What The World Needs Now Is

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Date: 22 January 2012 Preacher: Darrell Johnson

[0:00] If you have walked or driven through the intersection of Nelson and Berard this past week, or if you approached the sanctuary this morning walking up Nelson Street, you likely saw what is on the sign advertising today's sermon.

What the world needs now is dot, dot, dot, and my name in small print. It appears that the title of today's sermon is, What the world needs now is Daryl Johnson.

Believe me, when I first thought of this title, I was not thinking such an audacious thought. I would imagine some of you, when you saw the sign, said to yourself or even to your friends, What is happening to our pastor?

Two weeks ago, the title, The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached. And now, this title, What the World Needs Now is Daryl Johnson. We know that he's been under great stress for this last year or so.

Is he starting to lose it? I chose the title to play off the 1965 hit song, What the World Needs Now.

[1:29] What the world needs now is love. Sweet love. Oh, you're good. Now, although Jesus may not put it in just such words, I think he would agree with the sentiment of that song.

What the world needs now is love. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. As the father loves me, so I love you.

Love the Lord your God with all your strength and might. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love one another as I have loved you. Love your enemies. What the world needs now is love.

Lots of love. Courageous love. But in light of what Jesus says in the section of the Sermon on the Mount we just read, the sign, this audacious sign on the corner of Nelson and Berard in this world-class city is, well, let us pray.

Lord Jesus, as you now draw us further into your Sermon on the Mount, will you speak to each of us and all of us in such a way that we can be what you want us to be?

[3:04] Amen. Amen. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks audaciously. He speaks audaciously of himself.

Truly, I say to you, no appeal to any higher authority, just truly, I say to you. Indeed, setting himself over against and above others who try to articulate the nature of human life.

You have heard it was said, but I say to you six times. You have heard it was said, but I say to you. Blessed, right on, are those who are persecuted because of me.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord. Whoever does these words of mine and hears these words of mine and does them. Who is this I?

Who is this me, mine, my? Who is this person who lays out this fuller vision of human life and then grounds it in himself?

[4:13] Who is this who speaks in a way that no one ever has? Who is this one who speaks as if he were the Lord of the universe? Who is this one who speaks as if he were the living God in our flesh?

The Sermon on the Mount poses the most important question any human being can ever ask. Who is this Jesus? Who is this who humbly speaks so audaciously?

And in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks audaciously of those who follow him. He who speaks audaciously about himself speaks audaciously about those he calls to himself.

He who makes audacious claims about himself makes audacious claims about his followers, his disciples, about us. You are the salt of the earth.

You are the light of the world. It seems to me that the only person about whom Jesus should say those words is himself.

[5:29] I am the salt of the earth. I am the light of the world. He does go on to speak that way later on in his ministry. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.

But here in the Sermon on the Mount, in the greatest sermon ever preached, the greatest preacher who ever lived says of those upon whom he has gotten a hold, you.

You. You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. Now put yourself in the place of those who first heard Jesus speak so audaciously.

Ordinary folk. None of them listed in who's who in Palestine. None of them occupying high-ranking positions in the Roman government. None of them holding significant offices in the Jewish religious establishment.

Ordinary people. Actually, a rather ragamuffin bunch. Yet something was happening to them. They were being changed.

[6:39] Slowly but surely changed. Jesus had announced his good news to them. His gospel. The time is fulfilled, he said. The kingdom of God has come near. And then on this mountain by the Sea of Galilee, he was beginning to explain the implication of this good news.

He was describing what happens when people repent and turn around and embrace him and his good news. He was describing the new kind of humanity that begins to emerge in the world.

Poor in spirit. Merciful. Pure in heart. Peacemakers. Beatitude people. And then looking at that ragtag being transformed gathering, he says, You.

You. You people whom I love. You people who I've called blessed. You people upon whom the reign of God has come.

You are the salt of the earth. You. Are the light of the world. I'm told that the Romans had a saying at that time.

[7:46] It goes like this. There is nothing more useful than salt and sun. In Latin, Soley at sole. There is nothing more useful than sole at sole.

Salt and sun. Jesus is saying to that ordinary group of people. There is nothing more useful than you. Than you citizens of the in breaking kingdom of heaven.

You are sole at sole. You are the salt that the earth needs. You are the light that the world needs. Audacious.

And amazing. The earth. The world. Can get along without a lot of things. But according to Jesus. The earth.

The world. The world. Cannot get along. Without beatitude people. Every Palestinian home. However rich or poor.

[8:50] Needed both salt and light. John Stott suggests. That during his own boyhood. Jesus must have often watched his mother. Use salt in the kitchen. And light the lamps when the sun went down.

Salt and light are indispensable household commodities. What an audacious claim. You. Are the salt.

Not only of your kitchen. But of the whole earth. You are the light. Not only of your own home. But of the whole world.

Of the cosmos. So my friend Dale Bruner can say. That on that day. Jesus was bestowing on those ordinary people. Cosmic. Cosmic significance.

Now in using these two metaphors. Salt and light. Jesus is telling us. How he views human society. In using these two simple metaphors.

[9:51] Salt and light. Jesus is revealing. His perspective. On what is going on. Around the world. And in this city. Specifically. Jesus is revealing.

His understanding. Of. One. The condition of the world. Left to itself. Two. The role that beatitude people. Are to play. In the world.

And three. The way beatitude people. Are to fulfill this role. Through these two metaphors. Jesus is revealing. The condition. Of human society.

When left to itself. The role that beatitude people. Are to play. In human society. And the way. And the way. The way beatitude people. Play this role. In society.

So consider each of these perspectives. One at a time. First. Jesus use of the salt and light metaphors. Reveals.

[10:45] His assessment. Of human society. Left. To itself. Left. The key word is. Left. To itself.

Which. As I have pointed out. On other occasions. Is exactly. What the world. Wants. World. Cosmos.

This term. In the gospels. Means. Human society. Organizing itself. Without God. Psalm 2. Why are the nations. In an uproar. Why are the peoples.

Devising. A vain. Thing. The kings of the earth. Take their stand. The rulers. Council together. Against Yahweh. And his messiah. Saying. Let us tear their fetters.

Apart. Let us cast their cords. From us. World. Wants. To be left. By itself. And in his sermon.

[11:43] On the mount. Jesus. Spells out. The consequences. Of human society. Left. To itself. Most of us.

In this room. Use salt. To enhance. Our food. A little bit of salt. Brings zest. To plain food. But in the first century. And in centuries. Leading up to the advent.

Of refrigeration. Salt was used. To preserve. Food. Salt was. Absolutely essential. To keep. Food. Especially meat.

From spoiling. Do you see. Where Jesus. Is going. With his use. Of this metaphor. Human existence. Human society. Left.

To itself. Has the tendency. To spoil. To rot. Left. To itself. It runs down. It deteriorates. It decays.

[12:39] Not very flattering. Is it? Positively. Offensive. Offensive. Actually. But that is how. Emmanuel. The creator. In our flesh.

And blood. Assesses. The world. Left. To itself. Now. Fifty years ago. Or so. People would have laughed.

At Jesus. Fifty years ago. We were riding the crest. Of amazing progress. Philosophers. Politicians.

Scientists. Even. Theologians. Were speaking. In grand. And glorious. Terms. Of the. Ascent. Of man. Humanity.

Was marching. Triumphantly. Towards the realization. Of paradise. On earth. Few people. Speak that way. Today. Very few people.

Yes. We made. Tremendous. Progress. In technology. And in medicine. For which. I'm very grateful. Things go. Faster. They're bigger. They're brighter. They're stronger. Yet.

There's something. Terribly. Wrong. Where have we gone. Morally. And relationally. Intellectually. And spiritually. Left.

To itself. World. Tends. To run. Down. And like. Meat. World. Needs. Something. From. Outside. Itself. To slow.

And halt. This. Downward. Decay. The key phrase. Again. Is left. To itself. This inertia. Toward. Decay. In human.

Civilizations. Is the consequence. Of humanity's. Fundamental. Mistake. Our decision. To go it alone. And try to build. This world. On our own. Without God.

[14:32] When we leave. God. Out of the equation. The whole thing. Is going to unravel. And disintegrate. And the world. Cannot. Stop. Itself. From spoiling.

Now. I do not like. To talk that way. I do not like. To face this fact. Those of you. Who know me. Well. Know. That I want.

To believe. In the fundamental. Goodness. Of humanity. But Jesus. Here. Makes me face. The facts. Left to ourselves.

We. Like meat. Spoil. Jesus. Reveals. Even more. In his use. Of the metaphor. Of light. He's saying.

That human society. Left. To itself. Tends. To go dark. Human societies. Lose. Their way. Do I need. To illustrate.

[15:30] I'm presently. Reading. Nile Ferguson's. Civilizations. The West. And the rest. We take. Wrong. Turns. Leading. Into. Even.

Deeper. Darkness. Our thinking. Gets. Muddy. Right. Wrong. Is right. As long. As it feels. Good. And right. Is judged. As old.

Fashion. We become. Vulnerable. To the latest. Fat. And we. Like flies. Go to any. Flickering light. That will give us. Any hope. Of warmth. And healing.

And to me. The greatest. Ironies. Of history. Is that we call. The period. Of history. When God. Is taken out. Of the center.

Of human thinking. We call that period. Enlightenment. The great. Oxymoron. Of the last. Centuries. Left.

[16:23] Left to itself. The world. Cannot. Stop. Itself. From going. Dark. Now. I do not like. To talk. This way. Makes me sad.

And I know. How offensive. It is. Believe me. But it is. The way. It is. Now. The good news. Is. That God. Does not.

Leave. The world. To itself. The good news. Is. Is. That the living God. Intervenes. In the world. And provides.

Salt. And brings. Light. And to. Everyone's. Surprise. The salt. And light.

Turns out. To be. Ordinary. Broken. People. Whom Jesus. Brings to himself. Which brings us then. To the second.

[17:16] Perspective. On human society. That Jesus reveals. In his use. Of these metaphors. Of salt. And light. The metaphors. Reveal. The role. Beatitude.

People. Are to have. In a world. That tends. To decay. And darken. It's a double. Role. Arrest. And dispel.

Arrest. And dispel. As salt. To arrest. Or at least. Hinder. Social decay. And as light.

To dispel. And even. Draw. Draw back. The prevailing. Darkness. Arrest. And dispel. As fishermen.

Rub. Salt. Into their fish. So they do not. Spoil. So the savior. Of the world. Rubs. Beatitude. People. Into the fabric.

[18:12] Of human society. So it does not. Spoil. As a candle. Or a flashlight. Reveals. The obstacles. In the way. And illumines.

The path. Before us. So the savior. Of the world. Places. His followers. In every. Sector. Of society. So that the. Speed bumps.

Can be revealed. And that people. Can be led. Into the true light. God. This is why. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. At the height. Of the. Nazi regime.

Could write. In casting out. The disciples. Of Jesus. The earth. Is destroying. Its very life. And casting out.

The disciples. Of Jesus. The earth. Is destroying. Its very life. Audacious. I know. But that. Is what. Jesus. Is saying.

[19:08] The disciples. Of the. Incarnate. God. Are. Antiseptic. To social. Decay. And are. Lighthouses. To people. Who are.

Groping. In the darkness. Now. What this. Suggests. To me. Is. That the. Welfare. Of any. City.

Is. Directly. Related. To the. Health. Of the. Church. In any. City. When. Jesus. Entered. The city. Of Jerusalem. On Palm.

Sunday. After. Lamenting. The fact. That the city. Did not know. The things. That make. For peace. He did not. March. Toward. Pilate's. Headquarters.

He. Be lined. To the temple. Why? Because. In his mind. The real problem. Was not. Herod. And not. The Romans.

[20:02] The real. Problem. Lay. With the people. Of God. And so. He heads. To the temple. To cleanse. The temple. Because.

As. Goes. The temple. So. Goes. The city. As. Goes. The church. So. Goes. The city. The welfare. Of. Any. City.

Is. Directly. Related. To the health. Of the church. In the city. Now. Work. With. These. Metaphors. Of salt.

And light. A bit. Further. Because. I think. They. Open. Up. More. Of. What. Jesus. Is. Expecting. His. People. To be. In the world. Focus.

On. Salt. Salt. Preserves. Enhances. Flavor. And. Quickens. Thirst. So.

[20:55] To. Be attitude. People. Preserves. We are placed. In our sectors. Of the city. To keep. Our sectors.

From. Spoiling. To be more concrete. You. Each of you. Is placed.

In your sector. Of the city. To keep. Your sector. Of the city. From spoiling. I am placed.

In my sector. Of the city. To keep. My sector. Of the city. From spoiling. As one commentator. Put it. We are. Moral. Disinfectant.

Salt. Also. Enhances. Flavor. We are placed. In our spheres. Of the city. To give it. Zest. Something.

[21:54] To give it. To give it. Something. About the way. We. Speak. And act. Is to bring. Freshness. To people's lives. Would you agree.

With me. When I say. That most people. Live lives. Of. Quiet. Desperation. The attitude. People. Are placed. In the world. As salt.

Of hope. And peace. And joy. Lord. Help us. When I reflect. On how.

Effective. Or ineffective. I have been. In the world. Or as I reflect. On how ineffective. I have been. In my own. Family. I think. Of what. What. Oliver.

Wendell. Holmes. Once said. I might have. Entered. The ministry. If certain. Clergy men. I know. Had not looked. And acted. So much. Like. Undertakers.

[22:51] Apologies. To any. Undertakers. In the room. And salt. Creates. Thirst. Salty.

Food. Makes us. Thirsty. Salty. Disciples. Of Jesus. Make people. Thirsty. For Jesus. We.

Or live. In our. Sectors. Of the city. In such a way. That people. Want. What we want. Why do you. Have such hope.

Why do you. Treat us. With such kindness. Why is it. That that tragedy. You're going through. Is not robbing you. Of your joy. Focus.

On light. Light. Illumines. And guides. And pushes. Back. Back. The darkness. So to. Beatitude. People.

[23:49] Illumines. Like a candle. In a. Large. Room. The mere. Presence. Of the poor. In spirit. The pure. In heart. And the peacemakers.

Illumines. The darkness. Sometimes. We are welcomed. And sometimes. We are not. Either way. The attitude. People. Play the function. In the world. That Jesus. Himself.

Place. Illuminating. In the words. Of James. Boyce. Illuminating. Dishonest. Practices. And businesses. Illuminating. The lies.

Told. In the business. World. Illuminating. Gossip. And secretarial. And executive. Pools. Illuminating. Loose. Talk. And looser. Morals. At parties.

Corruption. In politics. Racial. Prejudice. Greed. Selfishness. And on it goes. And positively. Illuminating. The presence. Of God. Illuminating.

[24:44] The works. Of God's. Justice. And mercy. And illuminating. Those hands. Eager. To welcome. Prodigal. Children. Home. Light.

Also. Guides. The attitude. People. Are placed. In the various. Sections. Of the city. To guide. Those sections. Into the truth. We are to model.

A new way. Of living. Something about. The way. We work. Something about. The way. We speak. Something about. The way. We treat. Others. Is to lead.

People. Out of. Darkness. Into God's. Healing. Light. And light. Pushes. Back. It pushes. Back. The darkness.

It pushes. Back. Lies. It pushes. Back. The illusions. As the poster. You've seen. Says. It does.

[25:38] Very little. To curse. The darkness. One. Outta. Light. Light. Audacious. Really.

Really. Audacious. You. Are the salt. Of the earth. You. Are the light. Of the world.

I think. You can. See. Then. I think. You. Can. Feel. That. Many. Of us. Are. Asking.

The wrong. Question. About. What's. Happening. In. Our. World. Especially. About. What is. Happening. In. The western. World. That. Used. To. Be. Under.

Significant. Influence. Of. The gospel. Of. Jesus. Christ. As. Human. Society. Disintegrates. We are. Asking. The question. What.

[26:31] Has. Gone. Wrong. With. The world. And. We are. Pointing. The finger. At. The. Unbelieving. World. In light. Of.

What. Jesus. Says. In the. Sermon. On. The. Mount. Ought. Not. The question. Be. Where. Is. The. Church. And. Ought.

Not. The. Finger. Be. Pointed. At. The. Church. At. Us. When. Meat. Goes. Bad.

You. Do. Not. Blame. The. Meat. You. Ask. Where. Is. The. Salt. When. A. Room. Goes. Dark. You.

Do. Not. Blame. The. Room. You. Ask. Where. Is. The. Light. When. A. Society. Once. Under. The. Influence. Of. Christianity.

[27:23] Goes. Sour. You. Do. Not. Blame. The. Society. You. Ask. Where. In. Heaven's. Name. Has. The. Church. Been. A.

Number. Of. Years. Ago. I. Had. The. Privilege. Of. Friendship. With. Keith. Phillips. He's. The. President. Of. An. Inner. City. Ministry. Called. World. Impact. In. His. Book. They. Dare. To. Love.

The. Ghetto. Keith. Asks. Why. Are. The. Inner. Cities. Of. America. Deteriorating. So. Rapidly. Why. Have. We. Armed. Guards. In. Our. Inner. City. Schools. Why. Are. There. Bars. Over.

The. Windows. In. So. Many. Private. Residences. Why. Are. The. Elderly. Afraid. To. Walk. To. To. To. The. Mail. Box. The. Easy. Answer. Is. To. Blame. The. Violence. Loneliness. And. Hurt.

Of. The. Ghetto. On. Sin. The. Answer. Is. Correct. But. Only. Partially. A. More. Convicting. Answer. Is. That. It. Involves. The. Church. Of. Jesus. Christ. The. Answer. Is.

[28:18] That. The. Evangelical. Church. Has. Run. From. The. Inner. City. In. And.

Light. Just. Left. You. Are. The. Salt. You. Are. The. Light. You. Cannot. Run. From. The. City. Now.

The. Inner. Cities. Of. Course. Are. Not. The. Only. Ghettos. Abandoned. By. The. Church. What. About. Entertainment. And. Media. Medicine.

Politics. Higher. Education. Thank. God. That. Many. Of. You. Are. In. Those. Sectors. But. We. Right. I've.

Had. A. Series. Of. Meetings. With. Christian. Leaders. In. The. City. Over. The. Last. Few. Weeks. And. I've. Heard. Some. Amazing. Things. So. I. I. Am. Much. Encouraged. Something. Stirring. Our. City. And. I'm. Very. Encouraged. Which.

[29:16] Brings. Us. Then. To. The. Third. Perspective. Jesus. Reveals. In. His. Use. Of. These. Two. Domestic. Metaphors. Jesus. Shows. Beatitude. People. How.

To. Best. Fulfill. Their. Roles. In. Human. Society. The. Two. Metaphors. Help. Us. Avoid. Two. Extremes. On. The. One. Hand. We.

Are. To. Resist. The. Tendency. To. Turn. Inward. And. Become. Preoccupied. With. Our. Spiritual. Well. Being. Jesus. Says. A. City. On. A. Hill. Cannot. Be. Hidden. People.

Don't. Light. A. Lamp. And. Then. Put. A. Bushell. Over. It. No. They. Put. It. On. A. Lamp. Stand. I. Think. He. Would. Also. Say. Salt. Is. Of. Little. Use. In. The. Salt. Shaker. Salt. Must. Be.

Shaken. Out. Of. The. Container. Into. The. Meat. Where. It. Dissolves. In fact. The. Salt. Must. Dissolve. Into. The. Meat. To. Do. Its. Effect. On. The. Other. Hand.

[30:08] We. Have. To. Resist. The. Tendency. Of. Accommodating. Ourselves. To. The. Surrounding. Culture. Salt. Checks. Decay. Because. It. Is. Different.

Jesus. Says. If. The. Salt. Loses. Its. Saltiness. Of. What. Good. Is. It. Anymore. Just. To. Be. Trampled. Underfoot. By. People. How. Many. Churches. In. The. Cities. Of. The. World. Are.

Ignored. By. The. City. Because. The. City. Doesn't. See. Anything. Different. When. The. City. Looks. At. The. Church. It. Sees. A. Mirror. Image. Of. It. It.

People. Treat. Each. Other. Just. The. Way. The. City. Does. They're. Just. As. Harsh. And. Judgmental. As. The. Way. The. City. Is. Dr. Martin. Lloyd. Jones. Put.

It. This. Way. The. Glory. Of. The. Gospel. Is. That. When. The. Church. Is. Absolutely. Different. From. The. World. She. Invariably. Attracts. The. World. So.

[31:02] In. Order. For. Us. To. Play. Our. Role. That. Jesus. Intends. Us. To. Play. We. Have. To. Resist. The. Extremes. Either. Becoming. A. Holy. Huddle. Or. An. Inoffensive.

Culture. Pleaser. One. Of. The. Titles. Of. A. Book. By. Richard. Mao. I. Think. Says. It. Best. His. Title. Is. Holy. World. In. Isn't. That. A. Good. Title. Holy. World. In.

The. World. But. Inherent.

Attractiveness. Of. A. Thing. Let. The. Inherent. Attractiveness. Of. The. Deed. You. Do. In. Jesus. Attract. Salty. Works. Light. Radiant. Works.

And. We. Play. The. Role. That. Jesus. Wants. Us. To. Play. In. The. World. By. Simply. Being. Who. We. Are. Dietrich. Bonhoeffer. Again. Pointed. Out. That. Jesus. Did. Not. Say. You. Have. Salt. Or.

[31:58] You. Have. Light. Jesus. Did. Not. Say. You. Should. Be. Salt. You. Should. Be. Light. Jesus. Says. You. Are. Salt. You. Are. Light. Be. Who. You. Are. Be. Who.

I. Made. You. To. Be. How. Well. Ask. How. Are. We. Be. Be. What. Jesus. Wants. Us. To. Be.

Well. By. Virtue. Of. Contact. With. Him. By. Virtue. Of. His. Claim. Upon. Us. By. Virtue. Of. Him. Causing. The. Kingdom. To. Break. In. Our. Lives. We. Are. Slowly.

But. Surely. Becoming. The. People. Jesus. Wants. Us. To. Be. Which. Says. To. Me. Then. That. We. Best. Play. Our. Role. In. The. World. By. Staying. Very. Close.

To. Jesus. Surprised. We. Become. Salty. Because. He. Salts. Us. With. His. Salt. We. Become. Light. Because. He. Illumines. His. Light.

[32:50] In. Us. A. Little. Girl. Went. With. Her. Mother. To. Visit. A. Beautiful. Cathedral. And. As. She. Watched. The. Sunlight. Beam. In. Between. These. Windows. And. The. People. In. The. Windows. She.

Asked. Her. Mother. Who. Are. These. People. In. The. Windows. And. Her. Mother. Says. Oh. They're. Saints. And. Then. She. Said. Oh. Now. I. Know. What. Saints. Are. Saints. Are. People. Who. Let. The. Light. Shine. Through. Them. For.

The. Sake. Of. The. City. Which. Left. To. It. It. Decays. And. Darkens. We. Must. Stay.

Close. To. Him. Who. Is. The. World's. True. Salt. And. True. Light. Abide. In. Me. And. I. In. You. And. You. Will. Bear. Much. Fruit. What.

The. World. Needs. Now. Is. Dot. Dot. Dot. I. Say. That. What. The. World. Needs. Now.

[33:47] Is. Jesus. Right. What. The. World. Needs. Now. Is. Jesus. But. What. Is. Jesus.

Say. It. Turns. Out. That. That. Accidental. Apparently. Audacious. Sign. On. The. Corner. Of.

Nelson. And. Berard. Accidentally. Got. It. Right. It. Is. Right. On. What. The. World. Needs.

Now. Now. Is. Me. What. The. World. Needs. Now. Is. You. What.

The. Is. For. Me. To. Be. Who. Jesus. Says. I. Am. What. The. World. Needs. Now. Is. For. You.

[34:40] To. Be. Who. Jesus. Says. You. Are. What. The. World. Needs. now is for the citizens of the kingdom of heaven to first and foremost be citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

You! You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. So for the sake of the city he loves, let us resolve that as never before we will be who the Lord of the city says we are.

I want to invite you to just reflect by yourself by answering two questions. The first question is as I have been speaking this morning how has Jesus been speaking to you about the role he has for you where you live and work?

And the second question if money were no object and you knew you could not fail and by the way in the kingdom of God money is no object if money were no object and you knew you could not fail what good work in the city would you like to throw yourself into right now?

as if I have a man Aren't saying Oh just in the opinion only a beautiful wonder where we are so and and in the book the only heaven is the lleg c Og to first let serve while while