



Lighthouse Beacon

New Mexico Lighthouses - November 2003

Are You A Blessing To Your World?

Thus far in Matthew 5:1-16, Jesus has taught us about our spiritual growth through the Beattitudes (*blessings* – verses 1-12). The progressive nature of these blessings reveals the process of Christian maturity, from the very beginnings of our journey when we come to Him emptied of ourselves, to the point where we can “count it all joy” when we face persecution for His sake.

Now Jesus explains our value in God’s Kingdom by using Similitudes (*likenesses* – verses 13-16). Keep in mind that the first 12 verses of Matthew 5 reveal the re-creation process needed in a believer’s life, while the Similitudes show the outcome of those changes. Beattitudes are building blocks and Similitudes proclaim the result of a life rebuilt in Christ. *Let Him Shine!* — KC

“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.”

Matthew 5:13 (NAS)

What is our condition?

Here Jesus refers to born-again believers with the term, “Salt.” In Jewish culture salt represented several very important qualities. There was a Covenant of Salt (Num. 18:19) which was everlasting and it indicated faithfulness, dependability and durability. To this day, some middle-eastern cultures still eat “bread and salt” together as a covenant of brotherhood.

And salt was required in all the sacrifices (Lev. 2:13) because it represented preserving and purifying. It was even used as a cleansing and purifying for newborns (Eze. 16:4).

Salt was also recognized as critical for the welfare of both man and beast as they endured the harshness of hot climates. And it was important not only in flavoring food, but also in preserving it from the natural processes of decay. When Jesus spoke of salt to His followers, they realized the importance He was ascribing to them. In their day, salt was more important than gold or jewels because without salt they could not survive.



Salt penetrates into food as it dissolves and it permeates until it changes every bit of the food, not just the place where it first touched. Likewise, the Holy Spirit permeates us until it brings about changes in every part of our lives, our attitudes, and our behavior. A well-salted Christian is a new creation which has not only benefited from being changed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in them, but they also convey God’s Spirit to the world around them all the time, automatically. Just as salt does not have to *pretend* to be salty, Christians surrendered to Christ do not have to *pretend* to be Christ-like. When our lives are filled with the blessings of the Beattitudes described in verses 1-12, we *are* the salt of the earth. *It is not something we strive for, rather it is something we have become.*

What is our purpose?

Jesus says here that the children of God are like salt being used by our Heavenly Father to bring spiritual purity and preservation to a world that is dying. Just as salt gives food flavor and protects it from decay and destruction, His Holy Spirit in us reacts with people around us to give them a new life and protect them from eternal destruction. If we are filled with Him, then He works through us to bring about the Father’s will. And the more He permeates our lives, the more He can influence the lives around us.

“Let your light shine so that others may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.” Matthew 5:16

...you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light —Eph. 5:8

But there are also some interesting parallels concerning how salt and Christians fulfill their purpose. If you have ever had the lid of a salt shaker come off when you were using it, you know how quickly and irrevocably the food was ruined. Salt must be applied carefully so as to enhance the value of food and not ruin it. We typically sprinkle salt with a few grains being dispersed over the food instead of piling it up in one concentrated area. (For those of you who would claim this means we should not bother gathering together at church, shame on you! ;-)) The insight here is that one grain of salt, applied by our Lord, can flavor a very large area—perhaps a whole family, neighborhood, school, or even an entire company. The more salt there is available, the more area that can be covered. And there needs to be a sufficient supply of salt to permeate the food completely—whether for flavoring or for preservation. An insufficient supply of good salt means some parts are left unflavored, or worse yet, some become spoiled and destroyed.

Therefore, when we complain about the decay of the world, we may actually be commenting on the lack of spiritual salt available to be used by God. Every single Christian is important in God’s plan because He can use us to impact a disproportionately large piece of our world. Our ultimate Kingdom purpose is to have God’s Spirit work through us to change the “flavor” of the world around us.

What is our response?

“It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.” Oh what a terrible condemnation this is for Christians! Salt does not stop being salt, but, if exposed to dissipating elements, it can lose the qualities which make it valuable. Like-

wise, Christians who become overwhelmed by, and fixated upon, the cares of the world end up like the dissipated salt—incapable of being used for their most important task.

Israel is privileged to have an abundance of salt available, both from Dead Sea deposits and from a small mountain that is almost entirely salt. This mineral has been valuable to their health and commerce for millennia. But harvesting the salt requires that the outer surface must be carved away and disposed of because it is contaminated and unfit for consumption. And when salt loses its flavor, it cannot be re-flavored even though it is in constant contact with a mountain of salt. Instead, it becomes part of a process which will contaminate and ruin even more salt. Once salt has been overcome by the elements of the world, it cannot be restored and is good only as rock salt—to be put on roads and sidewalks to melt ice. Even then, it must be used carefully, because dissipated salt kills growing things and it can ruin a whole field of healthy crops.

So what was Jesus saying to us in this passage? At the very least, He is telling us that Christians can become so immersed and saturated in the cares of the world that they lose their ability to be effective in Kingdom work. And this process of dissipation happens easily, slowly, and constantly as we deal with the everyday issues of life.

Therefore, our response to Him requires that we remain fully dependent upon Him, never attempting to deal with the challenges of life based upon our abilities, but only on His strength. Then, as His Holy Spirit fills us, we will never lose our ability to influence because He renews us everyday so that through us, He can flavor our world...*Let Him shine!*

Christmas Preparations!

LightShine Ministries still has some materials available (Training Manual and Training Video) that will help you host a Christ-glorifying Christmas Party that will remind everyone of the true “reason for the season.”

And LightShine also has the “*Christmas Digest*” published by Campus Crusades for Christ. This booklet is full of excellent Christmas stories and makes a wonderful gift that will help “flavor” the season. Call 293-0743 for info or to obtain copies.