

Overflow with God's Love to the World!

Sermon #5 in Overflow Series

5 April 2020

Jesus said, "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*" John 10:10

In John 17:18, Jesus prayed, "*As You sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*"

As followers of Jesus Christ, we have been _____.

It is tempting to ask God to _____

Isaiah

Moses

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are _____ and _____
Matthew 5:13-15

Salt _____ what it comes into contact with.

Light draws peoples' eyes _____
Acts 13:47

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are _____ _____

Matthew 13:3-8

Successful planters _____

ADDITIONAL STUDY GUIDE

Matthew 10:42 *"And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."*

Matthew 5:13-16 *"(13) You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. (14) You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. (16) Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*

Pause and PRAY

Notice that Jesus did **not** say, "You have the potential for being salt," or "You OUGHT TO BE the light of the world." Jesus says, "You **ARE** salt and you **ARE** the light of the world."

* As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are the light of the world; we brighten the world, and if we don't do it, the world remains dark. We have the awesome responsibility of guiding other people to Jesus Christ and if we don't do it, they may remain lost forever. Where we refuse to let our light shine, darkness rules.

? How can you and your family be a light during this dark time of uncertainty in our world?

Salt and light were precious commodities in Jesus' day.

SALT

Matthew 5:13 – *"You are the salt of the earth"*

? What do you think of when someone says somebody else is "the salt of the earth?"

Sodium, or more commonly referred to as salt, is an extremely active element found naturally only in combined form; it always links itself to another element. Chlorine, on the other hand, is the poisonous gas that gives bleach its offensive odor. When sodium and chlorine are combined, the result is sodium chloride – common table salt – the substance we use to preserve meat and bring out its flavor.

Love and truth can be like sodium and chlorine. Love without truth is flighty, sometimes blind, willing to combine with various doctrines. On the other hand, truth by itself can be offensive, sometimes even poisonous. Spoken without love, it can turn people away from the gospel. When truth and love are combined in an individual or a church, however, then we have what Jesus called "the salt of the earth," and we're able to preserve and bring out the beauty of our faith.

Salt was so important in Bible times that Roman soldiers received part of their pay in salt. That's where our English word "salary" comes from.

Unfortunately, the phrase "the salt of the earth" has become a designation for people we regard as especially "good." Salt has become a common commodity in today's society; it is even now known as "common table salt." This makes it all the harder for us to appreciate how strange the phrase must have originally sounded.

Although it is not a biblical phrase, I think it carries a little more bite, if you will, if we were to substitute another seasoning: "You are red hot pepper for the whole earth!" By substituting "red hot peppers" we are reminded that the statement refers not to status, as if it said "You are the world's ethical elite," but to function, "You must add zest to the life of the world."

Let's switch from thinking about salt to looking at light.

LIGHT

Matthew 5:14 – *"You are the light of the world."*

A medieval monk announced he would be preaching on Sunday evening on "The Love of God." As the shadows fell and the light ceased to come in through the cathedral windows, the congregation gathered. In the darkness of the altar, the monk lit a candle and carried it to the crucifix. First of all, he illumined the crown of thorns, next, the two wounded hands, then the marks of the spear wound. In the hush that fell, he blew out the candle and left the chancel. There was nothing else to say. That one little candle lit so much and said so much. Our lives are the same way.

In John 8:12 Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."* Notice that Christ is the light. We are not the light, but we are reflections of His light. While we are called "lights," our main objective is to direct people to The Light.

2 Corinthians 4:3-5 – *"(3) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, (4) in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (5) For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake."*

Although Christ refers to Christians as *"the salt of the earth"* and *"the light of the world,"* He also gives some solemn and stern warnings concerning our status as salt and light in the world.

The Warnings

Jesus issues a warning. While the warning is clearer when referring to salt, Christ's warning also applies to Christians as we stand as light to the world.

The warning regarding salt

Matthew 5:13b – *"but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men."*

In Christ's day, salt from the Dead Sea was liberally mixed with other elements to make it last longer. When this mixture was exposed to the weather, the pure salt would filter out, separating from the worthless chemical residue, which was then fit for nothing. Arab bakers would sometimes cover the floor of their ovens with slabs of salt whose catalytic effect on the poorly burning fuel (usually dried camel dung) would promote combustion. After about fifteen years the catalytic effect of the salt wears out, and it is thrown into the street. The most powerful and meaningful application for the ancient near-eastern mind is also the simplest explanation.

We must simply remember the fact that salt was used as food. Therefore, based on everyday experience, Christ's audience would have known where their salt came from. Salt in Christ's day was not artificially prepared as it is today; instead, it was obtained from evaporated pools by the shore of the Dead Sea, or from the small lakes on the edge of the Syrian Desert which dry up in the summer. This salt crust, dug up from the surface of the soil, is never pure; it contains impurities (magnesia, lime, vegetable remains). That means that when the salt is dissolved by moisture there is a useless waste left over.

Luke focuses on the warning expressed by Christ, but also views it as a challenge to each and every one of us that if we are not "salt" then people will not be able to hear about Christ. Luke 14:34 says, *"Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?"*

Not only does Christ give a stern warning about believers as salt, but also Christ gives a warning or challenge regarding believers as light.

The warning regarding light

Matthew 5:14b & 15a *"(14b) A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.
 "(15a) Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure,"*

Christ's warning is pretty simple and straight-forward to me. Those of us who know Christ as our Savior, *must* be telling others about Him, and we *must* be living lives that are pleasing to Him. We cannot tell others about Christ, but live the way we want. We cannot live according to God's standards, but keep quiet about what God has done for us. You cannot have one without the other. The application of Christ's warning can take on many practical forms.

Application of Christ's Warning

1. Moral Compromise

What might moral compromise look like today?

When we as Christians, as salt of the earth, become guilty of moral compromise, we lose our flavor. The secular world can dilute our moral influence; it can even creep into the church, and render us powerless to bring about constructive change in our society. We are then transformed into the Lite Church. The church of the 7-½% tithe. The church of the six commandments. People can pick which commands they want to keep and which ones they believe are just too hard or unreasonable for today's society.

2. Over-inflated Ego

What might an over-inflated ego look like today?

Jesus warns us so we don't allow His praise to over-inflate our ego. Jesus says that salt can lose its flavor and become worthless. Our ability to influence society for good can also be compromised if our over-inflated ego at being salt and light causes us to present our agenda, our opinion, as the only one acceptable in the eyes of God.

3. Failure to Witness

Discuss "failure to witness," what causes it, and cures to reversing "failure to witness."

4. Hypocrisy

Why is hypocrisy so detrimental to Christianity?

Ask yourself, "What areas am I a hypocrite in regards to my faith in Christ?" and "What areas is our family hypocritical in regards to our faith in Christ?"

Conclusion

You don't have to be perfect to be salt and light. You just have to be faithful. You don't have to have any special training to invite your neighbor to watch our church service online or to invite them to come to church with you when we are able to meet again. You can do it faithfully, in weakness and in fear and trembling. You don't have to be comfortably sure of what to say in order to call a fellow church member who is homebound just like you. You can do it in weakness and fear and trembling. You don't have to be financially secure, guaranteed of sufficient income for the rest of your life, to be a steward who gives faithfully to the church. You can offer your gift in weakness and in fear and trembling. You don't even have to be sure of the strength of your faith to begin to pray regularly for others. You can stumble over the words, praying in weakness and in fear and trembling. It's okay!

My prayer for each of you is that as you will endeavor to be salt and light to those around you, but that you will do it by the grace and power of God. You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world.

Matthew 5:16 *"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*