

Sermon on the Mount Lesson 2 Article

Many years ago Elihu Burrit wrote, “No human being can come into this world without increasing or diminishing the sum total of human happiness, not only of the present but of every subsequent age of humanity. No one can detach himself from this connection. There is no sequestered spot in the universe, no dark niche along the disc of nonexistence to which he can retreat from his relations with others, where he can withdraw the influence of his existence upon the moral destiny of the world. Everywhere his presence or absence will be felt. Everywhere he will have companions who will be better or worse because of him. It is an old saying, and one of the fearful and fathomless statements of import, that we are forming characters for eternity. Forming characters? Whose? Our own or others? Both. And in that momentous fact lies the peril and responsibility of our existence. Who is sufficient for the thought? Thousands of my fellow beings will yearly enter eternity with characters differing from those they would have carried thither had I never lived. The sunlight of that world will reveal my finger marks in their primary formations and in their successive strata of thought and life.”¹

Some years ago a magazine carried a series of pictures that graphically depicted a tragic story. The first picture was of a vast wheat field in western Kansas. The second showed a distressed mother sitting in a farmhouse in the center of the field of wheat. The accompanying story explained that her four-year-old son had wandered away from the house and into the field when she was not looking. The mother and father looked and looked all day but the little fellow was too short to see or be seen over the wheat. The third picture showed dozens of friends and neighbors who had heard of the boy’s plight and who had joined hands the next morning to make a long human chain as they walked through the field searching. The final picture was of the heartbroken father holding his lifeless son who had been found too late and had died of exposure. The caption underneath read, “O God, if only we had joined hands sooner.”

The world is full of lost souls who cannot see their way above the distractions and barriers of the world and cannot find their way to the Father’s house until Christians join together as salt and light and sweep through the world in search of them. Our work is not simply as individual grains of salt or as individual rays of light but as the whole church of Jesus Christ.²

¹ ² MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (236, 240). Chicago: Moody Press.