

# Matthew 5:1-16

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[ 0 : 00 ] The question I would like to ask this morning is, what is a Christian? It's an important question to ask because if we are Christians we need to know what we are.

And if you're not a Christian you need to know what becoming a Christian entails. And if you are a Christian and you want to make disciples, as Jesus says in the Great Commission, then we need to know what we're going out to make.

What is a Christian? What would you say if I came up to you right now and asked you what is a Christian?

What would be your immediate automatic response to that question? What would you say? Well to answer the question I'm going to look at the passage we read there in Matthew 5 from verse 1 to verse 16.

And we'll find four things in these verses that tell us what a Christian is. First of all verse 1. We'll read verse 1 and 2.

[ 1 : 11 ] Note the action of Jesus.

We read in chapter 4 how he was going around. He was preaching. People were following him. He was healing the sick of all kinds of diseases and illnesses.

And there were crowds following him. And then we read here that when he saw these crowds, it's as if they're following behind and Jesus sort of stops and looks.

And he sees there's these thousands of people following. What does he do? He does something quite remarkable. He goes on a mountainside and he sits down.

Now we know how Jesus felt when he saw the crowds. Because scripture tells us he loved them. He sees the crowds as sheep without a shepherd. Lost.

[ 2 : 09 ] He cares for them. He wants to do them good. But here we see almost he's ignoring the crowds. He's going up on the mountainside and he's sitting down.

And he's doing that because he's about to teach the disciples. He's thinking strategically. He's looking ahead. How best can Jesus help the people that are following him?

The best way is to teach the disciples, to equip the disciples so that they can then go and help the crowds. So that's the action of Jesus.

Now note the action of the disciples. What do they do? Well they see Jesus and they go to him.

That's what it says. His disciples came to him. And he began to teach them.

Saying the disciples came to Jesus. And this is the first point of what a Christian is. A Christian is someone who goes to Jesus. We might not say anything else this morning.

[ 3 : 10 ] But if you learn that. A Christian is someone who comes to Jesus. Then that is the fundamental foundation. That is what a Christian is. Someone who goes to Jesus.

Someone who follows Jesus. Are you following Jesus this morning? Are you apprenticing your life to Jesus?

We have apprentices today. People who learn a trade from someone who is more skilled than they are. That is what a disciple of Jesus is. Someone who goes to Jesus.

Someone who learns from Jesus. Learns the skills that he has and passes them on. That is what the disciples were doing here. It's a great picture to keep in our minds.

That the disciple is someone who goes to Jesus. Who sits at his feet. Who listens to him. Who is taught by him. Are you taught by Jesus? You say well I am an accountant.

[ 4 : 10 ] Or I am studying biology. Or I am at school. But through all these things. Our hearts. Our souls. Should be looking to say.

What is Jesus teaching me here and now. As I do this work. As I live my life. It wasn't just the disciples 2000 years ago. Who had to come to Jesus.

As the disciples today. We have to come to Jesus. Every morning. Every hour. Come to Jesus. So a disciple.

A Christian. Is someone who comes to Jesus. Who learns from Jesus. And that never stops. Never ends. Throughout our life. We will always need to go to Jesus.

To learn from him. To be taught by him. And as we come to his teaching here. What. We should come with reverence. With awe.

[ 5 : 05 ] Because these are the words of Jesus. This is what he taught. His disciples back then. What else is a Christian? Well verses 3 to 12.

We know the Beatitudes. A Christian. Is someone who is blessed. What's a Christian? Someone who is deeply happy.

What does blessed mean? Donald Hagner. Who has written a commentary. On the book of Matthew. Says this. It describes the nearly incomprehensible happiness.

Of those who participate. In the kingdom. Announced by Jesus. Incomprehensible happiness. If you're not a Christian.

You might look at a Christian. And think. Well that's far from what I see. And to look at some of us. That is what we think. We're not incomprehensibly happy. Maybe because we're not living.

[ 6 : 04 ] As disciples. Towards Jesus Christ. The incomprehensible happiness. Of those who participate. In the kingdom. Announced by Jesus. What was this kingdom? Well Matthew chapter 3.

Verse 2. John the Baptist preached. Repent. For the kingdom of heaven. Is near. And we read. In chapter 4. Jesus preached. The same thing. Verse 17.

Repent. For the kingdom of heaven. Is near. Then in Matthew chapter. 10. At verse 7. When the disciples. Are sent off. On a training mission.

What is the message. That they are to bring. As you go. Preach this message. The kingdom of heaven. Is near. The kingdom of heaven.

Is near. The beatitudes. Are announcing. To the crowds. To the disciples. That the kingdom of heaven. Is near. God's kingdom. God's way. God's rule.

[ 7 : 00 ] And plan. Is open. To anyone. Who wants to take part. In God's way. We all have kingdoms. Our own individual lives.

Our own plans. And purposes. And Jesus is preaching. Repent. From your way. Your plan. Sit down. And think about. The way you are going. Turn around.

And join. In God's kingdom. Go God's way. Instead of. Your way. That is the good news. The kingdom of heaven. Is open. To everyone.

Here. This morning. You can enter. In God's way. In God's kingdom. By sitting down. Considering. Your way. Seeing.

If it's the wrong way. And going. The right way. Going. God's way. Joining in. The kingdom. Of God. Notice the brackets.

[ 7 : 55 ] In verse 3. In verse 10. Blessed are the poor. In spirit. For theirs. Is the kingdom. Of heaven. Blessed are those. Who are persecuted. Because of righteousness. For theirs. Is the kingdom. Of heaven. A Christian.

Is someone. Who has accepted. This invitation. To enter. God's kingdom. And has then. Entered. God's kingdom. And in entering. God's kingdom.

You become. Blessed. Incomprehensibly. Happy. In your soul. At its root. Blessed. Simply means happy. But it's more than the.

Just the frivolous happiness. That the emotions. Bring to us. It's a soul happiness. That comes from being changed. From within. From moving. From darkness.

To light. From your way. To God's way. From your kingdom. To God's kingdom. A Christian. Is someone. Who is blessed.

[ 8 : 52 ] And lives then. In God's kingdom. Note the beatitudes. They speak of a condition. You are blessed. Blessed are. The poor in spirit.

Blessed are. Those who mourn. Blessed are. The meek. Blessed are. Blessed are. Blessed are. Blessed are. It's not something you become. It's something you are.

When you enter God's kingdom. You're automatically. Blessed. Deeply. Happy. In your soul. That's your condition. What are your characteristics?

Poor in spirit. You recognize you have nothing. Of worth. In your own soul. That you can offer to God. That God will say. Well done. You're worthy of coming in.

No. You're poor in spirit. You realize you cannot offer God anything. But God's in his mercy. And his grace. Says. Come in. Blessed are those who mourn.

[ 9 : 50 ] Blessed are the meek. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. The merciful. This is a portrait of what Jesus Christ was like. He was the one who was poor in spirit.

He was rich. But he left the glories of heaven. Came to earth. Became poor for our sake. He was the man of sorrows. He mourned.

He was the one who was meek. Gentle. And humble. In the spirit. Come to me. All you who are weary. That humility. That was willing to open up his arms.

And didn't turn away anyone. He was the one who was merciful. Think of him as he deals with the woman caught in adultery. Everyone's there with their stones ready to judge and condemn.

What does Jesus do? Gives her a second chance. The woman at the well. What a life she led. How easily it would have been to condemn her.

[ 10 : 48 ] What does Jesus do? Gives her life. Eternal life. Think of how he deals with the disciples. This motley crew. Fishermen. Zealots.

Tax collectors. All castaways from society. What does Jesus do? Gives them a second chance. He's merciful. He's pure in heart. Tempted in every way.

But yet was without sin. The peacemaker. Takes away the dividing wall of hostility. Between God and man. And makes peace. He was the one who was persecuted.

And killed. Character. Picture. Of Jesus Christ. What are we to look for as Christians? Those same characteristics.

Do you want to be a Christian who follows Jesus? Aim to become like Jesus. And then there are the rewards. The congratulations.

[ 11 : 46 ] I hesitated to use that word. But it worked in well with conditions. Characteristics. And congratulations. Why are we blessed in the kingdom of God? Not because we are poor in spirit.

But because we enter in to the kingdom. Not because we mourn. But because we are comforted. This is the reward. Comfort from the king of kings.

We inherit the earth. It's always great to receive an inheritance. However small or large it may be. But those who participate in the kingdom of God.

Inherit the earth. And then they will be filled. Hunger and thirst for righteousness. You will be filled. Satisfaction.

The world offers satisfaction in many ways. But never truly gives. Lasting satisfaction. Fulfilling satisfaction. Here the promise is.

[ 12 : 45 ] If we are hungering. And thirsting. You will be filled. No doubt about it. See God. No one can see God and live.

But the pure in heart. Spiritually. We can see God. Peacemakers. Peacemakers. We called sons of God. Developing in our hearts and in our souls.

The very family likeness of Jesus Christ. And then theirs is the kingdom of heaven again. So a Christian is someone who is blessed.

Who has moved from living in his own kingdom. To living in the kingdom of God. And because of that. Receives all these great blessings.

And rewards. From God. So the Christian is someone who follows Jesus. Someone who is blessed. Incomprehensibly happy.

[ 13 : 43 ] And then the Christian is salt. Verse 13. You are the salt of the earth. But if 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 by men. Note again. You are. It is not you will be.

Or after 15 years of apprenticeship to Jesus Christ. You are the salt. No it is you are. Simply you have moved. From darkness. To light. You are now.

As a believer. The salt. Of the earth. Well what was salt. Back then. Salt was a necessity. To preserve food. Today we have freezers.

We don't need salt. So we lose the meaning of the verse. Back then they only had salt. They needed it for survival. So Jesus is saying. That as a Christian.

[ 14 : 38 ] You are necessary. You are needed. For the survival. Of the world. The world would not survive. Without you. Following Jesus Christ. You might think.

Well my life isn't very important. There is nothing I give really. But by following Jesus Christ. You help the world. To survive.

You preserve the world. You are needed. Without you. The world would descend into chaos. And by a simple look at the world today.

We can see. Where there hasn't been. Much of a Christian influence. The chaos. In those parts of the world. You are needed. But Jesus gives a warning.

If the salt loses its saltiness. How can it be made salty again? It's no longer good for anything.

Except to be thrown out. And trampled by men. How can we lose. Our saltiness.

[15:36] Well simply by deciding. That we're not going to take part. In the world anymore. That we're just going to give up. On the world. Becoming monastic. In our lifestyles.

By not making friends anymore. By ignoring our neighbours. By staying in a Christian clique. And by just saying. Oh the world is a terrible place. I'm having nothing to do with it anymore.

That is how you lose. Your saltiness. So the challenge is. To love people. Why did God save you.

Give you your life. Your family. Your friends. Your work. For the people that you meet. Through that. People. People. People. God loves people.

Do you love people? Don't lose your salt. By pulling away. From people. Love people. And God will bless you.

[16:34] A million times over and above. What you could imagine. By witnessing. By loving people. By being salt. Not by being. Doing anything spectacular. But just by living your life.

Amongst people. Showing a different way. Loving people. So the Christian is salt. And the Christian is light. You are.

The light of the world. A city on a hill. Cannot. Be hidden. 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.

In the same way. Let your light. Shine before men. That they may see your good deeds. And praise your father in heaven. What is a Christian? Light.

A guide. A witness. In this dark world. You are a witness. Again. It's you are a witness. You are the light. And how funny it would be.

[17:32] If you decided to hide your light. How ridiculous it would be. Nobody lights a lamp. And puts it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand. And it gives light to everyone in the house.

Don't try and hide as a Christian. It's foolish. It's ridiculous. But more than that. It's impossible. You cannot hide the light. The light shines.

The Christian shines. You do shine by the very fact of who you are. Not by what you do. Not by how good you live. But by who you are. By what God has made you.

By living in God's kingdom. By following his way. You are light. How does your witnessing work then? In the same way.

Let your light shine. How do we let our light shine? That men may see your good deeds. And praise your Father in heaven. We let our light shine. By being who we are.

[18:36] Who is the Christian? The Christian is someone who does good deeds. Who loves. Who has compassion. Who doesn't judge. Who is merciful. All the things that we saw in the Beatitudes.

All these characteristics of Jesus Christ. That kind of person. Is a light. That shines brightly. In this dark world. So different from the world.

To be merciful. The world wants to hang you out to dry. When you make one wrong move. The Christian wants to show mercy. And in doing that.

Shows light. And then. As we live our life. The way that God wants us to live. What happens?

People see. And people are converted.

They praise your Father in heaven. If people come into this church today. What will they see? Will they see fellowship? Will they see love? Compassion?

[19:33] If they see these things. They will praise your Father in heaven. So there's a challenge for us there. If we are believers. How do we live?

Are we salt? Are we light? Have we taken ourselves out of the world? Have we turned our back on Jesus? And if you're not a Christian. Look at this offer of Jesus Christ.

Repent. Turn. From the way that you are living. From your life. From your plans. Turn to God's way. That might not mean that you have to give up all your ambitions.

God has given you your life and your talents to use. For his glory. Turn. This morning. And become a Christian.

Simple as that. What is a Christian? Someone who follows Jesus. Someone who is deeply happy in their soul. Someone who is blessed. Someone who is salt. Necessary for the survival of the world.

[ 20 : 38 ] Someone who is light. Who by living is a light. A guide. In this dark world. If you are a Christian. And you want to go out and make disciples.

That is what you should be aiming for. Making apprentices of Jesus Christ. Pointing people to Jesus Christ. Saying go to Jesus. Learn from him.

Enter into his kingdom. Live for him. The world needs you. To follow Jesus. Amen.

Let's bow our heads for a moment of prayer. Amen. Father we thank you for what you have done for us.

We thank you that you have taken us from darkness. And brought us into the light. Thank you that you have blessed us. That you have made us new creations. That you have made us the salt and the light of this world.

[ 21 : 37 ] Father we pray that you would help us then to live. As the people that we are. Help us not to pretend to be something other. Help us not oh Lord to be embarrassed of what you have done for us.

Oh Lord we pray that you would change our hearts this morning if we are not believers. That you would help us to follow Jesus Christ. Every one of us oh Lord may we reassess our lives.

The direction that we are heading. Help us to see if we are following Christ or not. Help us to make adjustments where that is required. Oh Lord we pray that you would give us a love for people.

That you would give us compassionate souls. That you would develop us in our hearts the character of Jesus Christ. Help us to be those who are humble. Those who are merciful.

Those who are meek. Those who do not demand our own rights. Those who are willing to give up everything for you. Oh Lord we thank you for the good news this morning. We thank you that if we simply repent.

[ 22 : 43 ] And turn from our own way. We can take part in your kingdom. In your plans and in your purposes. Challenge as we pray. Work in our hearts by your Holy Spirit.

For Jesus sake. Amen.