

LAUNCH

Weekly Sermon/Worship/Small Group Themes

Matthew 5:13-16 Theme: Launched to Shine Brightly

Theme: Launched to Shine Brightly

Salt was a very valuable commodity in the ancient world. It preserved, purified and seasoned a meal. In a world without electricity light was also precious. The oil lamps of the day redeemed more time from the darkness in order to get a few extra things done before bed. Neither salt nor light are useful, however, if they remain in the salt shaker or under a bowl. Are we hiding our faith and missing an opportunity to bring cleansing, healing and seasoning to our community? Are we keeping our light covered instead of lighting the way to Jesus for people who are struggling in a personal darkness? Or are we doing our godly acts to grab the glory instead of giving it to God?

This is the kick off week for Launch

Songs: You Shine (Brian Deorksen), Salt and Light (Jami Smith), Beautiful Name (Zoegirl)

Matthew 5:38-48 Theme: Launched to Love Radically

An “eye for an eye” is probably the oldest written law in history going back to Hammurabi. It was actually a way to limit revenge but by Jesus’ day it became a justification for it. To most people it seemed fair and just. Jesus teaches us something more radical and difficult: to respond not with revenge or even avoidance but a third way: to extend ourselves in love. The Church is often known for being judgmental or indifferent toward outsiders. But what if we were to launch out with Jesus and radically love those who don’t love us?

Four weeks to Leaving the Building

Songs: Beautiful Stranger (Rebecca St James), Mighty to Save, They'll Know We are Christians, I Will Follow (Chris Tomlin)

Matthew 6:1-18 Theme: Launched to Sacrifice Selflessly

Giving, prayer and fasting are three pillars of Jewish faith. Yet it is easy for religious people to practice these in order to impress others. Jesus has a term for this: hypocrite. The Anchor Bible commentary points out a different meaning than we think. A hypocrite is not a play-actor – someone who pretends to be religious on the outside but doesn’t believe it within. It should be translated as “overscrupulous” or focusing on the fine points of the letter of the law and missing the purpose and point. Either way, Jesus says it’s silly to win the approval of others through our religious acts because that’s all we’ll get. If, however, we sacrifice without a concern for self we receive the true reward: the joy of our Heavenly Father.

Three weeks to Leaving the Building

Songs: Lord Reign in Me (Jami Smith), Holiness (Sonicflood), Hands and Feet (Audio Adrenaline), Everyday (Lincoln Brewster), I Want to Know You (Sonicflood)

,

Matthew 6:19-24 Theme: Launched to Invest in Eternity

6:1-18 focused on how to avoid the self-serving legalism of the Pharisees. This passage teaches how to avoid the self-serving materialism of the Gentiles. When it comes to money we are too near-sighted. We focus on how to build up treasure and security in this world instead of trusting the God who provides all we need in this world and the next. Jesus teaches that our heart will go toward whatever we treasure. It will serve whichever one we make our master. Jesus wants us to serve God and use money instead of the reverse. This is a good week to talk about Stewardship especially if you have commitment Sunday coming up.

Two weeks to Leaving the Building

Songs: Surrender (Lincoln Brewster), Enough (Barlowgirl), Follow You (Leeland), Love the Lord (Lincoln Brewster)

Matthew 6:25-34 Theme: Launched to Live Fearlessly

This passage is often misunderstood to mean we do not need to work so hard. While it is true that God will supply our needs since He cares for even the birds and flowers, this teaching is more about worry than work. Worry cannot add a day to our lives or an inch to our height. Worry is worthless. Yet we are worth much in God's eyes. That's why we can trust Him. If we seek Him first each day then all other things will find their proper place in our lives.

Next Sunday we Leave the Building

Songs: My Hope is In You (Aaron Shust), Tumbling After (Starfield), Friend of God (Gungor and Houghton)

Matthew 7:1-12 Theme: Launched to See Clearly

The saying goes "You spot it! You got it!" When we are irritated by the behavior of others we often don't realize we do the same things. Jesus tells us not to judge because our eyes are not clear enough to see the situation correctly. We are blinded by the filters of our own prejudices and perspectives. What's more, we all have one Judge who is able to offer the only true evaluation and correction. It's better for us to clear our eyes of our logs and then ask, seek and knock for the good provision God our Father has in store for us. This would be a good week to have people talk openly and honestly about their assumptions and misconceptions about the needy.

On Sunday the Church Leaves the Building

Songs: Love Break Me (Starfield), Majesty (Delirious), Refine Me (Jennifer Knapp)

Matthew 7:24- 29 Theme: Launched to Stand Firmly

Jesus concludes the sermon with a stark contrast. The two houses look the same above ground. Both face the same storm. The difference lies in their foundations. It's much easier and quicker to construct above ground. Building a solid foundation is difficult work. After all that labor you don't have much to show. Yet it's the only way to out last the storms which come to all of us. Now that we've been launched out of the building, it would be easy to run back to the shelter of the church building and hide our faith. Yet

Jesus is calling us to stand firmly on His Word in the world where storms will rock us but never knock us down.

Debrief the Church Has Left the Building – Share stories

Songs: One Thing Remains (Johnson, Riddle and Black), Strong Tower (Kutless), You Are my Hope (Skillet), Desert Song (Hillsong), In the Hands of God (Newsboys)