

# “Don’t Believe the Lie”

Matthew 5:13-20

Last week, I spent a great deal of time walking you through a prime example of a false teaching that we are forced to endure because our sinful world wants to believe the lie. So children and adults are told that until Christopher Columbus came along, most all people thought that the world was flat. And this has been told and retold so that the church, which oversaw the educational system of the day, looks like it was filled with ignorant, superstitious people.

As I said last week, this is a lie that our unbelieving world wants to believe. It enjoys believing this. This why the science community was angry at Bill Nye the Science Guy for debating Ken Ham this last week. They did not want the Creation Museum to be seen as a place where science happens. They want the world to think that we are ignorant, superstitious people with nothing real to say. Satan is the father of lies and he wants you to believe the lie.

Jesus says, “You are the salt of the earth.” The only other option is that you are “not salt.” Either you are salt or you are not salt. There is no middle ground. The lie is that we can live comfortably both in the world and in the church. You cannot be salt and “not salt” at the same time. You cannot be light and darkness at the same time. You cannot be comfortable in both places.

This does not mean that you are free from all sin and darkness. You are simultaneously sinner and saint. There is a war going on within you. Through the grace of your Baptism, the Old Adam in you, by daily contrition and repentance drowns and dies, and daily arises to a new life in Christ.

If you see violence and it doesn't make you uncomfortable; if you hear the name of God profaned and it doesn't make you uncomfortable; if you see people who are not married pretending to be married and it doesn't make you uncomfortable; then there is something wrong. You are in danger, as Paul says, of "exchanging the truth for a lie" [Romans 1:25].

We dare not make ourselves comfortable by dismissing what Jesus says about God's Law. Jesus says that not an iota (not the smallest letter, not even a dot) will pass away from God's Law. It is absolute. It is only accomplished in Christ.

We dare not make ourselves comfortable by listening to a lie. We dare not embrace the lie that there is nothing truly right or wrong. There are only shades of grey. There is no absolute truth. There is only opinion. This is one of the favorite lies of the past 100 years in particular. The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is credited with crystalizing this thought by saying "There are no facts, only interpretations."

The reality is that this type of thought has been around for a long time. Sin is nothing new. Dismissing the Law of God is nothing new. This type of irresponsible teaching that there is no truth has not just

become popular, but has become the dominant philosophy among the young and uninformed.

The Facebook page dedicated to Nietzsche has over two million likes. Tom Morris, the former chair of the Philosophy department at Notre Dame, says that his brand of skeptical philosophy is always the favorite among first year students. The young and uninformed love this irresponsible teaching because the young and uninformed always think there is a way to abolish God's Law.

Why do they want to abolish God's Law? I will turn again to Friedrich Nietzsche. He said, "No price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself." This is why he is so popular among the young and uninformed. I get to be my own man. Nobody owns me. Nobody can tell me what to do. This is a lie that our unbelieving world desperately wants to believe. It enjoys believing this.

There is truth in the notion that owning you is worth any price. Your Father in heaven certainly believes this, which is why He offered up His Son as the ransom price for you.

If I own myself, do I need to fear judgment? Again, Nietzsche has all the answers for the one who wants to believe the lie. He simply says, "God is dead." If you want to know where Time Magazine got the idea for their infamous cover, it flows from Nietzsche. And the young and uninformed embrace the concept – embrace the lie. This is a lie that they want to believe.

Nietzsche is still being quoted by our young people. Most recently, his statement "That which does not kill us makes us stronger"

has been widely embraced. It is in songs and motivational posters. And it is a lie. Not everything that doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

This goes hand in hand with another lie: "What I do in the privacy of my own home doesn't hurt anyone." Sin always hurts someone. Sin always hurts those around you. Sin always hurts you. Sin always makes you weak. It does not make you stronger. Sin is our rejection of what God has designed our life to be.

The Law is written on your heart. When you relax even the least of God's commandments, (especially when you teach others to do the same), you will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. You don't want to be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

But you being great in the kingdom of heaven; you being the salt of the earth – the light of the world; this did not happen because you were able to work yourself free from sin. We have already confessed: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." "But God, who is faithful and just, will forgive us all our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

You are salt because the truth is in you. The lie is that there is no truth. You are salt because God has purchased you as His own at the very high price of the broken body and shed blood of His Son. The lie is that you own yourself. You are salt because God is not dead. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.