who
spreads out the earth by myself,**

“You are the light of the world”

Jeremiah 1:4-5

4 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, **5** “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

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Ephesians 2:10

**For we are God’s handiwork,
created in Christ Jesus to do
good works, which God
prepared in advance for us to do.**

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“Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.”

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Amos 5:24

**But let justice roll on like a
river, righteousness like a
never-failing stream!**

Applications

- **Help those in need**
- **Stand up against evil**
- **Spread the Good News**

Final Thoughts

Romans 12:1-2

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship. **2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.