

The World Needs Someone Like You

By Bobby Schuller

Today we're beginning a series where we're going to talk about what Jesus said about life. Every couple of years.. you know I love the Sermon on the Mount. I studied it for years and years. I've translated it from Greek to English. I studied under Dallas Willard who was also a big Sermon on the Mount guy, and so I love to preach it but I've done it to death, in a way.

So I'm going to try, and in this series, pull from the gospels a lot, but I'm going to move off of Matthew a bit and we're going to talk about how Jesus gives you the opportunity to be totally alive. That when Jesus talks about eternal life, he's not just talking about going to heaven when you die, and he is talking about that, but he's also talking about how to be totally alive today! I want that, you want that, too. And he gives us a road map for that and so we're going to spend the next few months, actually, studying that, on how to be alive. Yes, that's right. It's the Narrow Path. How to be alive.

Jesus begins in the Sermon on the Mount by affirming that everyone in his audience is called, loved, powerful, and valuable. Now this was remarkable in his day because the religious people in Jesus' day liked to say some people are out and some people are in, and the way that you get in is by doing things the right way and not being sick. I hate to say that. But people like lepers, and people with bleeding diseases

were believed to be cursed by God because of a sin of their parents or something like that. So there was this system in place where some people were in, and some people were out.

Jesus comes on the scene in the gospel of Mathew in chapter 5, and he begins with the beatitudes in which he says that everyone belongs. He begins by saying “blessed are the poor in spirit.” Being poor in spirit is not a virtue. That’s a misunderstanding of the passage. Poor in spirit means you’re spiritually bankrupt. Blessed are you if you mourn. Blessed are you if you’ve been a doormat your whole life. In Luke, he says blessed are you if you’re poor, if you’re persecuted, if you’re unwanted, if you’re uninvited. Jesus says to these people you are called, you are loved, you are light, you are salt.

And I want to hang on that just for a minute. Many of us we think that God always calls the brightest and the best. In 1st Samuel, the people of Israel don’t have a king. They have judges, but they always say God is our king. And in the story the Jewish people decide one day that they want a king. And they pick this guy Saul. Saul is regal, he’s tall, he’s handsome, he’s kingly. He looks, acts and sounds just like a king. They make him king. And he becomes a tyrant, he becomes an evil guy, he treats people poorly and he’s a terrible king. And then God tells Samuel I’m going to call a new king. So he says Samuel, go to Bethlehem, incidentally, where the family of the Jesse’s are. Jesse’s household is there. So go to Jesse’s house.

And when he arrives Samuel the prophet, everyone in Bethlehem is scared because back then prophets weren't always bringing good news. And they said are you here to condemn us? And he said no, we're going to make a sacrifice together, which essentially means we're going to have a party. We're going to have a party and make a sacrifice to God.

Now the bible doesn't say this, but I always believe that Samuel did this party sacrifice thing as a bit of a veil, a guise to snoop around Jesse's family and see who the king was. Samuel was led by the Holy Spirit and was supposed to discern by listening and feeling from the Holy Spirit who this next king was.

So Jesse comes and he brings his son, and he sees the eldest son Eliab. And he looks at Eliab and the bible says he looks and says "surely this is God's anointed." Because Eliab was tall, he was handsome, he was the eldest. He had all the things that made him look kingly. And the bible says this: "God said to Samuel, do not consider his appearance, or his height for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." The Lord looks at the heart. The Lord looks at the heart.

And so one at a time, all of these sons were brought before Samuel and he keeps thinking this is the one. And God says no, that's not him, that's not him, that's not him. And finally he thinks he's gone through all the sons and Samuel says to Jesse, the dad, "is this it? Are these all your

sons?” And it always breaks my heart Jesse’s response. He says oh, like kind of scratches his head and he goes well there’s, I mean I guess there’s David.

Just like hold onto that for a second. A big honor. A big celebration. A big party in a little town. If you’ve ever lived in a little town a big party is a big deal. If the fair comes to town or something like that, everyone wants to go. David was obviously told stay back, take care of the sheep, all of your brothers and I are going to the sacrifice. You get to stay. He’s uninvited. Obviously his brothers and dad don’t see a whole lot in him. And Samuel says “we will not sit down until he is here.” And when David comes, he is the chosen one because of his heart.

And by the way, the heart is not all about emotions. In the bible, the heart is about will. It’s about what you choose to do. It’s about courage! It’s about being the one that in spite of not being the tallest, the best looking, the most regal, you say yes Lord, I say yes, I will do what you call me to do. It’s about the heart! And David is anointed.

And it says when he was anointed the spirit of the Lord came upon him and remained with him. David was not a perfect guy. David made lots of mistakes, was even, in a way, a murderer. And in spite of that, God continued to use him to do a lot of good in the world.

We don’t have time to get into that story and explain why, but it’s important to know that in our lives, we think of all sorts of reasons why God can’t use us. We think of all of our flaws and sins and mistakes and

we explain to God over and over, God you don't understand. I can't do that. Don't you know who I am? And you know what God says to you? He says I know exactly who you are. You're my beloved child. You have everything it takes. You have everything you need. You're salt and you're light and the world needs you.

And I guess that's what I want to get across to you today. Very often in church, we talk about how God loves us and God wants us, but sometimes that can feel like well God wants us, but the world wants nothing to do with us, or the world doesn't need us. But Jesus says to these people, okay, so go back to the scene. Here's Jesus on a hill, and there's thousands of people. And most of them are riffraff and vagabonds and ragamuffins and all sorts of old terms. And he says to these outcasts who are not religious, who are probably there to get a miracle or see something cool happen and he just says to them you are light, and you are salt.

Something I really want to point out here. Notice how Jesus doesn't say to them if you believe in me, you'll become the light of the world. I mean that's true, we got to believe in Jesus, but he doesn't say that. And he doesn't say work hard and become the light and the salt of the earth. Or he doesn't say if you read the bible or if you do everything I tell you to do, then you'll be salt and light. What does he do? He just says you are salt. You are light. That's what Jesus does. You notice how Jesus never prays for the sick? He heals sick people all the time but he doesn't

pray for them. When it's a leper, he goes up to the leper and he says be cleansed. He doesn't say, God, please heal this leper, he just says be cleansed. And he says, Lazarus, rise up and walk. And he says be healed. She is not dead, she's sleeping. Jesus commands. He affirms. He says with his mouth things that aren't and they become so.

Incidentally, that's a big reason why I preach the way I do. Very often, I don't say be stronger, I say you are strong. I don't say be righteous, I say you are the righteousness of Christ because that's how Jesus preached. He didn't say become the light of the world, become the salt of the earth, he said you are the light of the world, you are the salt of the earth. And that is so important. Its positive affirmation and positive reinforcement is so much better than criticism. And yes, there are times when we have to be critical, we have to work on things we don't want to talk about, but if it's possible, positive reinforcement is always better.

Think about if you're at a party and I used the analogy before. Imagine you're at a party and there's Joe. Some guy name Joe who's super rude to everybody all the time. And there at the party, Joe opens the door for you just like it's once in a blue moon. He happens to open the door for you and you just stop for a minute and you say Joe, you know, I just want to say I really appreciate you opening the door for me. I've had a rough day and people oftentimes ignore me but you opened the door for me and it probably seems like no big thing to you, but you're so polite and you're such a nice guy and you're so just polite all the time. I

really appreciate that. Thank you. And if you said that genuinely and then went along, you just watch how Joe the rest of the night is going to be like opening doors for people and washing dishes, right? Because when we see the best in people, we draw the best out of them. When we see the worst in people, we draw the worst out of them.

There was someone in my family who used to call me clumsy all the time. I'm not a clumsy person, but when I was around her, I was clumsy. I was messing things. And then she would say it again, oh you're so clumsy. And I'm like no I'm not, and then knock a cup over. And that's the thing. When people speak over us bad things, it's so easy for us to lean into that and own it as a part of who we are. And when people speak good things into our lives, it draws the best out of us. Positive reinforcement, it's all about that.

And so I want to say to you, that God is declaring that over you. Not that it's going to be so, but he needs you to know what's already there. That you're already salt, you're already light, you already have it in you. Just release it. Let it go. Open it up. Give it to the world. The world needs your salt and your light.

Now we're used to this phrase salt of the earth because we say it all the time, oh he's the salt of the earth, he's such a great guy. But Jesus invented the saying. And have you ever really thought about it, like why salt of all things, like why not the, I don't know, something else. There's good reason for it. In the ancient world, salt was very valuable.

Everybody had a little bit of salt, but not much because it was like truffles. It's like this thing that.. people didn't have a lot of it. Not only tasted delicious, but it was necessary for life because we don't realize, you know, everybody in this building has probably always had a fridge, except my grandma Persley. She apparently had in the Ozarks, a hole where she put ice. But anyway, I digress.

In an age without refrigeration, the only way to preserve most food was to salt it, so you'd pickle stuff and you'd need brine salt water to do that. You'd salt your meats. So in order for a city or civilization to grow, it needs access to salt or else it can't preserve its food. It needs salt and it needs water. So because of that, salt becomes this very expensive, valuable commodity, and actually because it's so universally needed, becomes the main way that people are paid. Did you know that? Like for a long time, Roman soldiers were paid in salt or a salary. That's where you get the term salary. Oh, light bulb, right? And you go on and on. I mean there's salami is salted meat, salad is a salted vegetables, there's other ones. Anyway, I go on and on.

But the most important thing to know is that Christ is affirming in you how valuable you are. You're extremely valuable. And in the same way a town needs salt to exist and to eat, the world needs you. You're so valuable. He says you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its saltiness, it's no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled by men. And you have to ask yourself have I lost my saltiness?

Sounds like a pirate, doesn't it. Ya'ar, salty pirate. Have I lost my saltiness? I am salt, but am I being salty? Am I releasing all the flavor and the enthusiasm and the value that makes me who I am. You are salt so be salty.

And he says you are light and the light is knowledge but light also in the bible really is about being powerful. The old axiom knowledge is power, well that was certainly true for the philosophical Jews and Greeks. They equated knowledge and power. So being light is a combination of both being powerful and being wise or being knowledgeable. And he says you have knowledge. You have treasures in you that are so valuable.

John Osteen, Joel Osteen's dad, who built that church into a mega church; I think he got it up to like 6,000 people before he died and handed it off to his son Joel, preached in a church of like 200 people, I want to say it was like 30 years in a feed barn. And he was just faithful for all that time. And his other daughter Lisa said that one of the things that turned it around that made it go from 200 to 6,000 quickly is the Lord said to him preach what you take for granted. Talk about what you think is obvious. See that's the thing. You know so many things because it becomes such a part of you, you don't understand how they can be light, wisdom, guidance to other people. You're light. You're powerful. You're salt. You have everything this world needs to be better. You want to leave it better because God's called you to make it better.

And one of the greatest things about this passage in Matthew is that the guy writing is a tax collector and tax collector's are at the very bottom of the rung. They were thieves, they had sided with the Roman Empire, they were outsiders, tons of shame. And Matthew the tax collector is writing about the Sermon on the Mount, and he's listening going I'm not salt, I'm not light. And in the next chapter, Jesus walks up to Matthew and he says you, Matthew, come follow me. You can almost see him knock over his table. He says, yes Lord, I'll follow you anywhere you'll go. What an honor.

Maybe you're like Matthew. Maybe you come here today and you go I'm not salt, I'm not light. Bobby, you don't know what I've done. Or Bobby you don't know how bad I've messed up. Or Bobby I'm too old, or I'm not educated enough, or I'm too young. Or I've tried over and over and I just keep failing. Friend, I want you to know God is affirming today in your life you're salt and you're light and your best days are yet to come. Don't give up your hope. Don't throw away your tomorrow. Good things are coming. Amen?

You are salt and light! You are. You are salt and light. Confess it, proclaim it, believe it, own it. The world needs you. What do you confess over yourself? Catch yourself. I mean how often do we say: I'm such an idiot. Of course I messed up. I'm totally stressed out. I'm so worried. These types of things. It's good to be vulnerable and it's good to talk about our feelings, but I'm talking about the ways in which we kind of

compulsively say it. We're not sitting down with a cup of tea, opening up to a friend, we're just blurting out negative stuff all the time; negative confessions about ourselves and others. Stop doing that. Confess your sins, confess your mistakes, be vulnerable, be open, but don't just always compulsively say bad things about yourself. In fact I would love for you to take a risk and one of these days when you're feeling stressed, just say something like I'm feeling pumped or I don't know what you'd say; I'm feeling relaxed or I am the salt of the earth, I'm the light of the world. It feels weird even saying it, doesn't it, but that's what God says over you. Confess it.

Maybe you're in a valley in your life. Hannah and I were in Switzerland and I took this cool picture. We'd always wanted to go here. We saw it on Pinterest, so we found it; this little house that is built on the side of a mountain. And actually the right side of that house is actually a mountain wall. So Hannah and I had to actually climb up there. You see all the snow. It was actually mid June, I think, late June. And the next day we almost got snowed in. It's only open during the summer, and it's very, very high in the Swiss Alps. And what that is is actually.. it's a kind of like a glorified campground. So they have these little houses all over the Alps where mountaineers and hikers can stay the night and get shelter from the snow and won't die in it and something. The amazing thing is they had a bunch of food and beer, and I asked them where did

you get all this beer and sausages and stuff? Helicopter comes and drops it in. Anyway, I thought that was cool. I digress.

But this is up from a little village called Appenzell. We were there doing ministry because of our Swiss office, and so we decided to take a few days extra. It's a mountaineering town. And one of the things I noticed is that there are two people in the little mountaineering village. There are the villagers who are just always there. They're doing life; they're never going up in the mountains. And then there's the other person. There's the mountaineer in the valley. And the reason they're there is not to be bored and sit around and do nothing. They're there to prepare for the next climb. In other words, there are two people in the valley. There are some who are complacent or stuck or in the rut, and then there's another type of person in the valley, the mountaineer who's preparing: the mountaineer who's getting the right tools, putting the plans together, who is meeting the right people, maybe training or resting. And where you are in your life, you may say Bobby, I've been in this valley for a long time and I just want to say to you you're in a time of preparation. You're not like the villagers who are going to be stuck there, you're the mountaineer that even though you're not on a mountain, you're getting the right tools. You're meeting the right people. You're resting. You're getting everything you need to get to the top.

And I want to just say to you that God is going to bring you up to the mountain. If you're on the top of the mountain right now, nobody

stays on top of the mountain, right? Unless you're dead. The only people who stay on top of the mountain are dead people. So life is that ebb and flow. There's the up and down-ness of mountains like the waves. Life is always a series of achievement and then letting go of your achievement so that you can achieve the next thing that God has for you. And that's a really great thing.

So as we talk about how to be alive, we have to know that we are salt, you are salt. You're light and the world needs you.

Well before we finish today, I always like to give everyone an opportunity to connect with God. And so today is a great day to become a Christian! What better day than today, right? We're thinking about the whole year is ahead of us. And maybe you're here today and you think Christians are so religious and they're mean or they're judgmental. Those people are bad Christians. They're not the good kind. The world needs good Christians like people that are not the bad kind. It needs someone like you. And today is a fantastic day to become a Christian.

So with everybody looking around, every head up, everybody just observing, I want to give you the opportunity today to become a believer. You say Bobby it is embarrassing. I don't want to be in front of all these people to do this. Look, the cool thing about becoming a Christian is it begins with an act of courage and how much more courageous than to stand in front of a thousand people and come down and confess Jesus Christ.

Are you at peace with God today? Are you at peace with yourself? If you need new life, I'm going to ask you now, right now, stand up, and come down here and let me pray for you. Just in front of everybody. Who cares. You don't need to be cool, just stand up right where you are, right in front of whoever it is, and come on down.

Jesus says if you confess me before men, I'll confess you before the Father but if you deny me before men, I'll deny you before the Father. I'm not here to condemn you, I'm here to love on you, to give you grace and to give you an opportunity that when the day comes when you breathe your last, that you know with confidence that you belong to Jesus Christ and you know where you're going, and to dedicate your life to serving him and loving him. The bible says today is the day of salvation. So you want it? Come get it. It's a free gift.

Thank you, friends. So we're going to pray together, and would you hold your hands out like this and can I ask do we have pastors and leaders? I want you to say this with me. And church, maybe when I became a Christian I had an offer to come down and I didn't actually go down, but I made a decision to believe in God that day, so maybe wherever you are, you're saying I still want to make this decision. Let's all say this together. Everyone hold your hands out like this and repeat after me: Jesus Christ, son of God have mercy on me, a sinner. I am now the righteousness of Christ. I am loved. I am forgiven. I belong. I am called. And I am favored. Write my name in the lamb's book of life and

teach me to be like Jesus. Fill me with your Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name,
amen.

Let's give them a hand. Thank you, guys.