



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

Being Salt and Light

Matthew 5:13-16

Message #15 of 80 – S1045

Sermon given on May 14, 2023



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Being Salt and Light

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Opening Comments

- **Happy Mother's Day** - Open your Bibles to **Matthew 5**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Last week we finished looking at the Beatitudes which form the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.
- The Beatitudes form the basis for everything else Jesus is going to say in the Sermon on the Mount.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give us ears to hear. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **Being Salt and Light**
- Before we read our text, we need to see that Jesus is going to use two similitudes to express spiritual truths.
- Similitude: similarity, resemblance; one that closely resembles another; a simile, allegory, or parable.

Similitude: A figure of speech in which two essentially unlike things are compared, often in a phrase introduced by like or as.

- Let's read our verses and then we can talk about them.
- **Matthew 5:13-16**
- Jesus compares believers to two everyday things, salt and light.
- We will begin with the first one – salt.
- **Matthew 5:13**
- Salt was a precious commodity in the ancient world.
- Roman soldiers were sometimes paid in salt.
- This became the basis for the word 'salary.'
- This is also the origin of the idiom, 'worth his salt', meaning they are worth what they are being paid – speaking of respect and value.
- Salt is still very valuable in some places around the world.
- Salt has three basic applications, just as it did three thousand years ago.
- **First – Salt of the Earth – Preservation**

- One of the main uses of salt in the time of Christ was as a preservative.
- Meat would spoil very quickly without refrigeration and in the hot weather.
- Salting meat was commonly done up to the twentieth century.
- And it is still practiced today. Salt was used to slow down decay.
- This world is tending toward decomposition and is rotting away.
- Abortion on demand right up to the point of birth.
- Irreversible mutilation surgeries for children who are confused about their gender.
- District attorneys protect criminals rather than victims.
- The world is in a rapid state of decay.
- The church exists to slow down the decay.
- We can't stop it completely, but we can slow it down.
- Maybe you have experienced this.
- I have been in a group of unbelievers who know that I am a Christian.
- It is not unusual for them to apologize if they use profanity in my presence.
- And I have noticed some will even restrain themselves from using profanity or telling certain kinds of stories or jokes.
- My presence is affecting their behavior.
- I don't have to tell them not to do those things, my presence as a Christ-follower is doing it.
- **Second – Salt of the Earth – Adds Flavor**
- Not only does salt preserve but it also adds flavor to food.
- It is one of the most commonly used spices around the world.
- Believers ought to add flavor to whatever their lives touch.
- We do this through our love, generosity, graciousness, mercy, forgiveness, honesty, integrity, and every other trait that reflects the nature of Christ Jesus our Lord.
- **Third – Salt of the Earth - Stimulate Thirst.**
- Salty Christians will create a thirst for the things of God to those around them.
- And it doesn't take a lot of salt to make its presence known.

- Just a pinch can make a huge difference in taste.
- So too, with a believer. We don't need to be some great, holy orator.
- Just be salty, be like Christ wherever you are. Others will notice.
- 'salt loses its flavor' = diluted to the point that it no longer has flavor.
- This is a warning against becoming so like the world that you are no longer salty – you are not like Jesus in any real way. Useless.
- Living out the beatitudes through the working of the Holy Spirit is what will make us salty.
- That brings us to the second similitude.

- **Matthew 5:14**

- This one is interesting because of something Jesus will say later in the temple in Jerusalem. **John 8:12**

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

- At the time of Christ there was a ceremony that took place every year called the Illumination of the Temple.
- It involved the lighting of four massive golden candelabra that could be seen from all over Jerusalem and beyond.
- The ceremony celebrated the great pillar of fire in the Exodus from Egypt.
- The pillar protected them from the Egyptians and then guided throughout the forty years in the wilderness and stood over the tabernacle whenever they camped, symbolizing God's presence with them.
- The pillar symbolized God's protection, guidance, and presence.
- John 8:12 took place on the day after the ceremony of the Illumination of the Temple.
- Jesus is proclaiming that He was the Pillar of fire.
- He protected them from the Egyptians, He guided them, and He was present with them throughout their forty-year journey through the wilderness.
- 'You are the light of the world...' – Jesus said He was the light, and here He says we are the light.
- In reality, we have no light in ourselves.
- Left to our own devices we would be as dark as the rest of the world.

- Something changes within us once we are saved – Christ’s light shines out from us.
- An illustration could be – Jesus is light the sun during the day.
- While the sun is up, the world can see by its light.
- But once the sun sets (Jesus ascends back to heaven) the moon comes out and illuminates the world.
- The moon has no light of its own.
- The moon reflects the light of the sun.
- In a similar way, Christians reflect the light of Christ Jesus.
- The amount of light the moon reflects depends upon how much of the moon is exposed to the sun.
- A full moon can produce enough light to see easily because the whole moon is exposed to the sun.
- The lesser the phase, the less light is reflected back to the world.
- As Christians expose more and more of their lives to Christ and His Word, their lives begin to reflect more and more of Christ’s light to the world.
- The Bible teaches us that Christ lives in us **Colossians 1:27**.
To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- As we grow in faith, more of Christ is seen in our lives.
- As we live out the Beatitudes, more of Christ’s light shines out of us
Ephesians 5:8.
For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light...
- Jesus says we ARE lights to the world.
- I have always been fascinated by things that glow in the dark.
- I don’t understand the science that is at work in these things.
- For a glow-in-the-dark object to work, it must be exposed to light.
- Once the object is taken out of the light and into the darkness, the glow begins to fade.
- A similar thing happens to us as believers.
- The more we are exposed to the light of Jesus Christ, the more brightly we glow or shine in the darkness.

- But the longer we are exposed to darkness and out of Christ's light the faster we fade.
- We expose ourselves to Christ's light through prayer, the Bible, fellowship, service, and the other spiritual disciplines.
- The more consistent we are with those things, the more of Christ's light we carry out into the dark world.
- We don't want to miss an important truth – light is only needed where there is darkness.
- **Matthew 5:15**
- We are not lights simply to be lights.
- We are lights with a purpose – shining for others to see.
- The feeblest light will shine brightly when it is exceptionally dark.
- Just in case that purpose is not clear, Jesus makes it clear.
- **Matthew 5:16**
- “Let...shine” = in the imperative. This is a command.
- The way that our light shines is by good works.
- Good works are things we do as an expression of God's love, compassion, and caring.
- As we live out the beatitudes and do good works of caring and compassion the world is affected by our saltiness and light.
- And if we believe and live the beatitudes, we will be blessed - we will be approved by God and we will experience a happiness that only He can give us.
- By being salty, we slow down or hold back the corruption that is growing in the world. It would be worse if we weren't here.
- Our very presence in the world adds the flavor of God to everything our lives touch.
- And when we live out the Beatitudes, some of those around us will become thirsty for the things of God.
- And if we walk in the light of Christ and do good works of care and compassion, they will see the light that can lead them to their Savior King, Christ Jesus our Lord.
- As we bask in Christ's perfect light, we will become more salty and His light will shine out from us more and more.

- Our part is to soak up as much of Christ Jesus as we can and then take His light out to the darkness.
- His word to you today – Be salty, glow-in-the-dark Christ-followers!
- David is going to come up and lead us in one last song.
- While he is doing that, we would like to pray with you.
- Kelly and I will be up here in front.
- Pastor Randy and Debbie will be in the back.
- If you would like to be saltier or carry more of Christ's light out – come, let us pray with you.
- Let's pray!