

15th March 2017.

**YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH, AND THE LIGHT OF
THE WORLD.**

Matthew 5:13 -16.

Tonight we continue with our verse by verse study of the book of The gospel of Matthew, where we left off a few weeks ago having gone through an in-depth study of what was the first section of the Sermon on the Mount made by our Lord Jesus Christ to His followers, being His disciples and the large crowd that followed Him from around Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan, as noted in Matthew 4:25.

Perhaps in a way of in-spiriting His listeners with encouragement especially after He had concluded as their mark of blessedness the persecution they were to face as an identity of belonging to the Kingdom of God. We have it in these verses Jesus Christ asserting the kind of influence the truly blessed would have on the earth and in the world, and true enough we'll affirm that by all those that have lived with the attitudes and character outlined in the scriptures we've studied from verse 3 to 12, a phenomenal impact has been made in the entire world among all tribes, tongues and through generations to date.

The Divine blessings of possessing the Kingdom of heaven, because they were poor in spirit; being comforted, because they mourned over sin; inheriting the earth because they were meek; being filled, because they hungered and thirsted for righteousness; obtaining mercy because they themselves were merciful; seeing God because they were pure in heart; being called sons of God because they are peacemakers; and having the kingdom of heaven because they endured persecution for righteousness' sake, are what entitled them to the great compliment and responsibility that Jesus stated in verses 13 – 16 saying.....

Sure enough even though both salt and light are brought about with the aid of some form of heat,(as in reference to the fiery trials that perfect and complete one[Rom.5:3,4 & Jms.1:2-4]) even today as it were then, both were considered very valuable for life's existence.

In those days, The Greeks called salt *divine (theion)*. In a phrase, which in Latin is a kind of jingle, the Romans said, "There is nothing more useful than sun and salt."

In fact those days, the Roman soldiers were paid in salt by the ounce, from which ‘salary’ comes, and the phrase “one’s not worth their salt”.

Here then, Rabbi Jesus, The Lord/Master says “**You are** the salt of the earth, and **you are** the light of the world”, identifying those that hearkened to Him with these two most precious of life’s necessities. Not bidding them to be or become but that they were, as in by His Word, of the nature of salt and of light. So if it were so for them, so is it for us that hearken unto His Word to obey and follow Him as Lord.

In the time of Jesus’ life on earth, salt was connected in people’s minds with these special qualities, from which we learn the call of His disciple’s identity.

Its glistening whiteness made it visibly pure. Even the Romans then, said that salt was the purest of all things, because it came from the purest of all things, the sun and the sea! Salt was indeed the most primitive of all offerings to the gods, and to the end of the day, the Jewish sacrifices were offered with salt. So then, if the Christian is to be the salt of the earth he must be an example of purity.

Yet then, unlike today, their salt not being as well refined as we have it today was prone to losing its saltiness by the contaminations it would get, which made it of no use. Which is why in verse 13, Christ interjected that if salt lost its taste how shall its saltiness be restored? And not expecting an answer said that it is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men”.

Likewise, even though none of us is perfectly pure, we should hold high standards of purity in speech, in conduct and even in thought, regardless of the norm of the increase of the lowering of standards of morality in the world around us, if we are to be distinct and keep our saltiness.

In Mark 9:49,50, Jesus said “For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt has lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.”

In Luke 14:34,35, similarly, Jesus said “Salt is good: but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men cast it out. He that has ears to hear, let him hear.”

So even as we shall have to apply this with the other qualities of salt relevant to us, when the impurities of this life influence your life, you become a cast away, fit to be trampled upon by men , but no longer useful or effective, which we should guard against.

As Paul in Colossians 4:5,6 cautioned “ Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

Secondly, salt incites thirst, causing one to want to drink water as a necessity (we experience that when taking popcorn in the movies, here at Calvary Cinema). And as the salt of the earth, we should be making those around us thirsty for the living water of Jesus Christ. People should say, "There's something about you that creates in me a thirst for what you're enjoying, and I would like to be like you."

So this implies that all those whose lives no one would want to emulate yet they call themselves Christians, have lost their saltiness!

Thirdly, and of more great importance than today, salt was the only preservative there was. It was what was used to keep meat/fish fresh. So then the Christian is to have an influence on life to prevent the moral decadence, and keep the bad from going worse. Which is a clear challenge to all of us in the various spheres of influence we are. That wherever we are at whatever level, we should prevent this world from the increasing corruption it's tending to. The church should collectively see to it that sin doesn't cause our society unto reproach but that righteousness exalts it. (Prov. 14:34) [We saw what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah, let alone apostate Israel.] The church should uphold the virtues of life that make it worth living in all circles, marriage, family, government, and so on....

Then fourthly and in connection to the above, salt, even up to date is the most basic of all flavors. Food without salt is sadly insipid, nearly sickening. Christianity is to life what salt is to food. That's why life in societies that aren't Christian is unbearable, the lack of joy, hope, peace, trust, and love make people close to living like animals of the jungle. So we should make the desirable difference wherever and whenever in life.

Unfortunately some have in the name of Christianity made life so dull by their legalistic and somber uptight lifestyles that make it seem like life is sucked out of them and they have to bear with that to the glory of God!

Lastly and not least of all, salt was and still is an antiseptic, with great healing properties, salt is highly medicinal.

Providing healing for sore throats, tooth aches, gums, burns, bug bites/ bee stings, and even allergies. In Ezek. 16:4 it was noted that babies were salted at birth to keep them from any infections they'd have otherwise.

Therefore the true Christian by nature causes healing in the lives of all with whom they interact, unto their spirits, souls and bodies by the grace of God.

I guess by just considering the application of the above qualities of salt, its clear what a great compliment and responsibility Jesus gave his listeners as we are today in being the salt of the earth.

And notably that which is ideally effective only as a collective usage. Because truly salt can only be applied as a collection of the grains and not as a single grain..

Upon which he added that; "You are the light of the world...."

This again was a great compliment, for in it Jesus commands the Christian to be what he Himself claimed to be. In Jhn 8:12, Jesus said "I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." In Jhn. 9:5, Jesus said "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." You could say that from Jhn.1:4,5, it was made certain Jesus Christ was the true light of the world.

The relationship between these two statements is that Jesus is the source of light; Christians are the reflection of His light. Their function is to shine for Him just as the moon reflects the glory of the sun. Which is what Jhn. 12:36 has it as "While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light."

So as the light of the world, the Christian should brighten up the world around them that they may see their good works and glorify the Father, having a good knowledge of Him.

2Cor. 4:6,7 say "For it is the God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Hereby, light doesn't only lighten up its environment, thus livening it up, but also provides direction unto whom all life should exist for, The Lord God of all glory.

All Christians are light in the Lord, and must shine as lights.

Eph. 5:8 says “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.” Phil.2:13-15, following hot on its heels that “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing. That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” [The full context of both Eph. 5:8 and Phil. 2:15 are awesome for consideration].

So, then, Christianity is something which is meant to be seen. As someone has well said, “There can be no such thing as secret discipleship, for either the secrecy destroys the discipleship, or the discipleship destroys the secrecy.” That’s why a city on a hill cannot be hidden and no one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket.

Then also for light as a guide, light is something that makes the way clear, So then the Christian by the Word of God should make the way to true living meaningfully clear to others. That is to say, a Christian must of necessity be an example. It’s us that should stand for the truth and lead the way to uprightness in society.

A light can also be used as a warning of impending danger, thus guiding people from the danger unto safety. The same way lighthouses are used and even traffic lights. Whereby it is our duty as Christians to warn the world of the impending danger of eternal damnation in hell, as we guide them unto The Way, The Truth and The Life, Jesus Christ our Saviour.

So even as the salt is preventatively working unnoticeably, the light expressively corrects, and they both have to work for a thorough effectiveness of glorifying God.

And to end it all, before one would be puffed up by the great compliments and responsibilities of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world, not only is it important to underscore the true essence they are by virtue of God’s commanding Word that they are salt and light, even as He said “Let there be light and it was”. In that we are either salty or have lost our saltiness, and we are either dim or covered up in a basket, but we are salt and we are light.

Then even though we are sent into the world we are not of the world, being as distinct as light is to darkness. Without “any shades of grey”, as the world would have it.

Then last and most important of all is that all this influence is not for the salt and the light to be appreciated of themselves but that The Lord may be acknowledged and glorified. Even as 1 Pet. 2:9 has it.....

Remember 2 Cor. 4:7 said that “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God, and not of us.”