

The Salt of the Earth

Matthew 5: 13

We have spent a considerable amount of time dealing with the portion of the Sermon on the Mount known as the Beatitudes. I think you would agree that that was a challenging and insightful study. As our Lord concludes His thoughts concerning the beatitudes, He shifts His focus to an important attribute and responsibility for the church.

Tonight we have come to the passage where our Lord addresses the need for all believers to serve as the salt of the earth and light to this dark world. We will discover as we move through these verses, both are necessary and much needed in our day. Each of these elements has a distinct and profound effect on their surroundings. So let's take a few moments to consider the [attributes](#) of salt as we think: [The Salt of the Earth](#).

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. This simple analogy reveals great truth regarding the Christian life and responsibility. Consider:

I. The Presence of Salt (13a) – **Ye are the salt of the earth.** Christ reveals that the believer is the salt of the earth. This is not something that is open for debate or discussion; we are the salt of the earth. As long as there are Christians, there will be salt.

- Salt is necessary to good health. There is salt in the blood running through our body. Our cells need salt to function properly. It is vital to human life. I realize we live in an age where salt is discouraged in the diet. Many are told to cut it out completely. Regardless of the scientific opinions, a certain amount is necessary.
- Let's look at this from a spiritual point of view. Just as salt is vital to human life, it is vital to spiritual life. We live in an age that salt is discouraged in the church. Some have removed it completely from their lives. They are unconcerned about their influence. God desires our true worship, our complete surrender, and a desire on our part to make a difference. We are here to reach others for Christ. I want my children to see some salt in my life. I want them to know that there is something special about serving God. If we never seem excited about the things of God, how do we expect anyone else to desire what we have?

II. The Properties of Salt (13b) – **but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?** Salt has certain properties that are always present that cause it to react in specific ways with other elements. We know that:

A. Salt Preserves – It is often used to preserve meat from decay. It works as a preservative. The nation of Israel was God’s people, but they lost their home to bondage. There was no salt, they weren’t preserved.

- I believe that Christians in America have helped prevent the wrath of God from destroying our nation. We can help preserve our families from the decay of this world. [Pr.14:34 – Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people](#). We need to preserve our morals, the church, our homes, etc.

B. Salt Penetrates – It has the natural ability to penetrate whatever it touches. We have the ability to penetrate the sin and darkness of this world. We can gain some ground. I don’t want to take a back seat. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us!

C. Salt Purifies – It is often used to purify or cleanse. [II Ki.2:20-22 – And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they bring it to him. \[21\] And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. \[22\] So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.](#)

- Salt water is used to cleanse sores and wounds of the flesh. We should have a cleansing effect on those around us. The church should have influence in the community to cause others to clean up some areas in their life.

D. Salt Promotes Thirst – It will create a thirst for water when it is consumed. We should create a thirst for Christ. When He is foremost in our life, we can help others desire what we have. We must live right, talk right, walk right, dress right, etc. I pray we will live a life that others would desire what we have.

E. Salt Produces Change – It has the ability to change things (food, melt ice, rust metal, etc.). Once salt has been added, it immediately begins to react. It is impossible to remove all of it. I hope there is enough salt in us to produce change. We can make a difference!

F. Salt Provides Flavor – Once added to a substance, salt enhances its flavor. It offers a bland and flavorless dish a desirable taste. We are not to appeal to the appetites of the world, but we do need to present a taste that is desirable for those who have never met Christ. May we live in such a way to create an appetite for the things of God!

I. The Presence of Salt (13a)

II. The Properties of Salt (13b)

III. The Profit of Salt (13c) – but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Salt was very beneficial and a prized commodity in that day. It was often used as payment for wages earned. That is where we get the expression “not worth his salt.”

- Up until recent times, with the innovation of freezers and canned goods, salt was necessary for survival. Salt is still necessary for survival in a spiritual sense. We need those salty Christians who are willing to make a difference for the Lord and in the lives of others. Faithful Christians are of great value to the work of the Lord.
- We also need to realize that unsavory salt, salt that has lost its flavor, is good for nothing. The salt of Jesus' day was much different than the salt of our day. In that day salt was mined from the earth and typically mixed with other substances. It often had dirt and other materials in it. Salt that had been exposed to the elements or had too much foreign material would lose its saltiness and be good for nothing but to be thrown in the foot paths as a means of gravel to keep down dust and mud.
- The salt-less Christian is good for nothing. When we become exposed to the world and dirty with sin, we soon lose our savor. Without our savor, we have lost the qualities that make us desirable. Unsavory salt was cast out and trodden under the feet of men. It was no longer a thing of value, but became just a part of the dirt. It had no influence any more. If we lose our savor then we have become useless to the Lord. I don't want Him to cast me out as a useless vessel; I want to be used as an instrument of influence.
- Consider some of the quotes that John MacArthur discusses in his commentary on this passage. “*Andrew Murray lived an exceptionally holy life. Among those on whom his influence was the greatest were his children and grandchildren. Five of his six sons became ministers of the gospel and four of his daughters became minister's wives. Ten grandsons became ministers and thirteen grandchildren became missionaries.*”

- *Woodrow Wilson told the story of being in a barbershop one time. "I was sitting in a barber chair when I became aware that a powerful personality had entered the room. A man had come quietly in upon the same errand as myself to have his hair cut and sat in the chair next to me. Every word the man uttered, though it was not in the least didactic, showed a personal interest in the man who was serving him. And before I got through with what was being done to me I was aware I had attended an evangelistic service, because Mr. D. L. Moody was in that chair. I purposely lingered in the room after he had left and noted the singular affect that his visit had brought upon the barber shop. They talked in undertones. They did not know his name, but they knew something had elevated their thoughts, and I felt that I left that place as I should have left a place of worship."*

- *"Helen Ewing was saved as a young girl in Scotland and gave her life completely to the lordship of Christ. When she died at the age of 22 it is said that all Scotland wept. She had expected to serve God as a missionary in Europe and had become fluent in the Russian language. But she was not able to fulfill that dream. She had no obvious gifts such as speaking or writing, and she had never traveled far from home. Yet by the time she died she had won hundreds of people to Jesus Christ. Countless missionaries mourned her death because they knew that a great channel of their spiritual strength was gone. She had risen every morning at five in order to study God's Word and to pray. Her diary revealed that she regularly prayed for over three hundred missionaries by name. Everywhere she went the atmosphere was changed. If someone was telling a dirty story, he would stop if he saw her coming. If people were complaining, they would become ashamed of it in her presence. An acquaintance reported that while she was at Glasgow University she left the fragrance of Christ wherever she went. In everything she said and did she was God's salt."¹*

Salt is very small as individual grains, but it can greatly affect things that it contacts. How salty are we? I pray that we can have an impact on our church, our community, and our world. I want to be of use to my Lord. We need more salt in our lives.

¹ MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 1-7.