

Christ's

Cry

To Today's Church

by Keith Daniel

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*Reading Matthew,
chapters 5, 6, & 7.*

If I were asked what the Lord Jesus Christ would say to His Church in America, without any hesitation I would say these words, "Ye are the salt of the earth, but" ...and I believe He would weep... "but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13).

Is it possible that something could happen to the Church of Jesus Christ that Christ could say these words: "My Church is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men"? One of the greatest theologians in the history of the Church said that the most accurate interpretation of this verse would read like this: "Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost his savor"—if you lose your effectiveness, your vital reality, your impact—"what will happen to the world?" You are the world's protection to make it tolerable to live in, Church of Jesus Christ. And you yourselves will eventually be thrown out by the world, and your religion will be considered worthless if you lose your vital reality.

I believe the Church of Christ not only in America, but in the West and in the world, has come to a crisis of having lost its effectiveness to stop the advance of corruption. If we were

what we ought to be in God's eyes, sinners wouldn't stand up so brazenly; they would melt in condemned hearts before they whispered, let alone shouted out, the things they cry out. If we were right in our reality with God, if we were effective as God wants us to be, sin could not advance.

I don't blame the politicians, though I weep over them. I don't blame Hollywood, though I agonize that there is such a hell-bent place, turning so many to hell. I blame the Church of Jesus Christ. It is going to shock you that I blame the Church.

Stepping Stones To Revival

In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ gives us the stepping stones to revival—to vital reality with God, to become effective so the world will stagger and turn from sin. "Blessed..." He says. The joy and peace God gives are incomparable; He gives joy unspeakable and full of glory. His blessing is something that comes only when men take certain steps.

The first step is, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). This is talking about a brokenness. How can the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek be blessed? It is because God says: "To this man will I look." God's eyes

look past the thousands walking and leaping and praising God but having no burden. God sees millions who worship not in truth but to be seen of men. God looks at them in dismay.

It is to the broken in spirit and the contrite in heart that God looks, broken like Jesus Christ, and mourning. God has to break us until we have no pride, no confidence in ourselves. The first step then we take to revival is that we as individuals and the church as a corporate body become broken, and we mourn and weep and are contrite.

But it is not very blessed to stay there. We have to take the next step. "Blessed are those who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Filled" means satisfied. If you find a man in the desert who is hungering and thirsting and you give him a million dollars, that man won't be satisfied. That man will only be satisfied when you give him that for which he is thirsting. Nothing will satisfy you until God makes you righteous. If you hunger and thirst, you are going to be made righteous. You will receive the only thing that will quench this thirst and will take away this hunger and will satisfy you.

This is righteousness imparted by God, not righteousness imputed. There is a great difference. The context here has nothing to do with righteousness imputed, whereby at a moment of faith in the Blood of Christ God declares me righteous. It is nothing of myself; I put my faith in the Blood of Christ. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). Just a moment of faith, that is righteousness imputed.

Here in Matthew 5, it is speaking of righteousness imparted. God's righteousness is

seen in my life when I'm made righteous. Are we hungering and thirsting to be made righteous by God?

When we have been made righteous by God, do you know what will happen to the Church? The first thing I see is that we become amazingly able to forgive so that we can be forgiven (verse 7). Also as a result of God's righteousness we are pure in heart (verse 8).

The next thing I see is there's peace coming between God's people—peacemakers (verse 9). I have the ability to go to my worst enemy, embrace him, fall on my knees and beg him to be at peace, no matter what it costs me. As

God sees us being merciful and making peace, persecution comes suddenly. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (verse 10). We won't be persecuted for righteousness imputed, but if righteousness is imparted we will be persecuted. "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution," God says (2 Tim. 3:12). "All!" We can't escape it because we are the salt of the earth.

The righteous life condemns those in the home and at work. A man's family may

become his enemies as he is standing up and living a righteous, holy life. Men see the good works.

It doesn't matter that we are persecuted, because they're eventually going to get saved because their hearts are so condemned. We're the salt of the earth. They can't go on with sin. They can't enjoy their sin any more because of the righteous life. They'll persecute but they'll come. They'll see the good works. We're the light of the world. We're showing the way. Men see the good works and come to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

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Fulfilling The Law

As a result of righteousness imparted by God, we are now able to fulfill the law in our lives. We realize that Jesus didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it in our life.

Some people say, "I'm not under law; I'm under grace. You're under the law, Keith Daniel; and I'm under grace. This is the dispensation of grace." Most people who say that to me end up in disgrace.

Christ said, "I haven't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it—in you!" It is through God's righteousness imparted by His grace and mercy in and through me. It is not by rigid discipline, but by Him writing the law of God upon my heart, and by the Holy Spirit I spontaneously live the standard. I don't memorize and think, "Thou shalt not..." and say, "Thou shalt not do this...." No, I don't do the forbidden thing, but it is not by my own effort. This is God's righteousness imparted. This is God's liberty. The liberty of the law in Christ Jesus is an amazing liberty, not a bondage of the law. When one finds God's righteousness imparted into him, imparted through him, it is not his own.

In every circumstance spontaneously seen is the fruit of the Spirit. No matter how trying the circumstances it's there, the law fulfilled even if you haven't memorized it. It's written on your heart by God. You're vitally real. You're fulfilling the law of God. In case you think the law is destroyed through Christianity let me tell you that the standard is ten times higher in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. And you can live it!

Christ says in effect, "You've heard it said, 'You mustn't kill,' but this is what I want you to live—and you're going to live it: you mustn't be angry anymore. Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer in My eyes. I don't want you to be angry any more without a cause." Any anger that can come in our life must be such a righteous indignation that anybody who watches could see nothing else but holiness in our reaction to that at which we are offended. In time of deepest offence we will be Christlike because it's caused by righteous indignation. This will condemn hearts and not condemn us.

The righteousness imparted by God gives one the ability to leave anything he wants to do for God the moment he realizes someone has something against him, and get right. He doesn't want to give out a tract, or give the tithe or give anything to God, for he knows God is not going to receive it if he doesn't go quickly and get right. Then he will come and offer his gift.

This righteousness imparted gives one the ability not to look at women with lust. Your wife is all you see and all you want. We can be holy by God's grace. This righteousness imparted is the result of purity of life and thought, and of even what our eyes behold. You wouldn't put away your wife and marry someone else if you think you've found someone better than your first wife. Ninety percent of divorce will stop, one-hundred percent I hope, when revival comes, and the Church will live the message and be able to preach it again rather than write volumes to deny it and try to explain it away and find psychologists to deal with it. No, God deals with it.

When we find God's righteousness we don't have to swear. Just our "yes" is all right. Every man looking at us with our integrity wouldn't require more than a "yes."

If the Church is the salt of the earth, this holy righteousness imparted by God to give us holy living would help us to turn the other cheek. Have you ever seen someone do that? Touch a man's theology and see if he turns the other cheek. Oftentimes there is something sinful in the way he defends his doctrine.

God's righteousness imparted helps us to be able to turn the other cheek. I saw a man hurting my father for righteousness. My father was one of the holiest men of God who ever lived. Before we could jump up, before we could stop the man, what my father made everyone in that room unable to move. No matter what that man was doing to him in his anger, my father just looked at him, and with such love as I've never seen in my life, he said, "I love you." He turned the other cheek. The man melted and crumpled onto the floor. Do you know what it is by God's righteousness imparted to you to love your enemies, to bless them that curse you, to do good to them?

How can a man carry on hating you if you do good to him? What good did you do to your

enemy to win him? Pray for him. Go back to him. Love him. Bless him. Turn the other cheek. You can as the result of God's righteousness imparted to the Church of Jesus Christ.

Revival puts reality into the standard of God's Word, by God's grace fulfilling the law. We'll find the ability to do our righteousness not to be seen by men. Do we know what it is to let not our left hand know what our right hand does? How many of us are as the hypocrites are? If we make sure everyone knows when we give, we won't have any thank you from God. Our gift is received by men but not by God. There are people who do have to know about our giving, but we do our best that no one knows it's us, when we're righteous.

When we pray we won't be as the hypocrites are. They love to pray standing where people will hear and they feel, "Oh, what a prayer warrior." How did Jesus tell how to differentiate between the hypocrite and the true disciple of Christ? Here's how to know: "When thou prayest enter into thy closet. When thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret and thy Father who sees in secret..." (Matt. 6:5). What did our Father see this morning? We didn't miss the meeting men expected us to attend, but did we miss the meeting with God? It would be terrible to us if we missed the service on Sunday or if we missed the prayer meeting. People would say, "He's a pillar of the church. What's wrong?" But the meeting with God in secret, we can miss it like the snap of the fingers. God says, You want to know whether you are a hypocrite? Do you miss the meeting when no one is watching?

Am I a prayer warrior when I pray in the mornings? Do I pray what I pray in the prayer meetings when I'm crying for the world? I have no right to pray in the meeting for the souls of the world unless I'm on my knees when no one knows, groaning before God. I have the right to stand before men like a prayer warrior only if I agonize alone with God. Otherwise I am a hypocrite.

Righteousness imparted by God will stop hypocrisy. Then our prayers, instead of doing nothing, will make heaven come down, when we're gathered together because we're real and our prayers are not a stench of hypocrisy. Our prayers are like a fragrance going to God.

Righteousness imparted will stop us from laying up treasures on earth. We'll not have anxious thoughts for tomorrow. The Bible says, "Take no thought." Don't lay up for yourself treasures upon earth. This isn't where you are going to spend eternity. Lay up for yourself treasures in heaven. How many Bibles could you have sent out in the years that you've named Jesus as your Saviour, instead of spending on the luxuries you've had? Don't put everything into the material. Don't have darkness through materialism.

You can't be materialistic and serve God, America. It doesn't mean God wants you to live poverty stricken lives. If God knows He can trust you He will abundantly bless you. God doesn't want to withhold from us even some luxuries, but these things must not keep us from being what God wants of us. We must all give account to God.

When we are right with God, we will be stunned what doesn't have any value, or hold any attraction for us anymore. We lose interest in these things. Do we hunger and thirst after materialism to be satisfied or do we hunger and thirst after righteousness to be satisfied? Do we hunger and thirst after sensuality to be satisfied? We'll never be satisfied. Do we hunger and thirst after men's esteem to be satisfied? When we get all their esteem because of all we give and all we do and all our sacrifices and everybody sees and everybody knows, we ourselves will know nothing of satisfaction. We'll have nothing of the heart of fulfillment, of joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. We'll never know what God could have given us. We'll be poverty stricken though we name the name of Christ.

Nothing will satisfy until we find God's righteousness. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). That is, what you need to be happy, not what you want.

How To Receive

How do we receive this righteousness imparted by God? Just as we obtained right-

eousness imputed to us by faith in God, there is a thirsting, a longing, a brokenness, a seeking—but there must come this moment when by faith we say, “God, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me, no matter what it costs me. I put my trust in Thee, God, as I put my trust for righteousness to be imputed in Thy eyes by the Blood of Jesus. I hunger, I thirst, and I long, and by faith I ask Thee, let the Blood go through and through in my life, through and through.”

Andrew Murray says that the Holy Spirit dwells in you if you’re saved, but being filled with the Holy Spirit means He takes control of you. He can only take control of you when you absolutely surrender to God on every issue and say, “I will not let Thee go, unless Thou dost have Thy complete way in my life. Have Thy way, God; have Thy way!”

Murray says when God fills you, when He takes you in absolute surrender and takes control of you, then in every circumstance in your life, spontaneously, no matter how trying the circumstances, is the fruit of the Spirit, is Christ. Christ is seen to your enemy as he beats you. Christ is seen to every soul that looks at you even if they’re persecuting you. They come to God because they can’t fight such a life.

If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. He would that all men pray everywhere, lifting holy hands without wrath and doubting. Without doubting is holy confidence, which is the result of a holy life, of asking in faith nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

God wants a holy confidence that can come from a heart that condemns us not. If our heart condemn us not then have we as a church of Jesus Christ, confidence toward God and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments, because we are vitally real. We are honored by God because we hungered and thirsted in brokenness and then by the same faith by which God imputed righteousness, God made us be righteous, filled us with the Holy Spirit. Then through the fruit of the Holy Spirit, righteousness is imparted in my life and I become the salt of the earth.

If God says to you, “Child, I want your life on the altar, I want you in brokenness, I want you for Me and Me only,” cry out, “I need to be made vitally real with God! I’m not the salt of the earth. I’m not bringing lives to Christ. My prayers are not being answered. And it’s because of this! I need righteousness imparted by God, written in my heart. I can’t attain it in my own strength...”

If you need to do that, call on God. Confess your sins; tell Him that you’re broken. Trust Him by the Blood to cleanse you through and through. Tell Him that you absolutely surrender, that you won’t let Him go now except He has His way and blesses you. Tell Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit, to take absolute control no matter what the cost. Tell Him you won’t settle for anything less than to believe that He’s done it, and that your life will live the standard of the

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vital reality laid before you by Christ here in these Scriptures, lived even to your worst enemy, to bring him to Christ soon. Tell God you want to become a prayer warrior, to have a heart that doesn’t condemn you, that whatever you ask for your country He can do, He will do, because you keep His commandments! □