

WEDNESDAY SERMON

HIDDEN HILLS SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

WILLOW, ALASKA

DATE: December 18, 2019

TEXT: Matthew 5:13-16

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 5:1-2, 13-16


SUBJECT: The Lord's Church is both salt and light

Preached September 25, 2011

Matthew 5:1-2, 13-16 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, . . .

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

The disciples of Jesus Christ are the salt of the earth. They are the element in the earth which keeps the whole earth from putrifying. If we, as God's children, have lost our savor – how shall the earth be salted or preserved? If we lose our savor – our saltiness – then we are good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men. The savor is the savory doctrines they preach – those things which are totally agreeable to the Holy Scriptures. This doctrine is full of Christ; it seeks to exalt him, and to magnify the grace of God. This is fitting for the lives of the saints according to godliness and tends to promote the same. The doctrine which they believe and




practice coupled with the savory manner of the lives of God's children makes them the salt. By their standing firm on the word of God and upon His Christ, God's children in the churches serve to contend with evil men and are a check on their wicked conduct. Not only did Jesus say his disciples are the salt of the earth, but they are . . .

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

While Jesus Christ was in the world, he was the light of the world. His people, while they go about ministering and caring for the LORD's good which He has entrusted to them, reflect the light of him in their lives – and are the light of the world. You and I, brother and sister-in-Christ are the light of this wicked world. The world is darkness and filled with darkness, but in that dark world shines the light of those who have entered in through the strait gate and are walking the narrow way which leads unto life.

It is an indisputable truth that a city that is set (or built) on a hill cannot be hid. Jesus is making a point about our being the light of the world. When men, in darkness, light a candle – they do not hide the candle under a bushel. A bushel was a container for dry measure – like our woven baskets that are often called bushels. A person who turned on a light in the darkness, then hid that light under a basket would be counted very foolish, would he not? – On the contrary – when men light a candle, they




put the lighted candle on a candlestick so that it gives light unto all that are in the house. The Lord has said we are the light of the world – He has lighted our candle, so to speak. He has made us the light of the world! Please, do not discount that marvelous fact!

**In Paul's letter to the church of God at Philippi -
Philippians 2:14-16** *Do all things without murmurings
and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and
harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of
a crooked and perverse nation, **among whom ye shine
as lights in the world;***

Would not the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, have us put our light on a candlestick or a lampstand? So that all in this the dark world could have light? The light speaks of our life – the life of Christ that is in us. The candlestick speaks of the Lord's church or churches. Let's see what he says in the next verse.


16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Let your so light so shine before men, -- The little word 'so' is an adverb which modifies the verb shine. Our light is to so shine. What did Jesus mean by using this little two letter word in his statement? I looked up the adverb 'so' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It means: 1. In the way or manner described, indicated, or suggested, in that style or fashion. Contextually the sense may be 'in the same way,' 'by that



means.’ Jesus speaks about you and I as the light of the world – and he would have our light SO shine before men. That is, in the same manner, as any man would place his lighted candle on a candlestick. Does a candlestick have an explanation in the scripture. Let us see:


Revelation 1:12-20 *And I <John> turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw **seven golden candlesticks**; **13** And in the midst of **the seven candlesticks** [one] like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. **14** His head and [his] hairs [were] white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes [were] as a flame of fire; **15** And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. **16** And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance [was] as the sun shineth in his strength. **17** And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: **18** [I am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. **19** Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; **20** **The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.** The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and **the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.***




Thus, we conclude that a candlestick is a church. That is what the scripture says! What is a church? – is it is a called-out assembly of scripturally Baptized believers who have agreed together to carry out the commands of their Lord. The Greek word for church is eklessia and is found 115 times in the New Testament. The vast majority of the times, the term speaks of a local, visible congregation. Examples: The church at Jerusalem; the church at Antioch; the church of God at Cornith; the churches of Galatia; the church at Rome; the church in their house, et al.

If a church is said to be a candlestick – and it certainly is; then what is the obvious meaning of Jesus words – that we should let our light **so** (in the same way – in like manner) shine? Does he mean for his disciples to place their light in a church? Indeed he does, as the whole tenor of the New Testament shows us. Once we are born of God – have entered through the strait gate – the narrow way is that way which is spoken about in the New Testament. We cannot expect that the world shall have light from us except that we have set our light on the candlestick – the church. Is the church important? Indeed, she is.


- The church is the bride of Christ. (John 3:29)
- The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. (1Ti. 3:15)
- The church is the body of Christ. (1Co. 12:27)

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- The church is God's holy nation – his royal priesthood – his peculiar people. (1Pe 2:9)
 - The church gives honor to God both now and for all of eternity. (**Ephesians 3:20-21** Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, **21** Unto him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.)
 - The church shows the principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. (**Ephesians 3:8-11** Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; **9** And to make all [men] see what [is] the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: **10** To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly [places] might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, **11** According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
 - The Lord's people were gathered in churches during the NT era and throughout history. There are no lone rangers! As believers, we need one another for mutual encouragement and spiritual growth. It is in the church where we are taught to observe all things which the LORD commanded us. It is where we grow up spiritually – to be



more and more like Christ in our life and walk. The New Testament shows the LORD moving believers into churches.


- **[At Jerusalem] Acts 2:40-41** *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls.*
- **[Saul tried to join, then Barnabas recommended him] Acts 9:26-28** *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought [him] to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.*
- **[At Antioch] Acts 11:19-26** *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And*



*the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. **22** Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. **23** Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. **24** For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. **25** Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: **26** And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year **they assembled themselves with the church**, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

That they may see your good works, -- It is God's intention that those around us observe the good works that we do – so that the heavenly Father is glorified. It is only as we voluntarily place our light on the candlestick that men may see our good works. After having been born again and being baptized, it is the scriptural pattern – as we have seen - that men and women walk together in the church(es). You and I have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

And glorify your Father which is in heaven. -- The church of Jesus Christ is the entity through which God receives his glory. God's glory does not come to him through mission boards, radio broadcasts, conventions, bible schools, and evangelistic



associations – but through His churches. The church is people – an assembly of Baptized Believers! Christ gave himself for the church.


Ephesians 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

Some may say, I want to glorify my heavenly Father, but how do I know what is a proper and scriptural church? We know Jesus founded his church during his earthly ministry. He said, “Upon this rock (speaking of himself), I will build *my church* . . .”

Well, we know the Catholic (neither Roman or Greek), cannot be the church of Christ, for it was founded by a man about 313 AD, going on 400 years too late to be the church that Jesus built. Catholic doctrines are far from the Holy Scriptures. In fact, their doctrine holds that their tradition is equal (and often) superior to the Holy Scriptures. We know the Lutherans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Church of England had human founders who both retained Roman Catholic “baptism” and kept many of the catholic beliefs and practices.

- Out of them came all branches of Lutheranism,
- both the Southern and Cumberland Presbyterians, the
- Episcopalians – Methodists, Nazarenes, and all Pentecostal and Holiness movements.

Then, there are the restorationists. We know that both the Church of Christ, and Disciples of Christ had their origin under Alexander Campbell, a Presbyterian preacher of some sort who was baptized by a Baptist preacher without church authority –




then went on to believe the catholic doctrine of baptismal regeneration. This movement began in the mid 1800's. We know the Mormons (Latter day saints) had their origins from Joseph Smith and began on April 6, 1830. The Mormons, like the church of Christ or Disciples of Christ claim the church went out of existence in 70 AD – and they were restoring the pure church. Jesus had told the church this:

“Upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”


“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (age).”

The Lord's statements assure us that the church would never go out of existence until he returns – and we affirm that it never has gone out of existence – nor has it been in either the Catholic or Protestant movements – or the restorationists! No, the churches can be identified by certain marks pointed to by their enemies. And what are these marks that identify the Lord's churches through the centuries and on to this present time? True churches are seen with these characteristics:

1. Its Head and Founder--CHRIST. He is the law-giver; the Church is only the executive. (Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:18)
2. Its only rule of faith and practice--THE BIBLE. (II Tim. 3:15-17)

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3. Its name--"CHURCH," "CHURCHES." (Matt. 16:18; Rev. 22:16)
 4. Its polity--CONGREGATIONAL--all members equal. (Matt. 20:24-28; Matt. 23:5-12)
 5. Its members--only saved people. (Eph. 2:21; I Peter 2:5)
 6. Its ordinances--BELIEVERS' BAPTISM, FOLLOWED BY THE LORD'S SUPPER. (Matt. 28:19-20)
 7. Its officers--PASTORS AND DEACONS. (I Tim. 3:1-16)
 8. Its work—Preaching the gospel – making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them ("to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"). (Matt. 28:16-20)
 9. Its financial plan—Freewill offerings from its members as they purpose in their heart to give.
 10. Its weapons of warfare--spiritual, not carnal. (II Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-20)
 11. Its independence--separation of Church and State. (Matt. 22:21) That is, that no state has the right to establish a national church and declare it to be the official religion of the nation.

Let your light **so** shine that men may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven – by putting your light on a lampstand



– the Lord’s Church! This is Jesus’ commandment to his own! And to the child of God – his commandments are not grievous!