

The Salt of the Earth

Basis=Mt 5:13

Intro:

1. Jesus had a penetrating impact on the people of His day
  - a. some were amazed, Mt 7:28,29
  - b. some were appalled, Jn 6:41,42 7:12
2. Whatever the response to Him was, they were aware He had been among them.
  - a. this influence was passed on to each succeeding generation.
  - b. Mt 28:19,20 II Tim 2:2
3. To influence the people around us is one of the 1st things Jesus taught, Mt 5:13
4. What does it mean that we are to be the "salt" of the earth?
5. In Jesus' time, salt represented at least 3 things:

I. Purity

1. To the Romans, salt was the purest of all things because it came from the purest of all things, the sun and the sea
2. Salt was a vital part of the Jewish sacrificial system
  - a. Lev 2:13 - everything offered had to be pure "covenant of salt", Num 18:19
  - b. in part because of its purifying qualities (Sodium Chloride--Chloride is a purifying element)
3. Thus, Christians, as the salt of the earth, are to be examples of PURITY and have a PURIFYING effect on the world around them, Titus 2:12-14
  - a. Kay Hull tells about how a certain doctor likes to tell dirty jokes, but knows she does not approve.
  - b. it used to be gutter language was not spoken around women, children.
4. Standards of the past are being lowered and destroyed
  - a. honesty...at work, school, even in the church
  - b. morality..abortion, fornication
  - c. family life.items a-c above: Christians should be active salt.
5. We MUST hold diligently the purity God has established, Titus 3:8, Jam 1:27
  - a. not only for ourselves
  - b. but for the whole world's sake

II. Preservation

1. Salt was used to help preserve things; hold back decay
  - a. curing meats and other foods
  - b. Plutarch: (a Greek biographer of Paul's day); "Meat

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is a dead body and if left to itself, will go bad; but salt preserves it and keeps it fresh and it is therefore like a new soul inserted into a dead body."

2. So then salt preserves from corruption
  - a. Christians are to have an "anticeptic" influence on life (fight corruption)
  - b. Quote: Nelson Smith: "A Galilean peasant, with a few of His rude countrymen who had gathered round Him, stands up there on the mountain, and says to them, "You, a handful, are the people who are to keep this world from rotting, and to bring it to all its best light". Yet the most progressive, enlightened and moral portion of humanity had derived its impulse to progress, its enlightenment as to the loftiest truths, and the purest portion of its morality, from these men who received from Christ the power to impart them!"
3. One way of being a preservative is the putting off of God's judgment.
  - a. Noah's righteousness saved the human race
  - b. 10 righteous would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah; 1 will save the world
  - c. the wheat are saving the tares until judgment, Mt 13
  - d. as long as there was some purifying influence, God spared the nations, but when all godliness had departed, that nation fell (i.e. Israel, Judah, Babylon, Nineveh, etc), II Pet 3:9
4. It is not merely being proclaimers of the Word that will preserve but we must be DOERS of it to have it effect society, Rom 12:2, John 8:31,32

### III. Salt Enhances Flavor

1. We all know that food without salt is flat and insipid
2. Christianity is to life what salt is to food...enhances
3. often people have thought of Christianity as doing exactly the opposite.
  - a. Oliver Wendell Holmes: "I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers".
  - b. Robert Louis Stevenson: "I have been to church today, and am not depressed"
  - c. Are we guilty of portraying a picture of Christianity taking the vividness out of life?
4. As the salt of the earth, we are to enhance life, not destroy it.
  - a. John 10:10, Phil 4:4, I John 5:3,4
  - b. it is a blessing to be a Christian, not a curse

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c. it is the way to get the most out of life, not the least.

Conclusion:

1. As wonderful and important as salt it, if it loses its effect, it is useless, Lk 14:34,35 Mt 5:13
2. Christians can lose their influence on the world and thus face the same judgment of the world.
3. Fortunately, it does not have to be that way
4. We can be the salt of the earth, Mk 9:50

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