

## "You Are The Salt of The Earth"

Matthew 5:13

### INTRODUCTION —

- I. Salt has been a mineral of high value from the beginning, an essential to health: "Body cells must have salt in order to live and work." *World Book Encyclopedia* estimates "more than 14,000 uses for salt;" but less than 5% of the 22 million tons produced annually in the USA is for use in food.
- II. WHO ARE "THE SALT OF THE EARTH"? The poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, who have entered God's kingdom and are willing to be persecuted and suffer for righteousness' sake, because of their calling, nature and relationship to God.
- III. But since *all may become* disciples of the Lord and citizens of his kingdom, he is speaking to *all who will*.
- IV. HE SPEAKS OF OUR PRIVILEGES, POSSIBILITIES AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES.
  - A. As a statement of fact, it becomes the highest of compliments to any person, a tremendous encouragement to those who suffer unjustly for Christ's sake, and a clear and powerful call to service.
  - B. It thus speaks of our hope in Christ, and becomes a summary of all our duties in him.

### DISCUSSION -

#### I. THE NATURE AND VALUE OF SALT: LITERAL AND SPIRITUAL

- A. Literal salt is very distinctive and important.
  1. As a negative function, it is a *saving power*: It purifies and preserves from impurity and prevents decay and corruption. It is therefore one of the indispensable things, an absolute necessity.
  2. As a positive function, it is a *seasoning power*. It seasons when it makes direct contact and "strikes in." A child defined it as "that which makes potatoes no good without." Thomas illustration: A king asked three daughters how much they loved him: Two said "Better than all the gold and silver in the world." The third one said, "Better than salt." – Sermon on the Mount, p.22.

5. Barnabas; Paul; Lois; Eunice; Timothy (Acts 13; Phil.2:19,20).
6. Mary the mother of Jesus; Dorcas; N.B. Hardeman; David Lipscomb; Liff Sanders went to Nashville Bible School in 1898, stayed one year, later began the church in Lubbock, Texas.
7. There are many such examples of salt: John T. Lewis in Birmingham; Reece Boyd, Jasper, TN., etc.

#### V. THE DANGER OF LOSING SAVOR: CEASING TO BE PURE SALT.

- A. The Lord teaches plainly that *this can and does happen*: Loss of spirituality and/or power to salt (Mark 9:49,50).
- B. Its *doom*: To be rejected of God, trodden under foot by man, and become worthless.
  1. "Salt without savor is fit only to be cast out and/or thrown away, according to Jesus.
  2. It is not correct to say there is some good in every person, for the Lord says plainly that a professed Christian may lose his power for good so that he becomes "good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."
- C. A Christian who loses his influence for God is perverted from his divine purpose and is worthless (Rev. 3:14-18; 2 Peter 2:20).
- D. "The Valley of salt" near the Dead Sea with rock salt is a place of death (2 Sam. 8:13; 2 Kings 14:7; 1 Chron. 18:12; 2 Chron. 25:11; Psalm 60, title; etc.)

#### CONCLUSION -

- I. The power of godly influence is enormous. When one is "*dead to sin, alive unto God in Christ Jesus*," he makes a great difference on earth (Romans 6:11).
- II. As Willard Collins said, "The influence of ten Abrahams could have saved Sodom. A Christian must live in such a way that the ideals of Christ can be seen in his daily life. This is the greatest contribution a child of God can make to his community in a time of crisis."--Collins, *The Best of 20 Years*, p.150.
- III. The Lord's words about his disciples being salt and light came *after* the beatitudes, *not before*.

--Charles E. Crouch

3. Can also destroy when perverted and used unwisely.
- B. Spiritual salt is also extremely important and enormous in value.
1. Christian character is very distinctive and a wonderful force in the world that cannot be ignored. The kingdom of God and heaven, the church, is an essential and indispensable thing: Though often criticized, it is one of the necessities of life.
  2. It is an incomparable and mighty force in teaching and leading others to Christ, doing more to preserve the earth from decay than all other institutions (John 6:44,45; I Tim. 4:16; Eph.1:15-23).
  3. It is the foe of impurity, decay, corruption and rottenness: It is a unique negative and preventative. It keeps character pure, sound, godly and saintly; and is a safeguard of the world (Gen. 18:22-33).
  4. It is also very positive, giving improved flavor and taste to whatever it touches.

## II. WHERE IS THE SPHERE OF OUR INFLUENCE?

- A. Not in heaven, yesterday or in some far off tomorrow.
- B. God gives us wonderful and unparalleled opportunities here and now.
  1. In our homes: "What is in your (salt) bucket"?
  2. In the church: Upon our peers, those we teach and influence?
  3. In our community: In all walks of life, in all we say and do around the earth (Acts 8:1-4; 1 Cor.10:31-33)?
- C. When? "Now—today" (2 Cor. 6:2; James 4:13-15; Hebrews 3:7-19).

## III. HOW? SOME WAG SAID, "MOST CHRISTIANS ARE ON A SALT-FREE DIET." HOW SAD!

- A. By **character**: By being something distinctive—it is our duty to *be salt* Mark 9:50).
  1. Disciples of Christ are *like him*, not half-hearted or lukewarm.
  2. He did not say "scatter salt," but "you are the salt of the earth."
  3. By life commitment and loyalty to Jesus, his truth and values (Matt. 5:112; Luke 14:26; 2 Peter 1:5-11).
- B. By **contact**: By *doing* something distinctive as followers of Jesus: *Penetration*; we have a *duty to be salt*: *The basic active ingredient*: Heb. 4:12.
  1. By being *in contact* with those whom we are to salt.
  2. By going into the stream of life: getting involved (Matt. 9:10-13). By losing self in service to God as the salt of the earth

(Matt. 16:25; 2 Cor. 12:15).

3. No monastic life is taught here: "Salt in a box" saves and seasons nothing. If all Christians remain "in one lump," and send out no personal workers or missionaries, hold no meetings, do no broadcasting or speaking for Christ and his truth, and turn the printed pages and mass media over to the forces of evil, what will happen to us and the lost world in view of Mark 16:15-16, and Matthew 28:18-20?
- C. Five powerful/wonderful ways to be salt: 1 Timothy 4:12.
1. "*In word*" (Col.4:6; Psalm 19:14; Matt.12:34,37; Gal.4:19; 2:20). Do yours encourage and comfort?
  2. "*In manner of life*" (Phil.1:27; 2 Cor.5:15,17). Is yours worthy?
  3. "*In love*" (John 13:35; 14:23; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Cor. 16:14; Eph. 4:15).
  4. "*In faith*" (1 Cor.16:13; 15:58; Eph. 4:14,15; 1 Thes. 2:13; Gal. 5:6; Jude 3).
  5. "*In purity*" (Matt.5:8; 1 Cor. 13:16; 1 Thes. 5:21-22).

## IV. BIBLE EXAMPLES: THE POWER OF INFLUENCE, BOTH GODLY AND UNGODLY, IS PROFOUND AND FAR-REACHING.

- A. These were *NOT* "the salt of the earth" (Gen. 6:5).
  1. Lot's wife, in a time of great immorality and perversion: Jesus said "*remember*" her (Luke 17:32).
  2. Nadab and Abihu: In a position of high privilege, trust, responsibility and opportunity, they wasted it and destroyed themselves (Leviticus 10:1-3).
  3. Ananias and Saphira: In a time of great need and grand opportunity, they blew it. Selfishness and deceit filled and marked the end of their lives: like many, willing to make a donation, but not give heart/life (Acts 5). Unlike Barnabas whose gift marked the beginning of great life/service to our Master (Acts 4:36).
  4. These all had influence, but not the right kind.
- B. These were "*the salt of the earth*."
  1. Abraham: "*And be thou a blessing*" (Genesis 12:2). **He was** (Romans 4:1-22).
  2. Joseph: One of God's best, greatest and most Christlike men (Genesis 37-50).
  3. Moses: One of God's most monumental men.
  4. The Jewish maiden who had such enormous influence on Naaman the Syrian leper (Luke 5:27; 2 Kings 5).