



Re-Forming Our Influence (Matthew 5:13-20)

Re-Formed: Sermon on the Mount pt. 2

Pastor Tim Peck

THE BIG IDEA

We allow God to re-form our influence in the world by living under the authority of Jesus, staying salty through intentional discipleship, and letting our light shine through good works.

OPENING

- What has been your experience reading the Old Testament? Has it been easy or difficult for you to understand and apply? Why?
- How do you see Christians around you trying to slow down the corruption of sin in our world today?

DIGGING DEEPER

- According to N. T. Wright, Israel's calling in the Old Testament was always to be a light to the nations *"so that his glory might reach to the ends of the earth. But the salt has now forgotten its purpose. The light has turned in on itself. The city set on a hill (Jerusalem, presumably) was meant to be the place to which the nations would flock like moths to a lamp, but she has done her best to make herself, and the God to whom her very existence bears witness, as unattractive as possible. There is rebuke within the challenge. Israel, called to be a lighthouse for the world, has surrounded herself with mirrors to keep the light in, heightening her own sense of purity and exclusiveness while insisting that the nations must remain in darkness."*¹ How does reading these verses as a rebuke on Israel back then help you understand how it applies today?
- By calling his disciples "the salt of the earth," Bonhoeffer says, *"They [disciples of Jesus] are the noblest asset, the highest value the world possesses. Without them the earth can no longer survive. The earth is preserved by salt."*² What do you think Bonhoeffer means by the phrase "without them the earth can no longer survive"? How is this different than how the world perceives disciples of Jesus?

¹N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), p. 289.

²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Works of Bonhoeffer: Discipleship* (Augsburg Publishing, 1995), Vol. 4, p. 111.



- What command does Jesus give in v. 16? Look up Galatians 6:9-10; Hebrews 13:16; 1 Peter 3:8-13. What are the good works Jesus is talking about?
- According to Pastor Tim, in vv. 17-20 Jesus places himself *above* the Old Testament by showing us its true intent. How does Matthew 7:28-29 support this idea? What does this imply about how the authority of the Bible relates to Jesus' authority?
- Some Christians neglect the Old Testament because it can be confusing to understand and apply. Apart from the prophecies about the coming of Jesus (which comprise no more than 10% of the Old Testament), many Christians relegate the Old Testament to the dusty past or the distant future. Pastor Tim suggests reading the Old Testament "backwards" by starting with Jesus and his interpretation.³ How is this different than you've approached the Old Testament before?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- If there is truly a linkage between your discipleship and the health of the community around you, what steps are you taking to invest in your discipleship?
- What is one way you can reveal God's character to others through your actions this week?

PRAYER REQUESTS

³This phrase is borrowed from Richard Hays, *Reading Backwards* (Baylor University Press, 2014).