

Salt of the Earth

The description of the world is stark

The world needs salt because it is corrupt and corrupting. G. Campbell Morgan: “Jesus looking out over the multitudes of His day saw the corruption, the disintegration of life at every point, its breakup, its spoliation.” Our world wants to believe that things are getting better and better, hoping for a golden age. The scriptures say something different (Gen. 6:5, 12; Matt. 24:14; Ps. 14:1). At one time, the Christian belonged to that corrupt world too (Tit. 3:3). Our world is not getting any better (Rom. 1:18-32; 2 Tim. 3:15). Left to itself, our fallen world can only rot and deteriorate.

The characterization of the Christian is significant

Who? Christ is speaking of His disciples, who were a despised people (Acts 2:7; 1 Cor. 1:26-28). They are so different from the world (Matt. 5:3-12). Of themselves they were not such an impressive, earth-shaking group of men. But He characterizes His true disciples and them alone as the salt of the earth.

What? These words were spoken in a place where food went bad and spoiled, and where salt was of great importance. Salt acted as a preservative. The function of the disciples of Christ is to have a preserving influence in this world.

Why? Sovereign grace alone (Eph. 2:1; Is. 51:1)

How? By being in the world, but not of the world (Jn. 15:19; 17:14; Js 1:24). A believer is distinct from the world in walk and talk, in priorities and perspectives.

1. **By gracious words** (Eph. 4:29; Col 4:6)
2. **By faithful lives** (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2. Chron. 13:5). “The Christian is different—sometimes frustratingly, annoyingly, maddeningly different—but also the only one who ultimately can be trusted to tell the whole truth.”

The deterioration in saltiness is sobering

“If the salt have lost his savour...?” The point is clear that if the Christian stops being distinct from the world, he stops being an influence for good. We live in a time when the church is saying: “if we are too different from the world, we will alienate them. We should get closer to them, and be more like them.” That is the quickest way to lose our influence. A worldly, inconsistent Christian is useless like saltless salt.