

Salt and Light Part 1.

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Summary: Happy Kingdom Citizens

Matt 5:3-12

Blessed are:

- 1. Poor in Spirit*
- 2. Mourn*
- 3. Meek*
- 4. Hunger and Thirst for righteousness*
- 5. Merciful*
- 6. Pure in heart*
- 7. Peacemakers*
- 8. Enduring persecution*

For theirs/they shall:

- 1. Is the kingdom*
- 2. Be comforted*
- 3. Inherit the earth*
- 4. Be satisfied*
- 5. Be shown mercy*
- 6. See God*
- 7. Be called sons of God*
- 8. Is the kingdom*

Beatitude #8 Transition

Matt 5:10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- If we are characterized by beatitude qualities, we are children of God's kingdom, which will look very different from the world's kingdom. Expect to be persecuted.
- But don't let persecution suppress the kingdom characteristics we have learned. Rather, be salt and light, impacting those around us with or without persecution.

Salt and Light Text

Matt 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

- The core of Jesus’ salt and light teaching is about influence. Impact.
- Jesus taught us to be “salty”, only a different kind of salty. Not anger or profane.
- Our mission is to glorify God by our influence, which presupposes the kind of character seen in the beatitudes (and the rest of the sermon)
- Jesus is calling Christians to influence the world we live in.
 - What influence does the corporate church have?
 - What influence do we have individually?
 - Does our salt and light cause others to glorify God?
 - Or do people in our circle even know we proclaim Jesus as Lord?

Purpose for Church

- Jesus developed his succession plan to influence the world

Mark 1:17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (talking to Simon and Andrew while fishing at Sea of Galilee)

Matt 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

John 20:21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

Matt 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

- Jesus prepared his disciples to spread the good news after his departure. Be Salt and light.

Why Salt and Light?

Matt 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth...”¹⁴ “You are the light of the world.”

- This teaching presupposes a decaying and dark world and it will get worse

2 Tim 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

- The earth and people will continue to decay until Jesus returns.
- The world is in desperate need of righteousness, godliness, truth, and love influence.

Satan's Lie: Mankind is Getting Better

- Evolution, intelligence, technology often pointed to as saviors.
- NY Post (3/29/23) Headline: "Immortality is attainable by 2030: Google scientist".
 - Ray Kurzweil claims "humans will have created technology to fend off aging and illness with microscopic robots"*
- Los Angeles, CA, 1979: University professor taught his students that marriage was on the decline because man was evolving to a higher level and marriage is something humans only need at the lower levels.**
- "The 19th century is said to have been the golden age for American utopianism"***
- After one of the deadliest wars, WWII, United Nations formed in 1945 as an agency of world peace. The first item of the UN preamble reads:
WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED
 - *to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, *****
- *But in reality, the world's societies are getting more corrupt and morally depraved.*

*<https://nypost.com/2023/03/29/immortality-is-attainable-by-2030-google-scientist/>

**<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/2207/you-are-the-salt-of-the-earth>

***<https://www.britannica.com/story/american-utopias>

****<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/preamble>

The Influence of “Salt”

- What use of salt was Jesus referring to? Theologian opinions abundant.
 1. An illustration of purity (pure salt is white)
 2. As a flavor enhancer or seasoning (Matt 5:13, Luke 14:34, Col 4:6)
 3. Symbol of permanence
 - covenant of salt - Num 18:19, 2 Chr 13:5
 4. As a preservative for food, especially meat
 - slowed the decay and made food storage possible lacking refrigeration
 5. As a valuable commodity
 - salt once used to pay wages; referred to as white gold in Roman times due to its importance in preserving food
 - “salary” comes from “sal” latin for salt
 6. To sting and disinfectant in a wound
 7. To induce thirst
 8. As a crop killer (Judges 9:45)
 9. As a fertilizer (Luke 14:35)
- So which one did Jesus mean? Maybe several of them.

Salt as a Seasoning

- This one has the most references

Matt 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Luke 14:34 “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35 It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Col 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

- Clearly, how we treat others is important. Gracious words, patience, kindness represent how Jesus treated sinners.
- When we enter a room, does the environment change for the better? It should!

Salt as a Seasoning

- Christians, by their actions, attitude, demeanor, words (or lack thereof), kindness, etc. influence those in their sphere or circle.

- 2 Cor 10:13-16 Paul speaks of one's (evangelist) sphere or area of influence

1 Cor 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

- The unbelieving spouse is not “sanctified” by salvation, but they are constantly touching godliness. That influence may eventually lead to their salvation.
- The unbelieving spouse may often enjoy the blessings that spill over from the believing spouse.

1 Pet 3:1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

- Perfect example of salt's subtle power on the world.

Salt as a Preservative

- Do salty Christians actually retard evil in society? Most definitely!

Prov 25:4 Take away the dross from the silver, and the smith has material for a vessel; 5 take away the wicked from the presence of the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness.

Prov 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Prov 11:11 By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown.

“Most competent historians are agreed in saying that what undoubtedly saved England from a revolution such as was experienced in France at the end of the 18th century was nothing but the evangelical revival. This was not done because anything was done directly, but because masses of individuals had become Christians, and they were living this better life, and they had this higher outlook. The whole political situation was affected, and the great acts of Parliament which were passed in the last century were mostly due to the fact that there were such large numbers of individual Christians found in the land.” – Martyn Lloyd-Jones

- All sectors of relationships, business, education, science, law, finance, health care, politics, etc. need salt and light. Otherwise, society will crumble.

Abraham Intercedes For Sodom

Gen 18:23 Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" 26 And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." 27 Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. 28 Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." 29 Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." 30 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." 31 He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose

Abraham Intercedes For Sodom

twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." 32 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." 33 And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

- Only 10 righteous people would have saved the entire city!
- Since the minimum was not met, God removes 4 people before destroying the cities.
- Righteous, God-fearing people act as a preservative in society.
- God destroyed the entire earth with a flood, saving the only 8 righteous people.
 - Would God have spared the earth for 10 righteous people? How about 100?

Righteous Preserve and are Spared

2 Pe 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

- God compares the future judgment to that of the flood and Sodom.
- He will rescue the godly. Is it possible God is patiently waiting due to the influence of the church?

2 Pet 3:9 not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

YOU are the Salt and Light

Matt 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth...14 “You are the light of the world.

- The pronoun “you” in Greek is Nominative, 2nd Person, Plural form
 - Nominative, 2nd person adds an emphasis; emphatic “YOU”
 - Plural means more than one person
- Translation: All of you disciples of Jesus are the **ONLY** salt this world has
- Jesus’ plan to influence the world is through his people.
 - There is no plan B.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Rom 10:13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Testimonies

- Dwight Moody (prominent figure)
- Helen Ewing (obscure figure)

The Danger

Matt 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

- Lost its taste: G3471 *morainō*; from G3474, foolish. To make dull, not acute, to cause something to lose its taste or the purpose for which it exists, e.g., salt not being able to make things salty.
- How does salt lose its saltiness? By contamination with gypsum and other minerals giving it a flat taste and making it ineffective preservative.
- Sin can cause a Christian to lose their influence (saltiness) in a decaying world. We can't retard the corruption, sting in the wound, create thirst, or season the world when we are just like them.
- Is the church influencing the world or the world influencing the church?
- Salt must be distinctly different from its environment. Otherwise, it's not salty!
- One grain of salt is detectable on the tongue, but what happens if you swallow a teaspoon?
- But a grain on eggs makes no detectable difference. Need 3-4 shakes.

How to Have Maximum Impact

- Christian example (salt) must be genuine and uncompromised. Of the Royal priesthood, Holy nation sort (1Pet 2:9). (high potency)
- Christian's must come into contact with their sphere (salt infiltrates food) (close proximity).
- When given an opportunity to proclaim the light of Jesus, the message should be simple and concise (clear communication).

**High Potency + Close Proximity + Clear Communication
= Maximum Impact***

In the World, Not of the World Paradox

John 17:15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

- Combining these: I want you in the world, but not of the world. I've sent you to the world, but don't love the world.
- How can we be in, but not of the world and go to the world, but not love the world?
- Matt 5:13-16 Be salt and light.
 - Salt must be in contact with the substance its affecting, but yet distinct.
 - Light must shine upon darkness, yet be distinct from the darkness.

Differences Between Salt and Light

- Jesus used two metaphors: Salt and Light, indicating two types of influence.
- Salt
 - Salt is often the silent and subtle influence. Quiet but powerful.
 - Salt must be in contact with the substance it is affecting.
 - Salt is usually accepted, even by unbelievers and skeptics.
 - Salt holds back the moral decay of the world.
 - Salt is influence by moral example, standing against evil, words seasoned with grace. Demonstrates how Christians are different from the world. Living like Jesus.
- Light
 - Light is obvious, it is obtrusive and may be unwanted.
 - Light can be useful from a distance.
 - Light proclaims truth, exposes sin. Illuminates the pathway.
 - Light is influence by good deeds, proclaiming the gospel or confronting sin. Preaching Jesus.



Acts 1:1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,

Summary: Persecution

- Salt and light describe Jesus' plan to impact the people in the world for the kingdom, and more specifically, God's glory.
- We must be distinct from the world in order to impact it.
- We must be in contact with the world in order to impact it.
- We must carry the clear message of truth in order to impact it.
 - $HP + CP + CC = MI$

Matt 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet."

Next time: "You are the light of the world"