

"The Sermon on the Mount"

Salt and Light

Part 1

Matthew 5:13-16

Introduction: Last week we finished our study of the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5. Tonight we are going to continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount and in the passage we are going to look at tonight we are going to see 2 titles which Jesus applied to His disciples that were there when He preached the sermon.

Notice Matthew 5:13-16

Now before we get started into the teaching of these verses I want us to stop and consider who Jesus is speaking to here.

Last week we looked at the change in Jesus Words from the pronoun "they" to the pronoun "ye".

Notice Matthew 5:10-13

The Beatitudes are addressed to "they" but then Jesus begins in verse 11 to speak directly to His disciples. Let me remind you there were gathered around Him a great multitude of people and some were believers and some were not. The Words He spoke in verses 10-13 were for those who were believers and especially for the apostles. That is why He used the word "ye". The flow of the text is focusing upon those in positions of leadership.

Notice Matthew 5:11-12

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Jesus pointed to the "prophets" here in verse 12 so He has in mind those who are spiritual leaders. His apostles were the salt and the light of the world, but the verses also apply to all of the body of Christ today. Because in some way we are all leaders and examples to people that are around us.

I. Parallels Between Salt and the Believer's Life

In **Matthew 5:13a** Jesus told His disciples they were the "salt of the earth". But what did He mean by that statement? In order to answer this question there are some things we need to consider about salt.

In the days of Jesus salt was a very important part of life. There were really 2 uses for salt.

1. It was used as a preservative.

We must remember that in Jesus day there were no refrigerators or freezers. In order to preserve meat it was rubbed down with salt. The salt would stop the meat from becoming contaminated. Salt deters the growth of bacteria by removing the moisture from the cells. This is how meat was kept from spoiling before refrigerators.

2. Salt was used for seasoning food.

This is one of the uses of salt today.

Let us now consider some of the ways that salt is a picture of the believer's life.

a. Salt is pure.

Germs cannot live in salt. In the same way we as believers are to live pure, uncontaminated lives.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² **And be not conformed to this world:** *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

b. Salt purifies.

As we already considered, salt fights off bacteria and keeps meat from spoiling. When Jesus told His disciples they were the "salt" of the world He was speaking of their responsibility to stand in the midst of fellow believers and proclaim the Truth of God's Word. As they carried out this responsibility they would be as "salt" for it would be through their labors in studying the Word and teaching the Word that the body of Christ would be kept free from contamination.

Today we are called to be the salt of the earth and do the same thing. Your platform may not be a pulpit in front of a church but you still have a platform. It may be with a group of believers at work or it may be in your own house with your family or it may be with friends you know that are believers. We all have the responsibility of being the "salt" wherever God has placed use.

c. Salt produces a thirst.

We all know what salt can do when it is used in our food. It will make us very thirsty. The picture here is that we as believers are to live our lives in a way that it makes others thirsty for the "Living Water".

1 Peter 2:12

*¹² Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, **they may by your good works**, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

d. Salt can dissolve in water but its quality still remains.

You can place salt crystals in a glass of water and they dissolve but the quality of the salt is still there for the water becomes salty. We as believers must be in the world but at the same time we must remain separated so as not to lose our witness. We are at all times to live our lives in a way that the unsaved world will thirst after the Living Water.

e. Salt can be exposed to extreme heat and will never lose its quality.

If you place salt in water it seems to disappear but if tasted it is still there. If you then place that pan of water on high heat and boil it completely dry you will find that while the water has evaporated the salt will be in the bottom of the pan and will still taste salty.

In the same way you and I as believers are called to endure the heat of persecution and through it all we are never to lose our flavor (testimony).

Notice the Words that Jesus spoke to the church in Smyrna;

Revelation 2:10

*¹⁰ Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

II. A Deeper Meaning

I believe there is far more to what Jesus was saying here but in order to discover the deeper meaning we must do some work.

Notice Leviticus 2:13

¹³ And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.

Here we see that every offering that Israel brought to God was to be seasoned with salt. Therefore, the salt in these offering was a picture of something for us and we need to find out what it was.

Notice Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God and we all know this is done on a daily basis. Therefore, looking back to Leviticus and the requirement for "salt" with the offering I say that the "salt" is also required with our sacrifice. But what is the "salt"?

Let us consider that Jesus told His disciples they were the "salt of the earth" in other words they would serve as a preservative and seasoning in this world. The same can be said of every born again believer. We all

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have different platforms but whatever the platform we are to serve as a preservative and a seasoning.

Now we as sinners have no power of ourselves to preserve or to season therefore in order for us to be the "salt" that we are called to be it must be the Holy Spirit working through us.

John 15:5

⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Therefore every sacrifice we bring to God must be the result of Holy Spirit working through our lives. We could never produce the effects of "salt" without the Spirit of God living the life of Jesus through us. We are to present our bodies as living sacrifices meaning we are to die to self. The "salt" in the sacrifices of the Old Testament was a picture of the Spirit of God in each of the sacrifices made.

Now allow me to support this with another Old Testament passage.

Let us step into the life of the prophet Elisha. He has just been separated from Elijah because God has taken Elijah to heaven. He is at the city of Jericho.

Notice 2 Kings 2:18

¹⁸ And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

Now at the city there was a major problem.

Notice 2 Kings 2:19

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19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

The city was beautiful to look at. Had we drove by the city we would have looked at it and we would have desired to live there. The people were pleasant the houses were very nice but there was something under the surface that we could not see, the water was bitter and the ground was barren. The bottom line was there was no fruit and the people were very miserable on the inside.

This is a picture of the believer who is out of fellowship with the Lord. They are living for the things of the world. On the outside their lives look great. They drive new cars, they live in new houses, their kids are at the top of the class, and their kids are always active in programs and sports. When you see them they are always smiling and you find yourself thinking they have it all together and that is the life you would like to have. But what you do not see is the lack of spiritual fruit. There is bitterness in their lives and they are spiritually barren.

Let us now notice what Elisha does.

Notice 2 Kings 2:20-22

20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

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Elisha used a cruse of salt and it was the salt that healed the bitter waters of Jericho.

Application:

The salt here is a picture of Jesus Christ. We can know Him as our Savior but if He is not the center of our lives and the Spirit of God is not free to live His life through us we will be barren, bitter, and miserable.

So I use this to show you that "salt" is a picture of the Spirit living the life of Jesus through us.

Conclusion:

Let us now go back to where we started in Matthew 5.

Jesus told His disciples they were the "salt of the earth" and that also applies to you and me. But as "salt" we can only be effective when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit. Anything apart from the Holy Spirit is done in the flesh and that will accomplish nothing.

Notice Matthew 5:13

¹³ *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

When I read the end of this verse I am reminded that our service that is done apart of Christ is worthless.