

032: Salty and Glowing

(based on Sermon #27 in the Life of Christ Series)

Before the Lord called me to the ministry, I worked for several years for a major corporation in Chicago.

- One of the aspects of the job that I enjoyed immensely was visiting our corporate customers.
- Because our company was premier in the industry, all the employees were trained to be no-nonsense representatives, particularly in the presence of customers.
- For example, we were required to wear a suit and tie at all times.
- We were given American Express corporate credit cards, and we were instructed, when traveling on business, to stay at nice hotels, rent nice cars, and eat at nice restaurants, especially when meeting with customers.
- I certainly enjoyed that!

We were expected at all times to act in a manner that was worthy of the company's prestigious reputation.

- Occasionally, employees were fired, if they did not live up to the company's standard.
- Why did the company have such a high standard for its representatives?
- Because representatives are the image-bearers of the company.
- Think of the spiritual application.
- You are a Christian, a believer in our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, a child of God.
- By nature of your relationship to Him, you are called to be His image-bearer before men, acting as He would act in the world.
- How are you to represent Him in the culture?

Listen to the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount

- Matt. 5:13-16
- 13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.
- 14 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.
- 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.
- 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Jesus expects you to be salt and light so that He is accurately represented to mankind.

- According to v. 13, you are to remain salty and not lose your flavor in the world.
- According to v. 16, you are to make sure your light shines brightly, so the world can see your good works and think the best of your great God so that He is glorified.
- Tragically, many Christians are *not* good representatives of God, for they have become “unsalty,” and they have hidden their light.
- Consequently, they are not salty and glowing.
- Does that describe you?

God wants His children glowing with good works — works that shine.

- That is what people notice.
- It is by our good works that we represent God to the world and draw attention to Him.

- We learned from our previous study of Matt. 5:1-12 that Jesus is speaking to believers, more specifically, to those believers who are following Him in discipleship.
- He is instructing believers as to the qualifications for inheriting the kingdom of the heavens, the ruling realm of Christ's coming Messianic kingdom.
- In 5:13-16 we find another qualification: living as salt and light.

In order to fully understand this teaching of Jesus, we need to put it in the broader context of Scripture.

- God created Adam without sin and in His image.
- Adam, as head of the race, was to be God's image-bearer, His representative on Earth, whereby all could see God's glory through Adam's good works — not merely the human realm, but also the supernatural realm, both good and evil.
- But that didn't happen. You know the story.
- Adam ate the forbidden fruit and plunged the entire race into sin.
- The lineage of the patriarchs up to the time of the flood lived for the Lord, generally speaking — Adam — Seth — Enos — Cainan — Mahalaleel — Jared — Enoch — Methusaleh — Lamech — Noah — Shem.

Nevertheless, conditions around them, in the culture, only grew worse.

- Man failed to represent God on Earth.
- So that when fallen angels came to cohabit with human women (as we read in Gen. 6), they found many who were eager to comply.
- The race plunged into extreme wickedness and violence, prompting God to destroy the world with a flood — the great Flood of Noah's day.

- Did this solve the problem?
- Did man go forward, righteously representing God on Earth?
- No, for not long after the flood, the Tower of Babel incident occurred, leading God to confuse the languages and scatter the nations.
- Deut. 32:8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.

The Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls use the phrase *sons of God* in the place of *children of Israel.*

- The ESV translates as follows:
- Deut. 32:8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.
- Notice the difference: the NKJV translates as *children of Israel*, whereas the ESV translates as *sons of God*.
- The latter translation makes more sense because the children of Israel did not exist at the time that God divided the nations.

Sons of God in the Old Testament are angelic beings (see Job 38:7).

- Dr. Michael Heiser says the purpose for God dividing the nations according to the sons of God is because at this time in history He gave over the nations to the gods.
- In other words, because of man's rebelliousness in rejecting Jehovah God, He gave each nation a patron god (little "g").
- Jehovah took Israel as His nation.

- Deut. 32:9 For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance.
- Whereas the head of the race failed to represent God properly, a nation would now be given over to represent God amongst the nations of the world.
- Israel was God's chosen representative
- Listen to these verses:

Exod. 19:6 You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.

- Lev. 19:2 Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy."
- Deut. 7:6 For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.
- Deut. 26:18-19 Today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.
- Isa. 42:6 I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles,
- Isa. 49:6 I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.

God is essentially admonishing His nation, "Israel, let your light so shine before the nations of the world, that they may see your good works and glorify Jehovah, the one true God."

- Did Israel succeed?

- Did the nation fulfill its responsibility to represent God before all the nations on Earth? No!
- Israel sinned, by turning to idolatry, and failed God miserably.
- So God sent the prophets to call Israel to repentance
- Did Israel repent? No!
- So God sent the Assyrians to invade the ten tribes of the north in 722 BC. He also sent the Babylonians to invade the two tribes of the south in 605 BC, taking captives, and again in 586 BC, utterly destroying the temple and the city of Jerusalem.
- The nation was exiled to a foreign land.
- Although God lifted the captivity later, and many of the Jews from Babylon returned to Palestine, the nation never fully recovered.

In the first century AD Jesus came to Earth.

- Continuing in the tradition of the prophets, He and John the Baptist urged the nation to repent or else they would face additional judgment.
- Did the nation repent? No!
- Thus, Jesus revoked His kingdom inheritance offer to the Jews and is now offering it to a nation bearing the fruits of it, which is the church, as discussed in a previous study.
- Furthermore, the Romans invaded Jerusalem in AD 70 and destroyed the entire city, including the second temple.

Adam was God's first representative to the human race, but he failed.

- Israel followed, as God's representative to the nations of Earth, but Israel also failed.

- Presently, the church is God’s representative to the world but, sadly, the church is failing as well.
- Nevertheless, Jesus is calling out a bride from His church that will become his co-regent in the coming kingdom.
- When Jesus comes to rule on Earth, He will be God’s perfect representative, what God had intended all along.
- He will rule in righteousness, along with His qualified, chosen co-rulers.
- How does one qualify as His bride and co-ruler?
- Those who live as salt and light in this world will be His chosen ones.
- Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, many believers are “unsalty” and have hidden their light.
- That leads to a spiritual tragedy, as described in v. 13:
- If the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

What causes salt to lose its flavor?

- To answer that question, we need to understand the metaphor being used by Jesus.
- Salt is the chemical compound known as sodium chloride.
- It is a very stable and useful chemical compound.
- In fact, sodium and chlorine like being together — forming a very tight chemical bond (ionic bond) — like a happily married couple.
- How, then, is it possible for salt to lose its saltiness?
- When salt crystals are placed in water, the positive ends of the water molecules attract the negative chloride ions.
- The negative ends of the water molecules attract the positive sodium ions.
- The more water that is added, the greater the dilution, the more salt loses its saltiness.

Interestingly, salt never ceases to be salt; its chemical compound does not change.

- But it can become diluted and less flavorful. What a great spiritual illustration!
- As a believer, you are in union with Christ.
- While that union will never cease, it can be diluted by outside influences, namely, the world.
- When you begin loving the world, the world pulls you away from closeness to Christ, so that your fellowship with Him becomes diluted.
- That is why James warned ...
- James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Uniting with the world, essentially places believers at enmity with God.

- Consequently, fellowship with the Lord becomes diluted and the child of God becomes less salty with respect to the world.
- When salt is diluted, it is not beneficial.
- However, when salt is “salty,” it is greatly beneficial.
- It is the opposite of leaven, which corrupts everything around it.
- Salt, on the contrary, is beneficial.
- Indeed, salt has many uses in our world.
- It enhances flavor, when added moderately to food, and it is a preservative to keep meat from spoiling.
- When Jesus says, “You are the salt of the earth,” and “You are the light of the world,” He is addressing His disciples, those believers who have chosen to follow Him.
- Unbelievers are not likened to salt or light in the world.

- These metaphors apply only to believers.

In what sense are believers the salt of the earth?

- In the sense that we add flavor to this world — the love of Christ and a Christian worldview.
- We serve as a preservative in culture, opposing sin and corruption by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- That is why when Christians are removed from this earth at the rapture, iniquity will abound, for the restraining presence of the Holy Spirit — the saltiness of Christians — will be removed from Earth.
- Thus, God’s design for us as His children, is that we function as salt in this present world, opposing the corruptions of sin and adding a distinct flavor.
- We do that by living the Christ-life, demonstrating His mercy, His love, His grace, His compassion, His power and glory, etc., to the world around us.

In using the metaphor of salt, Jesus was likely also referring to the Old Testament sacrifices, which required salt to be added to the offerings on the altar.

- Lev. 2:13, And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.
- Salt was considered pleasing to God.
- Leaven, a type of sin, was *never* to be offered.
- Lev. 2:11 You shall burn no leaven ... in any offering of the Lord made by fire.
- New Testament believers are to be a *living* sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1-2).
- When you are a salty saint, God is pleased.

- When you are an “unsalty” Christian, it is as if leaven is at work in your life, and you become as leaven in the world, actually promoting the agenda of the evil one.

We must keep in mind that Jesus is speaking to His disciples — saved (regenerated) people who are willing to pay the price to progress in discipleship.

- Many children of God are unwilling to pay the price and, therefore, they are not progressing down the path of discipleship.
- They will not be able to give a good account at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Notice what Jesus thinks of “unsalty” saints.
- Matt. 5:13b If the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

In the Greek, the verb used for salt *losing its flavor*, is *moraino*, which comes from the noun *moros*, from which we get our English word *moron*, meaning fool or stupid person.

- Thus, for a believer to lost saltiness is to play the part of a fool.
- Marvin Vincent, the Greek scholar, shares this story:
- Dr. Thompson (in *The Land and the Book*) cites the following case: “A merchant of Sidon, having farmed of the government the revenue from the importation of salt, brought over a great quantity from the marshes of Cyprus — enough, in fact, to supply the whole province for many years. This he had transferred to the mountains, to cheat the government out of some small percentage of duty. Sixty-five houses were rented and filled with salt. Such houses have merely earthen floors, and the salt next the ground was in a few years entirely spoiled. I saw large quantities of it literally thrown into

the road to be trodden under foot of men and beasts. It was 'good for nothing.'"

In this illustration, the salt near the earth became contaminated by the earth.

- It absorbed moisture from the ground and became diluted, less salty.
- When you live a fleshly life, contaminated by the world, your life becomes useless for the cause of Christ.
- It is "good for nothing."
- Your work is as wood, hay, stubble.
- It is as salt thrown out in the streets to be trampled by men, which is a picture of disinheritance from the kingdom of the heavens.
- Matt. 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Does this not sound like the foolishness of the five virgins who do not have the extra supply of oil (Matt. 25:1-13)?

- They are excluded from the marriage festivities.
- Does this not also sound like the fate of the rich fool who lives on "easy street," accumulating possessions, and has an "eat, drink, and be merry" attitude (Luke 12:16-21)?
- He loses everything and has nothing to show at the Judgment Seat.
- Does this not sound like the punishment of the unfaithful household servants who live for self and mistreat others (Luke 12:42-48)?
- They are appointed a portion with the faithless.
- Does this not sound like the disposition of the unwise steward who hides his talent (Matt. 25:14-30)?

- He ends up in the darkness outside, weeping and regretting the fact that he has not been faithful to his Master.

What does Jesus expect of us?

- Matt. 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
- Salty saints that shine brightly are those who produce good works, by the grace of God.
- Incidentally, our works will be judged by Jesus at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- The Greek word translated *works* in Matt. 5:16 is the same as used in 1 Cor. 3:
- 13 Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.
- 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.
- 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Are you salty and glowing?

- If good works are not evident in your life, then you are "unsalty" and hiding your light, as under a basket.
- Letting your light shine is living as a salty Christian, undiluted by fleshliness and worldly influences.
- Letting your light shine is allowing Jesus to live His life through yours, so the spiritual qualities of the Beatitudes are evident in your life.
- Letting your light shine is having a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.
- Letting your light shine is reflecting the glory of the Lord in this world.

Listen to this glorious verse of Scripture:

- 2 Cor. 3:18 We all, with unveiled face, beholding (reflecting) as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.
- When men see Christ in me, they don't marvel at what a great person I am.
- Rather, they glorify my Father which is in heaven.
- That is the kind of life that will qualify for inheritance in the kingdom.
- Will you inherit the kingdom?
- Or have you become "unsalty" and dim through contamination?
- Oh, that we would be salty, glowing saints for Jesus!
- I challenge you to THINK ON THESE THINGS!