

## **1PP The King and His Kingdom-The Calling of a Disciple of Christ**

**Part 10-Matthew 5:13-16 Influence!**

**4/22-23/2017**

Illus President Woodrow Wilson once told this story. "I was sitting in a barber chair when I became aware that a...man had come quietly in...to have his hair cut, and sat in the chair next to me. Every word the man uttered, though it was not in the least didactic, showed a personal interest in the man who was serving him. And before I got through with what was being done for me, I was aware that I had attended an evangelistic service, because Mr. D.L. Moody was in that chair. I purposely lingered in the room after he had left and noted the singular effect that his visit had brought upon the barber shop. They talked in undertones. They didn't know his name, but they knew that something had elevated their thoughts. And I felt that I left that place as I should have left the place of worship. My admiration and esteem for Mr. Moody became very deep indeed."

***"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. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. 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."*** **Matthew 5:13-16**

### **2PP 1-The Disciples of Jesus Christ are the salt of the earth**

***"You are the salt of the earth,..."*** **5:13a**

Jesus is specifically addressing His disciples arrayed before Him, not the multitude on the slope

The disciples *are*, not will be one day, but present tense *are*, salt and light

It's not a command to be salt and light, but a declaration of what we are

Jesus is calling them, and us, to live out what He has made us to be

Remember the Beatitudes that we just completed, verses 3-12

We are spiritually poor, being emptied of any notion of our self-righteousness

We mourn over our sin, being emptied of the confidence in our own goodness

We are becoming meek, surrendering our self-reliance, depending on the power of God

Those emptied hearts begin to thirst and hunger for righteousness, to be filled with Christ and made like Him

And that filling begins to produce people who are vessels of God's mercy to those all around

That filling changes double-minded people to pure, single-minded, devoted worshipers of God

That filling of righteousness puts peacemakers all over the world

Peacemakers who endure the harshest of persecution in order to tell people about Jesus Christ

Christ embodies all 8 of these virtues perfectly, and He is weaving this character into us, and

calling us to live out what He has made us to be

We are the ***'salt of the earth'*** and ***'light of the world'***

The whole earth, all the peoples of the world, are desperately in need of the salt and light that only the church can provide

But the question we begin with is *Why did Jesus draw on the metaphor of salt?*

There were many uses of salt in biblical days  
 It was medicine to fight infection, and a part of the diet to keep them healthy  
 Soldiers, training and battling in heat, were often paid in salt, and in fact the word ‘salary’ comes from a Latin word translated *salt money*; ‘*He isn’t worth his salt*’  
 Salt was a fertilizer for crops, and at times used in warfare by spreading abundantly to render the ground infertile  
 But salt was used mainly as a seasoning to spice up the taste of food and a preservative to slow down decay in food in that hot, non-refrigerated world

Do you remember the character of a disciple of Jesus that we just reviewed?  
 The natural effect of having that character is that we will have an influence among the people of this world, helping to stem the spread of evil, and to bring a good taste to Christianity  
 The church must, by our active presence, be preserving our society from total corruption  
 So it is wise to ask ourselves, In my school, in my neighborhood, at work, in my home, am I offering a good taste of Christianity and is my influence helping to restrain moral decay?  
 Jesus is telling us that because He has saved us and brought us into His kingdom, we are to be in the world but not of it  
 Our calling is to live in the world, but not of it, in a way that is distinct  
 Now I want to emphasize something that I hope you will remember from this sermon  
 The power of a salty life lies in our distinction from those in the world!

**3PP** *“The glory of the gospel is that when the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first.”* Martyn Lloyd-Jones

If we are trying to be like the world, we are not distinct and therefore, we have lost our power  
 Christians living out God’s moral standards can slow the decay of society  
 Like salt’s fertilizing qualities, Christians can encourage the growth of good wherever they live  
 We can help people all around us taste the goodness of God

**4PP** *“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”* Colossians 4:6

Here, salt is likened with grace, and perhaps Paul that it is not so much ‘*what you ought to answer*’, but ‘*how*’...with salt-seasoned, pleasant graciousness that faithfully communicates the salvation that Jesus Christ offers

In fact, every sacrifice offered by the Jews was to have salt sprinkled over it, the symbol of God’s faithfulness to forgive and love

Are we salty disciples, faithfully telling unbelievers all around us the way to be saved for eternal life and from eternal death

But Jesus gives us a warning: *“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.”* 5:13b

Salt is a stable compound and doesn’t lose its flavor, but there was a problem with Israel’s salt  
 It was harvested from the salt marshes southwest of the Dead Sea, and often contained other minerals like gypsum and dirt

When exposed to rain and sun, the salt crystals are often washed away and the mixture becomes worthless, and was usually thrown into the street or on the roofs of their homes  
 If a Christian is mixed with a love for the things of this world, adhering to its philosophies, then they will lose their preserving, seasoning influence  
 This is not a hint that a disciple could lose their salvation, but rather lose their effectiveness

Our society needs salt to keep moral corruption at bay, and light to lead people out of darkness, and that is where Jesus turns with His next metaphor

## **5PP 2-Disciples of Jesus Christ are the light of the world**

***“You are the light of the world.”***

**6PP** Jesus said in **John 8:12** ***“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”***

The disciples of Christ are the lights of the world because we are in Christ and He is in us  
 Someone described it well, in that Christ is the sun, we are the moon that reflects the sun’s rays  
 And sometimes, the light of Christ will be a warm, welcome sight for people we encounter  
 Yet other times it will incite the hatred of people in the world, as Christ Himself experienced

The Christian is to be salt, holding back moral decay and giving people a taste of the goodness of God, but light is for dark places

It’s for those schools and colleges that are full of secularly-driven, God-less agendas  
 For workplaces where you have every group allowed to meet but Christ-centered groups  
 It’s for areas in the world where suffering and death is real for Christian minority groups  
 Light is for families where you are the only Christian, where suffering is real and people have lost their way and have no more hope  
 God puts His lights in dark places where it is desperately needed

***“A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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.” 5:14-15***

**7PP** i-Light was meant to be seen, to illuminate

Houses in Israel commonly had one round window, 18 inches across

**8PP** Their lamps were commonly like a gravy sauce boat, filled with oil with a wick at the end

**9PP** The lamp would be put on top of a stand made from wood, to light up the house, and because they were difficult to light, instead of putting them out, during the day they would often place the lamp on the floor and place a clay bushel measure over it so to prevent fire  
 We make the Christ’s light visible in the way we talk on the phone trying to resolve billing issues  
 We make Christ’s light visible with our response to a filthy joke, or when a boyfriend or girlfriend is pressuring you into immorality and you say no

**10PP** ii-Light was also a guide

We must make the way clear for unbelievers to find their way to Christ  
 We are the lights of the harbor, -guiding the ships to the safe channels to the docks

We are the lights of the runway, helping planes make the safe landing at night  
 We are the lawn sconces guiding people to the front door of the home  
 And again, our power is in our distinction, as light is utterly distinct from darkness

### **11PP** *iii-Light is also used as warning, exposing danger*

The flashing warning light on the car can save you from serious malfunction and danger  
 The flashing light on the highway sign can warn you of danger ahead  
 There are times when we need to be that flashing light, warning others of the danger ahead  
 Sometimes, our light will anger people, because it exposes their sin by our attitudes and conduct  
 They will feel judged though we might not say a word

But light kept under the bushel is will not illuminate, or guide, or warn  
 Like the villages dotting the countryside of Israel, we are to be on the hilltops, visible  
 In other words, hidden light renders a Christian ineffective

### **12PP** **3-Disciples are to influence their society**

The Westlinds are missionaries in Colombia and they wrote the following in their prayer letter:  
 “Driving through Christmas traffic, fighting the drizzling rain, I chanced on a 4-year-old little girl. She was wet and cold and shaking. Her clothes were ragged, her hair was matted, and her nose was running. She walked between the cars at the stoplight, washing headlights because she was too short to wash windshields. A few gave her coins, others honked at her to get away from their vehicles. As I drove away only some 50 cents poorer, I raged at God for the injustice in the world that allowed the situation. ‘God, how could You just stand by, helpless?’ Later that evening, God came to me softly with that still small voice and responded not in like kind to my rage, but with tenderness, ‘I have done something. I created you.’”

The church is the kingdom of God made visible, and we are to be salt and light, holding back evil and guiding people to Jesus Christ for hope and salvation  
 But the truth is, the church has lost much of its influence...the **‘world’** influences us more than we influence it, but that cannot be and Jesus shows us the way to be influencers:

***“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.” 5:16***

We are to live visibly, doing good in such a way that it will get people’s attention  
 Peter tells us that there is no better time to do this than in the dark times of persecution  
**13PP** ***“But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.” 1 Peter 3:14-16***

***‘Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks’***

We are to live such brightly lit, visible lives that people will ask why we live this way, and when they do, we point them to how great our Heavenly Father is!

Illus Columnist William Raspberry says that when the church fails to offer spiritual help, it is “playing away from its strength.” It’s like a 7-foot basketball player who attempts long jumpshots, or when he’s near the basket keeps bringing the ball down to chest level before shooting. Coaches refer to a tall player who wastes his height advantage as “a big man playing small.”

But the Christian who only wants to do good things without giving the gospel, is playing away from its strength, a big man playing small

Christian, let our light shine through our good works, and be ready to testify of God’s goodness!  
This is our calling, salt and light in this world, holding back moral corruption wherever we are,  
making visible the love and salvation of God

Christian, what impact is your life having in this world?

Do your coworkers know you are a Christian?

Do your neighbors know that you a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Does your family know that you are a follower of Jesus?

How about your fellow students in school?

The people in your dorm or on your sports teams?

Are you salt and light at work, at school, at home, in your neighborhood?

Are you salt and light on social media?

Are you salt and light on business trips, away from your family and fellow Christians?

***“let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”***

Amen?

Pray