

Be Different!
Matthew 4:23-5:2; 5:28-29

I. We are called to be different from the world.

- A. When God called Israel, he said, "Be different."
 - 1. Be different than the Egyptians.
 - 2. Be different than the Canaanites.
- B. So, God gave Israel the Law of Moses.
 - 1. The Law was a reflection of God's values.
 - (a) Righteousness and justice.
 - (b) Love of God and love of people.
 - 2. Israel struggled to follow the Law and be different.
 - (a) "Give us a king so we can be like the other nations."
 - (b) They followed the nations into idolatry and false worship.
 - 3. Because of fallenness and sin, they were prone to corruption.
 - (a) They became like their pagan neighbors.
 - (b) They fell under the judgment of God.
- C. Jesus arrives. Once again, he calls us to be different.
 - 1. He preaches, calling people to repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.
 - (a) People were being called back to God as King.
 - (b) But the Kingdom was not of this world.
 - (c) It is a spiritual Kingdom, where God reigns.
 - 2. Jesus is on a mission of redemption.
 - (a) He will set the captives free.
 - (b) He will call people to be reconciled to God.
 - (c) He calls us out of the kingdom of darkness into light.
 - (d) This will require his death and resurrection.
 - 3. Now, Jesus is the reigning King.
 - (a) We enter his kingdom by grace, through faith (trust).
 - 4. King Jesus calls us to join his mission.
 - (a) Raise up "disciples" who will follow the King.
 - (b) These disciples are called to be different, too.
 - (c) But there are significant changes from the Old Testament.
 - 5. Followers of Christ have a new power (Holy Spirit).
 - (a) The King works in us to transform our lives.
 - (b) He is renewing our hearts and minds to be like him.

II. The "Sermon on the Mount" speaks of the repentance and righteousness of God's Kingdom.

- A. What are we to be like? We are to be different. Set apart.
 - 1. Verse 6:8 says, "Do not be like them..."

- (a) That is the main theme.
 - (b) People who know God are to be different.
- 2. So, Matthew contrasts how we are to live with how the world lives.
 - (a) With the pagans ("Do not keep on babbling like pagans")
 - (b) With religious hypocrites ("Do not pray or give for show.")
 - (c) With the legalists (Lust in your heart and you commit adultery).
 - B. Who is Jesus preaching to?
 - 1. Some say his disciples because of Matthew 5:1-2.
 - (a) John Stott
 - 2. He is actually speaking to his disciples and to a crowd.
 - (a) He was travelling and preaching (Matthew 4:23).
 - (b) He was doing miracles of healing and deliverance (Matthew 4:24).
 - (c) A great crowd began to follow him (Matthew 4:25).
 - 3. Chapter 5 tells us he went up on the mountainside to preach.
 - (a) However, he has gone off with his disciples.
 - (b) They are with him as he does ministry.
 - (c) The crowds are hearing also (Matthew 7:28-29).

III. Who is the sermon for? Is it practical and applicable?

- A. Jesus is speaking to both the crowd and to his disciples.
 - 1. Not all of the crowd will come to faith.
 - (a) Some are there for the miracle show.
 - (b) Some are there for bread and miracles (my needs).
 - (c) Yet, this teaching will profoundly impact the world.
 - 2. Before Jesus came, the pagan world was all about power and survival.
 - (a) There was no ethic of love your neighbor.
 - (b) World systems will change as the Gospel advances.
 - (c) But, in some ways the change will be superficial.
 - 3. Those who believe (disciples) will be changed internally.
 - (a) The love of God will initiate love between people.
- B. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to be like him.
 - 1. It is his character that is humble, meek, pure in heart.
 - 2. He is the salt of the earth, the light of the world.
 - 3. He is the one who fulfills the Law.
 - 4. He is devoted to his Father without hypocrisy.
- C. Yes, this sermon is practical and applicable.
 - 1. Let's ask God to prepare our hearts.
 - 2. Let's ask, "God, how do you want me to be different?"