

Matthew 5:13–16

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It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Salt and Light ***Matthew 5:13-16***

INTRO:

Approaching the beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount, we must realize the Lord is more concerned with who we are than in what we do. This is especially true in the verses before us today. They both say, we are something, not we do something. However, we must understand what we are and what we do are related. We may do some things because of who we are. Some folks do some of these things thinking they will make themselves acceptable to God, but if what they do does not come out of what they are in Christ, they cannot please the Lord. Who are we?

I. Salt (v. 13)

II. Light (v. 14-16)

I. Salt (v. 13)

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.” (Matthew 5:13).

A. Jesus spent the time in the beatitudes describing the character traits of those who inherit the kingdom of Heaven, because He was going to teach us what our identity makes us when we come in contact with the world.

B. Notice this verse does not describe what we will do. Rather it describes what will happen because of who we are. ***“You are the salt of the earth.”*** Because we are those who mourn over our sin, hunger after righteousness, and are pure in heart, the world responds to us. They adapt and change because we are salt.

C. What does it mean that we are the salt of the earth? Perhaps the best understanding is that in the first century salt preserved and controlled corruption. If something was salted, it meant that it stayed good longer at a time when there was no refrigeration. We find this idea later in **Colossians 4:6**.

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

Salt also added tang to words. Salt was very valuable. We use a word born in that day for paying troops. Salary meant to pay with salt. We still say that someone who does their job well is “worth his salt.” By our character and the actions which flow from who we are, we influence people to avoid sin.

D. What does it mean, ***“if the salt has lost its savor?”*** Sodium Chloride, which is salt, is extremely stable. However, the salt in Jesus’ day was not always very pure. One commentator observes that much of the salt came from allowing water from the Dead Sea to evaporate. Many times another mineral in the water would be present (gypsum). This mineral was sometimes called salt that lost its saltiness. Impure salt does not prevent decay well. If we are to influence the world around us for the Lord, we need to be people who are pure in heart.

II. Light (v. 14-16)

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5: 14-16).

A. Not only are the disciples and we to be salt of the earth, we are to be the light of the world. What does it mean to be light? The light here is illustrated twice in our text.

B. First, it is like a light of a city which cannot be hid.

v.14b ***“A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”***

To get a picture of this we need to travel back in our minds to a time without electric lights. When I was a teen, my best friend and his family moved up north. I remember visiting and waking up in the night to total darkness. I thought I had gone blind. I could not see my hand in front of my face. That is the kind of darkness Jesus is describing. A city on a hill, although only lit by olive oil lamps still, was extremely visible in such pitch darkness.

C. Second, it is a light designed to illuminate and not be hidden.

v.15 ***“Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”***

Both of these illustrations show us this light is not the Gospel message, as much as, the Christ-likeness we are to live before a dark world.

v.16 ***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”***

D. This brings to mind two important texts. In **Philippians 2:12-16**, it says, *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

Do all things without complaining and disputing, in order that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”

E. The second text is in **Ephesians 5:7-11**. We read here about imitating our Lord.

Paul wrote:

“Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

As we seek to imitate our Lord because the Holy Spirit is in us, we will find our lifestyles alone will expose those who do not like the light.

F. Creation itself provides a good illustration of this. In the beginning God created the sun and the moon. The sun is the source of the light and the moon is a reflector of the sun. The Lord Jesus Christ is the source of the light that radiates from our lives. We just need to be good reflectors of the life He put in our lives.

So, what kind of salt are you? Pure salt or contaminated salt? What kind of light are we? Good reflectors of the Lord’s glory or bad? Only if we are committed to growing in Him, will we be ones that others seek out to find the source of our life.

My Heart Is Filled with Thankfulness