

Come and Become pt 3: The Healing of the World

(Recap)

-Hot or not.com:

-in the year 2000 an internet phenomenon hit the scene... Hot or not .com. a website where people everywhere could rate other people's attractiveness from 1 -10.

-you could know with the precision of a number how hot you were and therefor how valuable you were

-You could get a clear objective idea about just HOW YOU MEASURE up against others.

-Maybe you have not put your photo on a website to be rated, but we are familiar with Wondering How WE RATE.

-good enough as a person 1-10

-successful enough. 1-10 -do I "do enough" as a part of the church. 1-10

-am I attentive enough as a parent. 1-10

-am I good enough husband or wife. 1-10

-how would God rate me??? 1-10

-How we rate matters to us.

Set the Scene: In the age Jesus lived in people were also trying to determine how they rated.

-in the same way we fixate on Hotness they fixated on Religious Morality and the sense of superiority it gave them.

-For the Jews, there were many ways to determined your moral Hottness:

-ways to get from 1-10

-if you were a man,,,,,, first born man in your family,,,,,,where you lived

matter ,,,,certain religious groups had more honor,,,,, specifically PHARISEES.

-Good Health and Wealth were seen as Indicators that God really liked you.

*-if you were a first born man in your family living in Jerusalem, and you were a prominent pharisee,,, and you were healthy, fit, and had a lot of money,,,,, you felt like God was clicking you a **perfect 10***

-You were Socially Superior and it was assumed that you were superior in God's sight as well.

-That is the social setting at the time of the sermon on the mount.

-Jesus started with this statement

-Matthew 4:17 Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near.

-Repent: means turn from one direction to another

-So Jesus starts everything off by telling all of these people to turn from how they had lived because God's way of life has come near them.

-The people Jesus was talking to would have thought they WERE part of the Kingdom of Heaven, Already.

-they would have said,,, DUDE CHECK OUR SCORES

-we are 8's ,, 9's,, and possibly even 10's we don't need to repent

-we could name some 1's and 2's and 3's and ,,,, we agree, they need to repent,,,,, we are the ones who call others to repent!

-yet Jesus said,,, Repent.

-earlier in this series we established a couple points I want to review...

Whether you consider yourself a Sinner or a Saint, we all must Repent to participate in God's Kingdom.

-Jesus' invitation to Repent and Participate in God's kingdom went to Pharisees, Prostitutes, and everyone in between.

-There is not One of us or one class of us here today that Need Repentance more or less than others.

-even the best Human Righteousness is like filthy rags compared to God's Holiness

Jesus' invitation was NOT for us to BECOME something and then COME to him. He invited us to Come and then THROUGH HIM we would Become something.

-that brings us to where we are starting today

-Problem: After coming to Jesus we think our first focus should be SELF IMPROVEMENT,, and then after adequate improvement,,, then we focus on trying to "DO THINGS FOR GOD".

-But does Jesus say that?

-Matthew 5:-12 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute

you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Pay attention to the very next line

-Matthew 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the 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 underfoot. 14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 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. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

-The sermon on the mount is a sermon.

-it is a bunch of information organized around a single thought or purpose

-this is not collection of unrelated sayings pasted together later

-The order and sequence of the Sermon on the Mount is intentional and crucial to understanding it.

After coming to Jesus our first assignment is to be Salt and Light.

-We are the ones who are poor in spirit, we lack spiritually, on our own. **We are 0's**

-but we have been invited to **COME TO JESUS**

-repent of trying to be our own God,,, submit to him as the author of life

-follow his way of life as we learn it from him and he enables us

-Here is something so amazing! The first thing Jesus instructs us to do is not to clean up some of our filth. He first tells us to be salt and light.

-right off the bat, we are invited to participate with Jesus in HIGH & LOFTY DEEDS

-Jesus doesn't even give us a 90 day probationary period.

-think of the story of the prodigal son::: he disgraces himself and squanders his life; and finally has to crawl home, tail between his legs,,, he is going to BEG just to BE a SERVANT,,,,, his father runs to meet him, SILENCES his begging, and calls for : shoes for his feet ,, , a robe for his back,,, and **THE RING FOR HIS FINGER**

-the ring was the family seal ,, , with it he could make decisions in the family's business,, and in the fathers name,,,,, he could DO THE WORK OF HIS FATHER, WITH HIS FATHER, AND AS HIS FATHER. (that happened FIRST DAY BACK!)

-We usually have this idea like the Prodigal Son had.

-We come to Jesus as a mess and we think that we have “some ways to go” before we will have anything of value to offer.

-but Jesus disagrees. He invites you right into Good Deeds

What are Good Deeds?

-Jason did a great job talking about this last time and we are going to continue his thought and walk down this path a bit further...

-Jesus used two metaphors to describe Good Deeds: Salt and Light.

-salt: -in the ancient world salt was a preservative, kept things from spoiling

-just about anything could be preserved in salt : meat, vegetable, eggs...

-because of that, salt was a valuable commodity, people were sometimes paid in salt

-Hence the expression: worth their weight in salt

-The second food became available the spoilage clock started ticking.....

-the natural environment is full of bacteria that relentlessly work against us....

-The presence of sin in the world is like that bacteria.

-it hammers against us Relentlessly trying to corrupt

-it spoils people: kids turn from sweet individuals into people who do the unimaginable

-sin corrupts relationships,,, hammering away at marriages, families, and friendships,,,
SEEKING TO HURT AND DIVIDE

-sin corrupts our inner life::: bringing emotional brokenness and misery,,, chronic anger, cynicism, crippling fear, inability to trust or be trustworthy

-BUT, Jesus makes spoiled things wholesome again. (us)

-By inviting us to be salt Jesus is inviting us to live in such a way that our actions COUNTERACT the CORRUPTIVE Effect of sin in the world.

-we should be watching our surroundings for opportunities to say and do things that reverse the rot.

-Forgiving those who sin against us and MODELING, FREEDOM FROM chronic anger

-that small moment (our forgiveness) actually sprinkles salt on people's life...

-doing something completely selfless for one who has been corrupted by cynicism helps reverse the rot in them.

-This and more is part of what Jesus meant when he invited you and I to be Salt.

-Light essentially works the same way:

-in the days before electricity, people lit candles to see at night

-when you lit a candle you placed it up on a stand, and the light would fill the house,,, so you could see. (it improved your own life....)

-there was an even greater **cumulative effect:** as hundreds, even thousands in a city lit candles, that city would GLOW at night

-Image: city lights at a distance

-nobody's light is all that big or bright on its own, but together that city RADIATES LIGHT
-in this picture we are probably 20 miles away, but at night you could probably see this city for hundreds of miles

-Lost travelers with no idea where they are going could still be days away and every time they look up they could see the light and correct their path.

-Our Good Deeds carry the potential not just to preserve but to serve as a GUIDING BEACON for wandering pilgrims around us.

-who has ever known someone who was so good that you actually just tried to be more like them???
-You pointed your life in their direction..... they were a light...

-Why are we taking so much time with Salt and Light?

-because I want us to understand the Great Spiritual Impact Jesus said our Good Deeds would have.

-Common good deeds done over and over have remarkable power vested in them by God himself.

-Clarification: Rarely is there one defining good deed.

-most Good deeds are NOBLE but COMMON

-the effect of the salt was cumulative with lots of individual pieces together...

-the effect of the light on the outsider was the culmination of lots of little lights...

-words and acts of kindness for your neighbors over and over

-gestures of good will and inclusiveness over and over....

-above and beyond forgiveness and restoration of relationship over and over

-others first generosity, favors, and thoughtfulness (especially for those who have not earned it) over and over

-those have IMPACTS

(when a bunch are together in your life you are that city,, you are that bunch of salt preserving things that you are in contact with.)

-Any opportunity where our simple actions or words can bring light or push back decay,,,, those are Good Deeds.

What do Good Deeds Ultimately Accomplish?

-Last time Jason talked about the fact that for the Ancient Jews, Following God's law was the full embodiment of Good Deeds.

-to live out the heart and soul of the law would be to live a life full of Good Deeds

-The same is still true about obedience to the New Testament Teaching of Jesus.

-to live out the heart and soul of Jesus' instruction is to live a life full of Good Deeds

-The ancient Jews had a word for Good Deeds: Mitzvah (plural is Mitzvot)

-it is the same word used for the Old Testament Law.....

-commandments or duties

-But there was also a deeper more nuanced understanding of the word Mitzvah.

-to observe mitzvot was to Participate with God in the healing of the world.

-When Jesus invited us into lives marked by Good Deeds he was inviting us to join him in the Healing of the World.

-with that thought in mind the metaphor of salt takes on a whole new potency!

-This world and the people in it suffer the corrupting effect of sin. The things and the people around us are SPOILING.

-God has invited us through word and action to join him in HEALING THAT SPOIL. (not just preserving, not just holding decay at bay,, **but HEALING**)

-Jesus said that people would see our Mitzvot (good deeds) and they would Glorify the Father in Heaven.

-So our good, healing deeds ultimately lead people back to the source of them, where God makes them New and Whole through Jesus.

-Ultimately our good deeds will help Unspoil the world by bringing people into the transformational Embrace of Jesus.

The difference between the Good Deeds people had been doing and the ones Jesus called for was in the Motivating Factor.

-The “good” Jews of Jesus’ day(8’s 9’s q0’s) did a lot of good deeds, but those good deeds were part of a religion that only had a Vertical dimension.

-they did all the things they did for the sole purpose of pleasing God

-on the surface that sounds good

-But when your religion is only Vertical it becomes easy to stray into self centered motives.

-doing good deeds of whatever kind can become all about RAISING YOUR HOTNESS SCORE with God. (and therefor your blessing and reward.....)

-so no matter what good things you end up doing, the dominating motive will really be how these good deeds will Obligate God to me....

-It is easy to slip into patterns of doing Good things for wrong reasons.

- We can be generous and give (even tithe) but not be motivated by actual generosity, but instead, because we know God will bless us for it. *(even our generosity can serve selfish reasons.)*
- We can forgive and be Merciful to people *because we know it is what God expects of us,,, and if we are not merciful then he will not be merciful with us. (obligation)*

-Problem: Good Deeds that are solely Vertical in motivation will always be limited to what we feel is Required of us.

-The disciples asked Jesus *“how many times must I forgive a brother who sins against me, Is it 7 times? Jesus answer<<< not 7 but 70x7.....*

-they are asking: ***How far must I go, that is exactly how far I WILL GO and NO FURTHER.***

-What the question reveals is that we are not interested in the impact of our good deed of forgiveness on that person, we are only interested in checking the box of God’s requirement to avoid judgment.

-If you were motivated both by what God asks and by a genuine love for that person, then you would not ask that question. You would already be willing to forgive AS MANY TIMES AS IT TAKES

-BTW that is what Jesus’ answer implied 70x7 was hyperbole (like saying a million times). The number is so high you would never keep count,,,,,

-Jesus was saying “forgive as many times as it takes to see that person restored.”

-Jesus gave 2 Motives that should drive every good thing we do:

- love God with all your heart, mind, and strength
- love your neighbor like you love yourself (be willing to do for others what you would be willing to do for yourself)

-No matter what kind of good deed we are talking about Jesus’ dual motive drastically alters the scope and nature of what we would do.

-an act of generosity:::: if it is only to satisfy God (i will give my tithe, that is all that is required, then I am off the hook)

-dual motive: whatever it takes,,,,, if I have it and it will do good, I will do it..

-going out of your way to be kind to someone who is hurting:::: if just vertical). You would assume that there is only a reasonable amount God would expect from me

-dual motive: again says I will do whatever it takes, to bring comfort,,, because I would do it for myself

-Whether you are talking about what we do for our neighbor, spouse, friend, coworker, or whoever..... to be motivated by a love for the person rather than just a responsibility to God changes how we handle opportunities with people.

-Good deeds that lack robust Horizontal motive will always end up hollow.

-you will be doing good things but in the end they will really be targeted toward the reward they earn you.

-That is how SALT LOSES ITS SALTINESS and HOW a LIGHT IS PUT UNDER A BOWL

-But when Radical God inspired Neighbor love overflows into actions, those actions have a Transforming, Preserving, Light Giving Effect.

-Those actions are how all of us, Even though we are the POOR IN SPIRIT, can participate in THE HEALING OF THE WORLD.

-we are pitiful, we are poor in spirit, we cannot merit anything good on our own,,,, despite all of that through Jesus God invites all of us today through GOOD DEEDS MOTIVATED BY LOVE to join him in healing this hurting world.

-lets go do Whatever it takes,,, lets be salt,,, lets be light