

Authentic Christianity Part 1: The Light of the World

April 30, 2023

Matthew 5:13-16

Why does the Church languish in being salt and light in the world? Worldly Shepherds: ones who are incapable of using the word of God to help the church and disciple others. Multiple generations of sentimentalism and seeker sensitive, emotionalism. Embarrassment at the Biblical Gospel. The world sees the wheat and tares growing up together in the church. True repentance is the result of salvation. Congregation as Customers which leads to light preaching that offends no one. Convenience is important, the Word of God has to fit the schedules of those listening.

>>The Church is to build a culture of worship and awe in the truth and elevate God's Word. Genuine and authentic Christian faith makes a difference – some who we live among will like the message of the Gospel. Will my life make a difference? Is my life a true example of Christ? Is my life hiding my false Christianity?

The noteworthy life of an Authentic Christian is 1) Indisputable, 2) Influential, and 3) Impactful.

1) **Indisputable**: V13, salt is sometimes seen as death and destruction: Lot's wife (Gen. 19), useless land that is too salty to farm or produce (Deut. 29:23), and in James as being bitter (James 3:12). It can be seen as covenantal: Moses' law seen as a covenant of salt, Num. 18:19, 2 Chron. 13:5. Seen as flavoring – Paul speaks of our speech be seasoned with salt, Col. 4:6. Seen as purity, new beginnings, Ez. 16:4, 2 Kings 2:20-21.

What is Jesus speaking of with regards to salt and it losing its flavor? If the salt has been mixed with impurities and no longer functions as salt. In Luke 14:34, Jesus says this salt can't be used as salt, and it can't even be thrown in with manure because it would ruin the fertilizer. The only use is to throw it on a road to be trampled underfoot so that it would prevent anything from growing. Jesus is talking about purity in this passage. If we lose our effectiveness as believers to the point that no one can trust our testimony of a changed life, then we have become worthless.

>>The text references a word that relates to foolishness or being made foolish. Salt that loses its flavor is likened to someone losing their mind or is made foolish as used in Rom. 1:22 and 1 Cor. 1:20.

What are applications of our faith being indisputable from Matt. 5:13-16? 1) Is it possible to permanently damage our Christian witness by being a compromising Christian, 1 Cor. 3:15. Losing saltiness is not referring to losing salvation but is describing someone who was a fake Christian like the seed that fell on rocky soil (Matt. 13:5, Mk. 4:5). What does it mean in Mk. 9:49-50 that everyone will be seasoned with fire? This passage references sacrifices. Rom. 12:1-2 speaks of Christians being a living sacrifice. Christians endure suffering, they stay on the alter, and obey the Lord. People see the changed life of a believer.

What about the believer who gets off the alter? The "salt" has lost its flavor and is not a good witness of Christ. **Only** Christians are salt. Jesus is the only name that can save, Acts 4:12. Mk. 9:42-50 speaks of cutting off whatever keeps you from obeying the Lord.

2) **Influential Life of a Believer**: a life observed at a higher level, V14. Jesus is the light of the world (John 1:9, 8:12, 9:5, 12:46) and we are to reflect His light. A compromised life will show to others, Matt. 5:21-22. Jesus demonstrates this in Matt. 5:25 commanding us to pursue reconciliation and make friends. In 5:27-28, to guard our hearts to keep from coveting another man's wife.

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1 Cor. 7:12, Paul encourages a believing spouse to remain with an unbeliever if they wish to remain married. The believer sanctifies the unbeliever by the Holy Spirit within them effecting the other. It might be the means that God uses to bring salvation to family, 1 Pet. 3:1.

Ways to be influential: 1) Work as unto the Lord, Col. 3:23. 2) Suffer like a Christian should, not be angry, philosophical, depressed, anxious or bitter. Suffer in joy, trusting in God's sovereignty (Jam. 1:2, Lam. 3:28, Is. 45:5-7). 3) Be a pillar and foundation of truth, 1 Tim. 3:15. 4) Target your greatest sin tendency, pray for revelation and talk with close friends about your need to fight it. 5) Humble yourself at every turn. Be humble each day. Walk worthy of your calling with lowliness and gentleness, Eph. 4:1-2. 6) Guard your tongue, Matt. 12:34.

3) **Impactful:** Matt. 5:16, bringing glory to the Father by unbelievers repenting and coming to Christ, 1 Pet. 2:12 (give glory), Rev. 15:4 (glorify your name), 11:13 (gave glory), 16:9 (did not give God glory). Rom. 10:17, let our deeds make an opening for the Gospel to be preached. Mk. 4: 8, 20: those who hear the Word of God bear fruit. We can multiply our impact by being salt/light. Believers are a purifying influence by living our lives until the rapture takes us out of the world.

Further Discussion and Application

What gifts has God given you that we can use to influence and impact the lives of others in the church? How can using this gift bring glory to God? What are the instructions to men and women in the church found in Titus 2:1-10? What should you be doing to make use of the time that you have been given for the Lord before He comes (Titus 2:11-14)?

How can we use the gifts God gave us to influence those in the world and bring the light of Christ to their darkness? How does working unto the Lord bring an opportunity to share the Gospel?

How can we suffer in a way that will bring God glory and be an example to those in the world? Who are we trying to minister to and be an example to? Why would God provide opportunities to proclaim the Gospel through your suffering? How can we prepare to take advantage of the opportunities to share our faith? Can good come from our suffering?

How can we maintain and increase our "saltiness" in the world? What do we begin to add to our lives in greater measures that would provide us more influence and impact in the world? How does the simplicity of working unto the Lord, being humble, killing sin, and guarding your tongue be a great place to start? How so? How would it impact your family and co-workers?