

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 5:13-16 | Salt and Light
September 11, 2022

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 5.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

Over the past several months, we have taken our time learning about Jesus' first sermon to his disciples.

It's called the *Sermon on the Mount*.

And it's in this first sermon where Jesus teaches His disciples (how to be happy) and how not to have a care in the world.

It was the prelude to "Seek first the Kingdom of God." (Matt 6:33)

Last Sunday, we studied the ending of what we call the *Beatitudes* within Jesus' sermon.

And we learned how Jesus prepared and prophesied what would happen to us, as disciples, for living a Beatitude-type life.

Jesus prepared us for insults, persecution, and slander. Why?

KEYPOINTS:

- Godliness triggers hostility from the world.
- Persecution is evidence of salvation.

In other words, you have come to the point in your Christian life that you don't care anymore about your reputation—

You no longer give a rip about people rolling their eyes at you.

It no longer hurts your feelings when people point and laugh in your face for sharing the Gospel.

How is that possible? You used to care about your personal reputation so much.

How are you now able to not care?

Answer: Spiritual maturity.

Why? Because you're growing up and maturing in the Lord.

You realize that time is short.

All these different forms of persecution prove that you are who you say you are—a Disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now you would think that after last Sunday, everybody listening to Jesus talk about being persecuted for their faith would go and hide in monasteries—to get away from the world and avoid persecution.

You might think that Jesus would suggest it. *-So they can protect themselves*

But that is not what Jesus says today at all.

INTRODUCTION:

Directly after Jesus taught His disciples to rejoice and be glad in the persecution of their faith in Him—

Jesus then, in His next breath, tells them to go back into the world and share this Gospel message regardless of the cost.

In John's Gospel, Jesus prays this prayer for the disciples.

+ **John 17:14**—The world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

+ **John 17:15**—I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

+ **John 17:18**— As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

So as we know, the disciples didn't go and build a monastery.

+ They stayed in the world to be witnesses to the world.
Acts 17:6 — these men who have turned the world upside down have come here
Today, Jesus uses two analogies to give us a word picture—salt and light.
↳ of what it looks like to do just that

In today's lesson, the Lord summarizes a disciple's function, purpose, and role.

By Studying the Beatitudes we've learned how Jesus told the disciples how to get their sinful hearts right before a holy God.

Now Jesus tells us what to do with our imperfect righteous lives.

In other words, Disciples are to be a witness to the world.

I want you to think about this-- as we study today's Scripture passage...

The world has no other way of knowing the Truth except through His disciples.

There is no plan B.

You are the plan if you're a Disciple of Jesus. That's what the Great Commission is all about

So today's lesson includes a directive from the Lord Jesus Himself.

What is it? And how do you apply it to your lives today?

Let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:13-16 CSB

Matthew 5:13— "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Matthew 5:14— "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden.

Matthew 5:15— No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house.

Matthew 5:16— In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

***This is the Word of the Lord for River Bible Church.*

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 5:13— "You are the salt of the earth.

We mentioned that Jesus changed his speech pattern last week in the middle of the final Beatitude.

He went from a third person to a second person pronoun—meaning that Jesus is emphatic, direct, and clear about who He is speaking to.

"Blessed are those..." to "You are blessed...."

And today, that theme continues within His analogies of salt and light.

The interesting thing about the grammar that Jesus uses in verse thirteen is that the pronoun “you” is also plural—it’s *Sy* (sue) in Greek.

Meaning all disciples (the entire church, the whole Body of Christ, all y'all) are called to be salt and light.

When you grab a salt shaker to season your food, you don't put one isolated gram of salt on your dinner—no, you give that salt a good shake, so it seasons your food properly.

Jesus uses this ^{salt} analogy because spiritually speaking—you as an individual disciple, have limited influence, limited time, and limited gifting.

But when we come together like we are today, we're able to work as a team and sustain the calling of the Great Commission that was given to the original Disciples!

And it's in this way as a team called the local church
God allows us to participate in something way bigger than ourselves.

The church has always been plural.

The church was designed to be in community/because the church represents God Himself—

Which includes the community of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Back to...

Matthew 5:13— “You are...”

Are— Eimi (e-me) is the verb “to be.”

Jesus is stating a fact—you, as a disciple, are something.

It's a part of our spiritual DNA.

It's a component of being *born again*.

The question is, "are what?"

Matthew 5:13— "You are the salt..."

That's a bit weird.

Jesus obviously is using an illustration.

Now we have to pause right here and make sure we're all on the same page.

When we think of salt, most of us immediately think of a purified and processed version of table salt.

We generally think of salt as a food additive for taste—Morton's.

That's not what Jesus is referring to here in verse thirteen.

So let's make sure we don't put our thoughts and opinions on the text—that's called eisegesis.

What we want to do is pull out the historical, literal, and grammatical truths of the text itself—and that's called exegesis.

We want to be on the same page with our author—Matthew, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

So the salt that Jesus is referring to is way different than ours.

Let me give you some background and context.

Salt is one of the most common substances on the earth.

It's known as "white gold."

Salt is one of the most significant substances in history.

It is as essential as iron, gold, and wheat.

Salt in the first century was much more than a food additive. *the seasoning*

~~In ancient societies,~~ *Also* it was an economic commodity.

As you read through Scripture, you'll notice that salt was used *in many ways,* as an element within the OT Sacrificial system. *Exek:*

The "salt of the covenant" in Numbers 18:19; Ezek 43:24.

Salt was used within the grain offering in Lev 2:13.

It served as a symbol of purity in Exod 30:35.

Salt was used within the Temple and was provided to the priests (Ezra 6:9; 7:22).

Now, Despite all the practical uses, too much salt can lead to death. *spiritual*

Land with too much salt, like salt flats, marshes, or pits, is uninhabitable.

Salt was used in war.

Armies would use salt to destroy an enemy's land (Deut 29:23, Judg 9:45; Zeph 2:9).

The Bible also correlates salt with judgment and disobedience.

For example: Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt ^{why?} for her disobedience and became a monument to God's wrath (Gen 19:26).

ON WIFE'S DRESS.

Moving to the NT, we see Jesus correlate salt with Discipleship.

Along with our text today—Jesus calls His disciples to have salt within themselves and to ~~live at peace~~ in Mark 9:50.

The apostle Paul commands the church in Colossae to season their speech with salt in Colossians 4:6.

And most importantly, especially for our context today, Scripture uses salt as a Symbol of Life.

It's known as a symbol of life because salt is a preservative.

Salt delays the decaying process when rubbed into the meat.

As you know, people in the ancient world did not have refrigerators, so if they wanted to keep their food from spoiling, they had to cover it and embed it with salt.

The Romans believed that except for the SUN— nothing was more valuable than salt.

In fact, Roman soldiers were often paid with salt.

It's where the expression "he's not worth his salt" came from.

We also get our English word, *salary*, from salt.

So to follow Jesus' analogy, one task of the church is to help prevent the world from self-destruction.

For example, looking ^{BACK ON} into world history, the Christian church, more than any other institution, has restrained evil by being responsible for higher education, hospitals, orphanages, adoption services, even the arts—music, painting, and literature.

So, in a very real sense, the church has been the preservative God used to keep civilization from imploding upon itself.

Matthew 5:13— "You are the salt of the earth."

Earth is *gē* (yēah) in Greek—

^{SO} On one side of Jesus' analogy—there's an earthiness to Jesus' example.

You are a preservative for the land and soil. *that God has created, - we are stewards*

On the flip side, you are the salt to the world system and all of its decaying morality.

Back to...

Matthew 5:13— But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty?

Atheists, secular scientists, and liberal theologians love to take their shots at this verse.

They say that salt, as sodium chloride, can never lose its taste.

And they would be missing the point of Jesus' ^{spiritual} analogy entirely.

Because Jesus is not talking about sodium chloride from the twenty-first century.

He's talking about salt that was used in first-century Israel.

The Dead Sea, which is SE of Jerusalem, is the saltiest body of water in the world.

It is a salt mine.

Salt from this area can be mined in three ways: 1) from salt cliffs, 2) marshland, or 3) salt water that's been evaporated. *process*.

But, here's the deal, Dead Sea salt is not pure.

It's mixed with other minerals like gypsum.

People make jewelry from gypsum.

So this salt from the Dead Sea could be tasteless, stale, or alkaline taste—taste like metal/jewelry.

And because that's the original context, Jesus says...

Matthew 5:13— *But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty?*

*Lose its taste—Greek is *mōrainō* (more-rain-oh).*

We get our English word, moron.

Jesus is specifically talking about foolish and sinful behavior. *in verse 13*.

This disciple who Jesus refers to—who has lost his saltiness—is not acting as a preservative to a decaying world.

Rather than slowing down the decay—he is joining the world in their defilement.

Jesus is referring to someone who calls himself a disciple yet is living an ungodly lifestyle.

Nothing is preserved when this man goes out into the world.

Matthew 5:13— "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty?"

How do you lose something?

Accident? Irresponsibility? ^{or} Priorities?

What do you do with someone who has professed Jesus Christ as Lord,

They said they believed that Jesus is God's Son and that He was resurrected from the dead,

This person was baptized and discipled by others....

And yet, when you look at their Christian life, they're not growing into maturity.

They continue to act like a moron.

What are we to do with such a person? ^{who hasn't} ^{relaxed} prioritized his faith in Christ?

It's no secret, Jesus tells us.

Matthew 5:13— It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

In other words, this disciple's witness is worthless.

He's doing more harm than good.

If we are not the salt of the earth, it is probably because we have allowed the world to contaminate us.

And that's the manner in which Jesus speaks.

If a disciple is contaminated and refuses to separate himself from the world, he will lose his saltiness.

Luke's Gospel says this...

+ **Luke 14:34**— "Now, salt is good, but if salt should lose its taste, how will it be made salty?"

+ **Luke 14:35**— It isn't fit for the soil or for the manure pile they throw it out. Let anyone who has ears to hear listen."

- TALK About being good for nothing

Now please note here that Jesus is not referring to Christians losing their salvation.

Many other passages in Scripture talk about the security of our salvation.

But Christians can lose their effectiveness when sin continues to contaminate their own lives.

So, as a disciple of Jesus, what are you to do if you feel like your losing your saltiness?

Are you becoming lethargic and lazy regarding your faith?

Are you becoming uncompassionate about people?

Are you becoming angry for whatever reason?

Answer: You are to push back on the world and start doing something different, like surrounding yourself with people who love and fear God.

The apostle Paul says...

1 Corinthians 9:27—I discipline my body (discipline comes from the word disciple) and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

To lose our saltiness is not to lose our salvation, but it is to lose our witness.

And if we lose our witness, we lose our impact and influence.

Temporarily
We lose the truth and the power of the Holy Spirit.

And depending on the sin, the depravity of sin, the length of sin and your disobedience toward repentance—

You
We may become disqualified for service and brought home early.

In other words, God Himself may decide enough is enough and take you out—that's a sermon for another day.

Jesus presses in with another analogy.

Matthew 5:14—You are the light of the world.

We have the same plural Greek pronoun “you” —Sy (sue)

Are— Eimi (e-me) is the verb “to be.”

You are the light

Now, this verse may seem a bit odd because Jesus said that He is the light of the world in John 8:12.

But what Jesus is doing here is taking His title and transferring it over to his disciples.

Our light, our truth, and our righteousness are a reflection of Jesus.

It's as if Jesus were the sun, the source of light, and we, as His disciples, are the moon reflecting His light.

The moon's core is metallic, and its surface has titanium.

Titanium is also in the headlights of your car.

As disciples, we are witnesses— extensions of Him. Jesus as light

This analogy of light is a bit different from salt.

Salt is hidden, and yet light is ^{visible} apparent.

Salt melts inwardly— yet light manifest outwardly.

Salt works covertly and discreetly, while light works publicly and boldly.

Salt works ^{from} on the interior, light from the exterior.

Salt preserves slowly while light proclaims instantly.

Salt is mainly negative in the sense that it delays corruption.

Light is positive because it exposes corruption.

Light is so positive in Scripture it is mentioned 493 times in 403 verses—and that's only the NT.

And that's why Jesus says this in verse fourteen.

Matthew 5:14— A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden.

Have you ever driven on 89A from Sedona into Cottonwood at night?

You can see not only Cottonwood but Clarkdale and Jerome.

You can't —not —see the light coming from these cities.

The same thing happened in the first century.

People used oil lamps like this to light up their homes at night.

And when you have hundreds or thousands of homes that are built on a hilltop, there is no way you can't see them from a distance.

The city is exposed.

The city is impossible to miss.

And that's Jesus' point. He goes on to say...

Matthew 5:15—No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house.

This statement is clearly common sense.

Many homes in the first century had only one room.

So this little light lit up the entire home.

Matthew 5:16—In the same way, let your light shine before others,

So Jesus makes verse sixteen personal again—your light.

Here's the directive from our Lord—*let your light shine*.

As a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have a personal responsibility to shine the light that He has given you.

You are a light to your unbelieving family, friends, coworkers, and the Verde Valley.

And because you are a light, Jesus commands for people to see it.

Why? So they have an opportunity to be changed by it.

A hidden light is still light, but it is useless light—selfish light.

+ **Matthew 5:16**—...so that they may see your good works...
 Good ↓

The Greek word *kalos* (guh-~~low~~se) is good.
 low'se

It's not so much good in quantity, although the quantity is important—but good in attractiveness, winsomeness—beautiful appearance about your light.

Because you are different!

+ **Matthew 5:16**—...so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

+ **KEYPOINT 1:**

We are not only to enjoy God but to proclaim God!

Heaven emphasizes His majesty and holiness.

Man's chief end is to glorify God.

PREACH

So, what's all this mean for you as a disciple of Jesus? *today?*

What is your function | purpose | and role as salt and light?

Answer: To join God where He's inviting you next.

~~There is no plan B.~~

When you were born again, you *became* spiritual | salt and light.

are a preserving influence | in a wicked broken world.

As a disciple, Jesus uses your life as a witness for Him.

You are salt—you create a thirst for people to know about Jesus. *How cool is that?*

Disclaimer: For those of you who have strong personality types:

You are not called to throw salt in people's eyes.

We also don't want to leave a bad taste in people's mouths. Salt is a seasoning it makes people thirsty.

You are not called to blind people with light either.

We are salt and light by having a real honest conversation about truth through God's Intersections and Divine Disruptions.

You have been gifted by God in an extraordinary way to have a noticeable impact in and on the city—

You have been wonderfully made to have a unique influence | and a distinct witness with people that you touch—

Why? Because you are salt and light.

We will never change the world through politics, worldly education, or humanistic morality.

We will only change the world through salt and light.

Salty people unconsciously leave the presence of God wherever they go.

How many times have you stepped into a conversation when people suddenly stopped talking?

And there's this awkward silence that seems to last forever?

Why do they stop telling dirty jokes around you?

Why do they apologize when they take the Lord's name in vain? *in front of you?*

Think about this— as a salty Christian—your presence temporarily holds back the world's wickedness.

One of the problems of the church is that we have an identity crisis.

We don't know who we are—even though Jesus tells us in this text.

And if we don't know who we are— at one time or another, we all end up asking a question that goes like this—

Why did God save me? Why has God left me here? In other words - What's my purpose?

Why don't we baptize people and hold them under just a little longer to send them immediately to glory?

Because you are a part of the church.

You are a part of the most profoundly dysfunctional group of people on the planet!

Look around, we are not that impressive to the world!

And yet, God has chosen you to do one thing—

And that one thing is to join Him in His plan to go out into the world—not recoil from it— share the Gospel and make disciples.— *By using the unique gifts He has given you.*

If you don't know what your gifting is—

Or when you *rebel* go against your spiritual DNA of salt and light— you will never be happy.

Why will you never be happy?

Because of disobedience and inactivity through the gifts that God has given you.

Dear friends if you feel isolated and alone *that's* because you are.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

KEYPOINT: #2
You can't have God's truth without God's people.

- you - individually
Without the church, there is no truth.

Romans 10:15—How beautiful are the feet of those *People/Christians/Disciples* who bring good news.

So the primary job of the church is found...

Ephesians 4:12—to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ.

*So Jesus says, "You are salt & light."
The question becomes, Are you willing to learn how to use them?*

Dear friends, if ~~you want to be a part of that~~—let me give you a commercial:

For invite to

Sign up for the Foundations Class starting next Wednesday, September 21, at 6:00 pm.

It's a great way to get started—to meet new friends, learn God's word, learn how to apply God's Word and be a part of something eternal!



PRAYER

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