

A City Set on a Hill

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Matthew 5:14

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus described His disciples as “a city set on a hill.” Cities were often built on hills and raised areas because there were benefits to doing this. Jesus’ disciples are like this – there are benefits of being like the city on a hill, but there are also challenges.

Characteristics of a City on a Hill

- Highly visible – we should not expect to blend in with the world (Romans 12:1-2); we are following a higher standard (Matthew 5:3-12, 20ff); followers of Christ will be different and this difference will be noticed (John 15:18-19; 1 Peter 4:3-4)
- Target of attacks – due to higher visibility and a different standard, we will be targeted (John 15:20); we are to expect a degree of persecution (1 Peter 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:12)
- Position of strength – the higher position provides a natural defense; God is on our side (Romans 8:31); we have a solid foundation (Matthew 7:24-27) and the promise that the Lord will not forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6)

Not Taking Advantage of Our Position

- By failing to shine as a light in the darkness – the world is filled with darkness and is under the devil’s control (1 John 5:19; cf. Colossians 1:13); we might fail to be an example of what God’s people should be (cf. Romans 2:23-24)
- By surrendering to our enemies – this can be done by refusing to fight (cf. Jude 3) or by joining sides with the enemy (cf. Galatians 2:4-5)
- By letting down our defenses – this can be done by forsaking the assembly (Hebrews 10:25), neglecting to study the word (2 Timothy 2:15), and not being alert (1 Peter 5:8)

Strengthening Our Position

- Brighten our light – we shine our light by being an example; we are to be blameless and innocent (Philippians 2:15); display excellent behavior (1 Peter 2:12); be perfect as God is perfect (Matthew 5:48)
- Fight the good fight (1 Timothy 6:12) – if we resist the devil, he will flee from us (James 4:7); be willing to suffer hardship in this fight (2 Timothy 2:3); continue until the end (2 Timothy 4:6-8)
- Put on the full armor of God – our use of this is based upon our knowledge of the word (Ephesians 6:14-17); ultimately, our strength is from the Lord (Ephesians 6:10-11)

Conclusion

- As Christians, we are as a city set on a hill – we will be seen by others, we will be the targets of attack, yet we have strength from the Lord
- Let us continue to let our lights shine as we continue to fight for the Lord