

Matthew 5:13-16 – Being Salt and Light

Scriptures:

Mark 9:50 - Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.

Luke 14:34-35 - "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt

G217 -

G1093 – earth, humankind

loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

G3471 – lose taste, become foolish,

G2333 – season with salt

It is then good for nothing but to be thrown

G2480 - useful

G3762 -

out and trampled underfoot by men.

A similar thing is happening with our lives. As believers, we are not the same temperature as the world around us. We are either changing the world around us or the world is changing us. Either the salt of our lives is preserving the world, or the world is corrupting us.

Living out the beatitudes through the working of the Holy Spirit is what will make us salty.

The only hope for un-salty Christians or churches is repentance and restoration by God.

The verse begins with 'You are the salt of the earth.' Jesus is telling us that He believes we can be salty – preserving the world – adding flavor to everything we touch – and creating a thirst for Him. Let's all go be salty.

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 has no value as long as it is in the saltshaker. For it to be useful it must be poured out. We must be salty around those who need to be preserved, or influenced, or caused to be made thirsty. We must allow the Holy Spirit to rub us into the culture around us, to sprinkle us into our society, to dissolve us into lost people's lives.

'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.

The second law of thermodynamics states that entropy will always increase within any closed system. Temperatures of all things within the system will transfer heat or cold until equilibrium is reached. A warm drink cools until it is the same temperature as the room. A cold drink warms to room temperature.

my presence as a Christ-follower is doing it.

"Believers, salty believers are the world's preservative." (Hughes, 2001) page 81

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 must be salty not only because they are righteous, but because life is alive." (Hughes, 2001) page 82

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.

Another thing salt does is to stimulate thirst. That is why bars serve salty snacks, so their customers will drink more.

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

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 protecting 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. That puts us at odds with the world because it wants the decay to happen even faster. The world sees the decay as a good thing.

This means that one of the main purposes of the church is to be rubbed into the decaying flesh of the world to slow its decay.

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,

Notes:

The Beatitudes have been called beautiful attitudes. They are sometimes seen as internal realities of the true Christian. Some might even imagine that they can be lived and experienced in isolation. Jesus crushes that wrong view with these two metaphors that tell us the Beatitudes must be lived out around other people.

They also teach that there should be a marked difference between believers and unbelievers. These verses follow immediately after the beatitude of persecution. Any believer who is salty or glow-in-the-dark may experience persecution – salt can sting, and light is jarring to those accustomed to the darkness.

Jesus is speaking to believers. This was spoken early in His ministry so it hard to say how many followers He had at this point. It is also impossible to say how much they understood about what He was saying. The point is that what He is saying is for everyone who is saved.

'salt of the earth' has become an idiom to mean: "an ordinary person who is respected because they are honest and good."

These are similitudes. Similitude: similarity, resemblance; one that closely resembles another; a simile, allegory, or parable. "A figure of speech in which two essentially unlike things are compared, often in a phrase introduced by like or as."

Other verses about salt: [Mark 9:50](#); [Luke 14:34](#)

Salt purifies, permeates, and preserves. The church should: ~Be a cleansing agent to the world - slowing deterioration of society. ~Add flavor to its surroundings. ~Create thirst for the things of God.

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. It has many medicinal uses, like gargling with salt water for a sore throat.

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 right up to the twentieth century.

David Livingstone, the famous missionary to Africa died while on a mission there. His servant buried his heart there in Africa and salted down his body so that it could be shipped back to England for burial in Westminster Abbey.

Scriptures:

1 John 1:5 – This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

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."

1 Peter 1:15-16 - but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

John 3:19-21 - And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

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.

Ephesians 5:28 - For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light...

14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is

G5457 – "phos"

set on a hill cannot be hidden.

G2928 -
concealed

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 (Col. 1:27). 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 (Eph. 5:8).

Jesus says we ARE lights to the world. We are called to be lights in the darkness that surrounds us. 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 shine in the darkness. But, the longer we are exposed to darkness and out of Christ's light the faster we fade.

Notes:

The Bible describes God as light (1 John 1:5) and Jesus described Himself as light (John 8:12). In both cases it is referring to God's holiness.

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 their 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.

God calls His people to be holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

The fact that there is light requires that there be darkness. If Jesus is saying that believers are light, then unbelievers are darkness. This is not an evaluation of degrees of light and darkness just that there are both.

Light reveals truth and reality. Darkness hides things.

When sin entered the world, spiritual darkness came with it. Most of the world is in spiritual darkness. And a horrible truth is that most of the world loves that darkness (John 3:19).

'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

Scriptures:

¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a

Notes:

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.

basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light

to all *who are* in the house.

Scriptures:

Matthew 13:43 – Then the
righteous will shine forth as
the sun in the kingdom of
their Father. He who has
ears to hear, let him hear!

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that

G2989 –
“epilampo”

Notes:

“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.

they may see your good works and glorify

G2041 – one
who does
good.

G2570 –
beautiful, fitting,
attractive form,
advantageous,

We are the light of the world until
Christ Jesus comes back, the True
Light of the World. We are called to
bring light to the darkness until He
comes and drives the darkness away
forever, light the sunrise drives away
the darkness of night.

your Father in heaven.

The Romans of Jesus’ day had a
saying, ‘There is nothing more useful
than sun and salt.’

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.

Be salty, glow-in-the-dark Christ-
followers.

As glorious as we believe heaven will
be, it is still mysterious to us – we
don’t know that much about what it
will be like. Jesus adds to that
mystery when refers to His people in
heaven ([Matt.13:43](#)).

The climate change cult is terrified of
the sun monster. They should be –
eventually the sun is going to get so
hot that it will not just melt the
icecaps, but will evaporate the
oceans. You surfers don’t need to
panic right away, it should take
about one billion years. And then
about seven billion years after that,
the sun will burn out completely.

If you are a believer, you will shine
brighter than the sun long after our
sun becomes a cold, dead rock in the
cosmos. That’s radical!

Be glow-in-the-dark Christians!

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