

“Salt & Light”

Matthew 5v10-16

Scripture Ref: Eph 4:24; John 15:18-20; John 3:19-20; Eph 5:8

1. Last week we ended on the note of the “new man”

...and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Eph 4:24

- a. **You are different – you should know it – you shall walk according to it – and the world will know it too...**
- 2. I mentioned earlier “do I desire the things of the world, or do I desire the righteousness of God” – we choose whom or what we will serve.**
 - a. **The one who can see the spiritual – the eternal – is able to make the decision to serve the Lord and look forward to His eternal kingdom – finding fulfillment in Gods kingdom.**
 - b. **Vs serving the world – and looking to the kingdom of this world for fulfillment**
 - c. **When you choose to serve God, it should come as no surprise that the world will not understand, and may well be downright hostile.**

The Worlds vs The Christian

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

McALLEN, Texas - A man was arrested for drug possession after telling authorities that two masked gunmen had stolen 150 pounds of marijuana from his home. Hidalgo County sheriff's deputies arrived at the home near Penitas in South Texas to find the door kicked in and nearly 15 pounds of pot lying on the floor, Sheriff Lupe Trevino said. Jose Guadalupe Flores, 35, escaped while the men ransacked the house but returned later and told the deputies he had been wrapping the drugs for shipment when the intruders arrived. Flores, an illegal immigrant from Mexico, was charged with felony possession of marijuana at an arraignment hearing Monday. Because of his immigration status, Flores will be jailed until his case is heard.

3. Now Jesus is not talking about being persecuted for “our” sake.

- a. Some people are under persecution because of their own choices – but they think “man, I’m being persecuted”....
 - b. No – you are being “*prosecuted!*”
 - c. Everyone today is a victim – anyone who gets into trouble wants to blame someone else for our circumstances (prison is full of innocent men!)
4. Jesus is saying “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake” – IOW you are being attacked for doing GOOD, foR standing for what’s right.

12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

5. Doesn’t that sound just strange? When people are attacking you, and saying bad things about you – REJOICE!
- a. That’s like saying “I’m so stoked, I just got poked in the eye with a stick!”

Why they will hate you... Because you represent Jesus

6. I saw an interview recently with a Hollywood journalist who had written about a famous actor that had made a statement that identified him as possibly having a conservative position.
- a. The journalist wrote that “if he were a casting director, he would tell this actor to eat cake” – no work for you!
 - b. When the interviewed probed into the basis of the comment – it took a while – the journalist admitted that he had animosity in his heart towards all conservatives...
 - c. IOW the actor had done nothing personal to this journalist; he hated him based on what he believed!
7. Why does that matter to you and I? Because there are people out there – and the numbers are increasing, who hate you simply based on what you believe to be true
- a. So much for tolerance!
8. Why would the world have animosity towards the Christian?
- a. Simply because you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ...

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.
John 15:18-20

- b. You could say you belong to Buddah, or Allah, or Krishna – no one would hate you... they would say you are diverse!
 - c. But if you stand for Jesus, or for what is right, what is good, for righteousness, for holiness,
 - d. it shines a big bright light on the evil deeds of man.
9. **FACT – Diamonds are always presented on a black background – it contrasts the stone and makes it look more brilliant.**
- a. In contrast to the dark backdrop of an immoral and sinful world, the dark deeds of man don't stand out – they blend right in
 - b. But as soon as the Christian enters the scene – something changes, the light enters... you are the light!
 - c. And just like holding up a cross to Dracula – the world hates it!

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

John 3:19-20

- d. And so if you represent the light – you are a target!
10. **But the promise is this “for great is your reward in heaven” – IOW Jesus has your reward**
- a. “Great” – God knows and sees when one of His children have been persecuted for His name's sake - and He has a great reward for you.
 - b. It has been said that faith is not tested in times of rest, no your faith is tested when your faith will cost you something.
11. **But when we are willing to stand – it changes our position in this world: We become something that influences our world...**

The Salt of the Earth

13 "You are the salt of the earth;

12. **And Today salt is cheap – we spread it on roads when they get icy – you would never think “man, if just had enough money to buy some salt...”**
- a. But it was not the case 2000 years ago – salt was an extremely valuable substance – for it had qualities there were necessary for life...
13. **Salt was...**
- a. Valuable and precious – it was a valuable commodity – sometimes Roman soldiers were paid with it, hence the term “worth his salt”

- i. Today people get really worked up over too much salt – but NO SALT is very bad for you – your body needs it
 - ii. If you get injured and go to the hospital, the first thing they do is hook you up to a saline drip – salt-water!
 - b. Preservative – When applied to meat, salt retards decay and preserves the meat – critical to carry provisions before refrigerators, canning, or freeze-dried process.
 - c. Flavorful – the single most used phrase at dinner tables – “pass the salt”
14. When Jesus tells us we are the “salt of the earth” – He is painting a word-picture of our place in this dark and sinful world...
- 15.#1 – We are precious to Him. IOW we are valuable – we are not just pawns, used by God to achieve His objective. He cares deeply for us.
- 16.#2 – We are the preservative of the world – in other words our presence has the effect of slowing the decay of this world. (ROTTEN WORLD!)
- a. The very presence of Christians in this world, with the Holy Spirit indwelling, is a restraining force to the complete giving over of the world to sin.
 - b. Too often Christians will just “check out” of what’s happening in the world around us, with the attitude “the whole world is going down the tubes... why bother?”
 - c. We not only the right but the obligation to stand up and be counted when decisions are being made in our society.
17. If we check out – then we have no influence...
- a. Salt has no effect on the substance it is to preserve unless it is applied to the substance! (you cant put a pile of salt “near” your pork shoulder and expect it to cure!)
 - b. We have to be applied to the world around us – interspersed with the people and places in order for us to have an affect!
- 18.#3 – We should be flavorful – we as a group can add flavor to our society that cannot be found anywhere else.
- a. Just like when you are preparing a soup – if you need a pinch of salt, pepper doesn’t do – no other spice will take the place of salt.
 - b. And too much – well you ever go to put salt on your meal and someone unscrewed the top? Too much salt is not flavorful – it’s repulsive.
 - c. So as we are being sprinkled and applied to the world around us, don’t take off the lid and dump your salt all over someone
 - d. One guy I know was like that – when some situation came up the he felt he needed to give some truth to – it was like turning on a fire hose!
 - e. Ever try and drink from a fire hydrant?

19. IOW – we don't need to overwhelm people – we need to be like salt – knowing the exact amount that's needed for the occasion – adding the flavor of life!

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.

20. In Jesus day they did not have pure sodium salt like we have, it was salt evaporated from sea-water or impure rock salt, both of which when exposed to air can lose its saline properties –

a. And when that happened they would spread it over courtyards

21. So what is Jesus saying – you are worthless and going to get walked on?

a. No! He is saying we need to keep our salinity – keep our qualities that make us useful to the world around us...

The Light of the World

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.

22. What does light do? It illuminates – it brings clarity – you can see!

a. When I was on an aircraft carrier, we had to wear floatation jackets with strobe light – if you fell off the deck, even in pitch black waters the rescue helicopter could see that small light

b. That's what we are to be – our very presence in the world should shine like a beacon of hope in a dark and cruel world.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Eph 5:8

23. MESSAGE? We live in a world that is not friendly to the children of God, you may be persecuted - even worse – for your faith – but we cannot just fade away and be secret-agent Christians...

a. *Point is that when we walk out those doors – that is where our ministry begins.*

b. *Point is not to try and avoid persecution – but to let our light shine IN the persecution.*

c. *Point is to see all of life as divine opportunities*

- d. ***Being salt to the world around – letting people see our light – our joy, our peace, our love – these are things that stand out in a dark and rotting society -***

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