

OUR INFLUENCE AS CHRISTIANS

Matt 5:13-16

INTRODUCTION:

- A. One of sweetest epitaphs ever written is engraved on the grave marker of a little girl. "A child of whom her playmates said 'it was easier to be good when she was with us.'" What a beautiful tribute to the power of a good influence.
- B. Our influence is of vital importance to us and others
- C. God wants you and your influence. Give Christ your life and by living for him influence many souls to accept him.
- D. I know of no better time than now to consider our influence on others
- E. **(Title)** Make your influence great

DISCUSSION:

I. THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS OUR LORD

- A. Christ is our example 1Pet 2:21
- B. He is the world's greatest influence
 1. Over 1900 years since he lived in the flesh
 2. Money testifies of influence: dated from his birth
 3. Even the infidel must acknowledge the birth of Jesus every time he dates a document
- C. Napoleon spoke of the influence of Jesus
 1. "Can you conceive of a dead man making conquest with an army faithful and entirely devoted to his memory.
 2. Napoleon said his armies forgot him while he was living and lost battles crushed his army & adversity scattered his friends
- D. Jesus speaks and at once generations become his by stricter, closer ties than those of blood.
- E. Jesus' influence lives thru his word & lives of followers
 1. Millions do not read his word
 2. They are influenced by the lives of his disciples
 3. Song "The World's Bible"

II. CHRISTIANS MUST EXERCISE A GOOD INFLUENCE

(Exercise = Set in action; bring to bear or employ actively)

- A. The kingdom of heaven, the church, is a kingdom of influence Matt 16:18
 1. Like unto leaven Matt 13:33
 2. The kingdom has a powerful influence to go throughout the whole world
- B. Ye are the salt of the earth Matt 5:13
 1. Salt used for preservation of meats & seasoning
 2. Christians are agents used in preserving the world from putrefaction, corruption, and destruction
 - a. Not enough salt in Noah's day Gen 6:5-7
 - b. Not enough in Sodom Gen 18:20-33; 19:13
- C. Ye are the light of the world Matt 5:14

1. Light influences darkness by dispelling it
2. Christians, by their good works, teaching and example are to dispel spiritual darkness
3. Walk as children of light Eph 5:8

D. Wife can win husband by her godly living 1Pet 3:1,2

III. HOW TO EXERCISE A GOOD INFLUENCE

- A. Don't be a stumbling block Rom 14:13; 1Cor 8:13
 1. Some things may be right in and of themselves
 2. But may become wrong in some circumstances
 - a. Put soft drink in whiskey bottle and drink it
 - b. Love for recreation keep one from services
 3. This will destroy influence and show to the world you are not seeking first God's Kingdom Matt 6:33
- B. Be uncompromising
 1. Contend earnestly for the faith Jude 3
 - a. You lose your influence when you compromise
 - b. Others lose respect for your sincerity
 - c. Reason many children do not respect parents
 2. Double minded man unstable in all ways Jas 1:8
 - a. We respect those who stand up for their faith
 - b. No confidence in person who will not stand
 3. Show your faith by your works Jas 2:18
 - a. Practice what you preach
 - b. If you don't attend services how can you expect others to do so
 4. Serve needs of others Matt 20:28; 23:11; 25:35ff
 - a. Don't wait to be asked
 - b. Find something that needs doing and do it

IV. OUR INFLUENCE LIVES AFTER WE ARE DEAD

- A. Whether good or bad our influence continues to live
 1. Their works do follow them Rev 14:13
 2. Our manner of living puts in motion things in this life which will continue to vibrate through eternity.
- B. Influence of parents lives in the lives of their children.
 1. Best time to start training is with the grandparents
 2. Notice Timothy's training 2Tim 1:5; 3:15

CONCLUSION:

- A. Christ is our example 1Pet 2:21 and he had the greatest influence of anyone that ever lived.
- B. What kind of influence do we have on those with whom we have company, children, husbands, wives, friends or even enemies.
- C. Let's make sure our influence is a good one
- D. Only way to do it is obey God & no better time than now 2Cor 6:2