

Sermon On The Mount: The Lord's Salt & Light

Company

Matthew 5:13-16

INTRODUCTION:

In the "Beatitudes", the character & blessedness of the citizens of this kingdom were described. The final beatitude, Christ described the attitude the world often displays towards the citizens of His kingdom. (**vv.10-12**) Christ now turns His attention to the opposite side of the coin -- the influence of the kingdom, and its citizens, upon the world.

How important is the Christian's influence? We all possess one, good or bad, **Rom.14:7**. We may be young, old, strong, weak, rich or poor, but we still have some influence. It is impossible for us not have some impact on this world. **Matt.12:30**. Influence is something you cannot lose. What do we do with it? Cherish it and protect it, so it will be good and useful. Be careless with it and cause it to be bad and harmful. Do we ever understand the power of our influence? Death cannot even stop influence (**Heb.11:4**). This is an important aspect many forget. Our influence should live on after my death. **Psa.19:7-14**, prayer of David worthy to follow.

How can one influence others? Proper application of Beatitudes a good start: *Poor in Spirit; Mourn sin; Meek and gentle towards God; Hunger & Thirsting after spiritual things; Seek and give mercy; Pure in heart; seek peace with God, brethren, and men; Stand for righteousness, even if faced with persecution!*

1 Tim.4:12; How should our "light" shine as Christians? Diligently, **Rom.12:11**. Zealously, **Rev.3:19**; Constantly, **Rev.3:2**. Jesus use two metaphors to describe our influence: "Salt & Light". Let us look closely at these two characteristics...

I. "YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH;" (v.13)

- a. Note the distinction between "you" and "the earth".
 1. "You" identifies the disciples of the Lord. **1 Pet.2:9**.
 2. "The earth" identifies all those outside of Christ.
- b. Salt has several characteristics...

1. It is white, enhances flavor, preserves, etc.

2. Description of salt: *"It is well-known fact that the salt of this country (Palestine) when in contact with the ground, or exposed to rain and sun, does become insipid and useless. From the manner in which it is gathered, much earth and other impurities are necessarily collected with it. Not a little of it is so impure that it cannot be used at all; and such salt soon effloresces (to change to a powder by exposure) and turns to dust--not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown...No man will allow it to be thrown on his field, and the place for it is in the street; and there it is cast, to be trodden under the foot of men"* (Thomson. **"Land and the Book", p.382. 1887, quoted in Pulpit Commentary**).

c. Salt is a preserving agent; thus is the Christian, **Gen.18:26,28**.

d. Salt also has a savoring agent; thus making the world more palatable to God, and possibly for others. Perhaps making it possible for God to continue to bear this world and its "distasteful" wickedness (**Jer.5:1; Job 6:6**). Give some "good" flavor to this world.

1. Where the "salt" of Christians is missing in the world--misery, apostasy, and wickedness not far away! **Ps.9:17; Isa.60:12; Gen.19:24,25**.

2. Salt can also kill things which are undesirable. It kills certain bacteria or prevents its growth. Christian teaching and living will show the end of ungodly practices (**Gal.2:20**). Must come into contact with that which is to be preserve if it is to be effective. Just a little salt can have an effect on a great mass. Is this not what our Father desires for us to do in this world? Implication: we are the saving agents of the good in the world. If we are not, who has the influence?

II. CHRIST WARNS AGAINST LOSING OUR FLAVORING ABILITY. **(v.13)**

a. Pure salt never loses flavor ability..yet, when mixed with impurities salt can lose it's ability to enhance flavor. Can we lose our "flavoring agent" in the world? Yes! **Matt.6:24; 1 Cor.15:33; Eph.5:3-7**. If we do we will be thrown out! **Matt.13:40-43; Rev.3:15,16**. We cannot be "seasoned", if we have lose our flavoring influence!

b. All that is right, good, and pure in this world should be seen in the lives we live as Christians. This is a continuous duty. Never ending and very demanding. Those who try to "hold the world", "walk the tightrope" and "straddle the fence", have given up the ability to "flavor this earth"!

III. "YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD", (5:14,15)

a. Distinction made again between "you" and the "world". The Christians are the "*light*" and the "*world*" those outside of Christ.

b. The "Light", is identified with God (**1 Jno.1:5; Ja.1:17**).

1. Christ is "light" of the world (**Jno.1:4, 5-9; 8:12; 12:46**).

2. Gospel gives light (**2 Cor.4:4**).

3. Christians described as children of light, **Jno.12:36; 1 Thess.5:5**;

We have been called into light, **1 Pet.2:9**. Light of world because of relationship to Christ.

4. Light has no communion with darkness, **2 Cor.6:14**.

5. Walking in the "light" we are cleansed from sins, **1 Jno.1:7**;

Eph.5:7-10.

6. Lights in a dark world, **Phil.2:14,15**. Must reflect that light by the lives we live (**2 Cor.4:6**).

c. Our light is one that is placed in a position of prominence so that it cannot be overlooked. Compared to:

1. A city set on a hill, in contrast to one in the valley.

2. On a lampstand, not under a bushel.

3. Compromising dims our lights.

d. Qualities of light:

1. Light is active. Moves 186,000 miles per second!

2. Light enables us to see. It can guide us out of darkness. (aircraft, beacons)

3. Light cheers and comforts. Light in hospital room.

4. Light is pure.

5. Light is essential directly and indirectly to all life. plant life, brings us food.

6. Light works quietly.

7. Light awakens (**Eph.5:14**).

E. Two Fold Responsibility as "*lights of this world*":

1. They must be VISIBLE. Seen by the world (**Jno.13:35; 17:21**).

2. They must RADIATE. Give light. Must have some affect on the world!

1 Pet.2:11,12; 2 Cor.9:12,13.

IV. "MUST LET OUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN, GLORIFY OUR FATHER BY OUR WORKS." (5:16)

- a. Shown by our good works (**Jno.6:28**).
- b. Exposes the darkness (**Eph.5:13**).
- c. Explains cause of darkness (**Isa.59:1,2. Jno.3:19**). Sin!
- d. Provide a way out of that darkness (**Eph.2:1,2,12**).
- e. Holds fast the words of life (**Phil.2:14-16**).
- f. Seen when not even wanted (**Jno.3:19,20**).

WHY???

- 1. Glorify and Honor God.
- 2. Bear fruit. Prove our discipleship, (**Jno.15:8. Eph.5:11**).
- 3. The world in "spiritual darkness" and needs to see the way out? If we don't show them it is possible, who will?

CONCLUSION:

We as Christians must "Plant on Feet On Higher Ground"! We are all in this together. God is looking for us to help this world out of the clutches of the Evil One! Pray tell me, how can we influence this world for God, if we are just like the world? All of us need to continue to challenge ourselves to do better. Are we ashamed of who we are and what we represent? I am God's witness here on earth. My life is the answer for the way out of misery, pain, suffering, and harm this world can do to you (**1 Cor.11:1**).

Why be concerned about being the "salt & light" of this world? Because God in heaven is commanding us to be concerned! As citizens of that kingdom are "that light in a dark world". Does my life shine as a beacon in the night?

Psa.51:10-15. (read). Finally, if we are not the light and salt of this world, what chance do they or we have?

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