

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Sermon on the Mount

Week 31

Blessed, Light, and Salt

Matthew 7:21 - 23

Opening Prayer:

The Call

The call to us at a time when great pieces of the future crumble in life is not so much to faith as it is to hope. Depression is the seedbed of hopelessness, the loss of surety that life must still somehow be full of good, however impossible it is to remember it, to see it, to trust it at this moment.

Hope does not tell us that soon life will be the same again as it was before the loss. No, hope tells us that the pieces are there for us to put together, if only we will give ourselves to the doing of it.

When Jesus dies on the cross something entirely different rises. And that something is the call to us to make the best in life live again.

The 12th station of the cross brings us face to face with the finality of defeat. Some things don't have a happy ending in life. They just grind on until loss becomes the new normal.

Sometimes we fail...

Sometimes we're beaten...

Sometimes we're lost...

Sometimes we're abandoned by the very people we love most in life and
who we thought also loved us...

Sometimes we learn that there's no going back to things that once were,
but are no more.

The question with which the 12th station confronts us is an awesome one. Am I able to accept the daily deaths of life, both the great ones and the small, knowing that death is not the end of life, only it's passing over to something new in me? Hopefully, I learn from Jesus who gave up himself, his mission, his life in ways that all seemed totally wrong, that the deaths I died may bring new life to the world around me as well.

When we take hold of life with all its deaths and all its resurrections, life becomes an eternal hotbed of creation given into the hands of the creature so that creation can go on creating.

Reflection

Once again, Jesus issues a reminder about what is needed to be considered His disciple.

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name? Did we not drive out demons in Your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in Your name? Then I will declare to them solemnly, I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers." Matthew 7:21 – 23

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has been painting a clear image of the kind of kingdom into which He invites us. We have been reflecting on that image in both our study of the Sermon and in last year's reflections on The Beatitudes, and perhaps have struggled with the inner transformation needed to bring about such a kingdom. The struggle often lies in turning inward and engaging in a deep listening to the inner voices of our heart, something many of us are not accustomed to doing. Because it can be very uncomfortable to do this, we may be tempted to focus our energies on our actions, on the outward expression of these teachings, and avoid the inner work needed. This, however, is not enough to enter Jesus' kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom that Jesus is offering is much more than outward actions; it entails an intimate encounter with our Lord, an inner transformation of our heart. To pledge allegiance to our Lord and to show that by doing good works are good things to do and, in many ways, help us get to that inner transformation called for by Jesus. But, if we are focused only on outer actions and don't allow for our interior conversion, we run the risk of Jesus saying to us, "I never knew you. Depart from me."

So what can we do to keep striving towards this inner conversion? First, try to remember who Jesus says we are: blessed, light, and salt. We are beloved children of God, continuously connected to Him, and called to bring His love and reconciliation into the world. We are also called by many other names, names that are true but only describe part of us: tall, short, mother, husband, real estate broker, lawyer, teacher. Sometimes we believe and live out of these identities rather than our true identity. Reminding ourselves, and others, of who we are created to be helps keep our priorities aligned and our focus on Jesus. Finally, incorporating a regular spiritual practice, such as "The Examen", helps us humbly reflect on and become aware of those areas in our heart still calling for transformation. We can then invite the Holy Spirit to bring about that conversion in our heart.

With a truly transformed heart, we live in a way so that all we say and do is grounded in divine love and a pure heart. Then will Jesus say to us, "Well done, my good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25: 23)

Reflection Question: Does Jesus Know Me? What is my next step toward inner conversion?

Closing Prayer

Speak to Jesus about what is on your heart, then rest in silence for a few moments listening for His response.