

# Salty Salt and Bright Lights

## Matthew 5:13-16

**Introduction** – We have been studying the Beatitudes, seeing the character of those who have been transformed by God's wonderful grace. We saw in the last Beatitude how the world relates to this righteousness we have in Christ. Now we will see how we are to relate to the world. It is important to remember who Christ is talking to – a bunch of simple fisherman and other 'unimportant' folk. You are the salt of the earth....You are the light of the world. Truly, God, through the cross, has put to shame the wise men of this world (1 Cor 1:27). And who are you?

### **You are the salt of the earth.**

**Preservative** - The ancient world used salt as a preservative. Meat had to be salted to keep it from spoiling. What is the natural course of the world without 'salt'? This can be seen in big ways (i.e. civilizations and legal codes) and in little ways (i.e. how the conversation changes when you walk into the room). The Christian does not tolerate sin like salt doesn't tolerate corruption.

**Seasoning** – It is true that salt also seasoned the meat, as our speech should be seasoned (Col 4:6), but even here, the emphasis is on wholesome, uncorrupted talk (Eph 4:29). But we should leave taste in the mouths of others, or as with another illustration, an aroma (2 Cor 2:14-16). Our natural, mundane, ordinary, but obedient, lives should promote a thirst for the Water of Life, or condemn like salt in the wound.

**Covenant of Salt** – All sacrifices were salted (Lev 2:13-14, Num 18:19) symbolizing the purity of the sacrifice and the efficacy of the covenant. Salt accomplishes something and God's covenant will always bring blessing or a great curse.

### **But if salt loses its flavor...**

**Unsalty Salt?** – This was a common problem with impure salt, and it was often disposed of on roads where it wouldn't harm gardens, but would simply be trampled under foot. This is a sober warning to those whose lives are full of corruption.

**Never Purified** – (Matt 13:20-22, 1 John 2:18-19) If you have lost your saltiness, you have lost your assurance of salvation. Purified salt remains pure. If you turn away from Christ, you are hopeless (Heb 6:4ff), and your judgment will be worse than that of Sodom (Matt 11:23-24). The Jews had turned away from their privileges and joined the world of rebellion. They were not salty. Do not be presumptuous.

**Application #1** – If you have lost your gospel-saltiness, you have no reason to believe that you are a child. You must repent. If you never were saved, you must repent and believe and receive the covenant of salt.

**Application #2** – Our effectiveness is directly related to our distinctiveness. We should not try to be more like the world. The goal is effective holiness through gracious distinctiveness. The church has tried to be like the world and in the process has become the laughingstock of the world. The saltiness is gone.

### **You are the light of the world.**

The Servant was prophesied to be the light to the Gentiles (Is 42:6), and Simeon proclaims this fulfilled in Christ (Luke 2:32). Christ declares Himself to be the Light of the world (John 8:12), and in Him, we are that light. Light reveals the darkness, rebukes the darkness, and by the grace of God, shows the way out of the darkness.

**A City set on a Hill** – This is not simply a proverbial statement. It is rich in meaning to the hearers, sitting on a mount and looking upon the city, Jerusalem, on Mt. Zion (Ps 48:1-3, Dan 2:34-35, 44-45, Heb 12:22ff, Rev 21:9-10, Ps 122:3). The City on the Mountain is the place of refuge. It is also the place of dominion and world conquest. It is the place of community, culture and society – where we really learn how to live. This City *cannot* be hidden.

**That is Silly** – Jesus uses a ridiculous example of men lighting lamps and covering them to make His point. Hidden lights are stupid lights.

### **Godly, Optimistic Confidence – v16**

Gospel salt will have its effect. Gospel light will push out the darkness. The Light of this City cannot be ultimately quenched because Christ is its Light (Matt 16:13-19). The church is not on the defensive, Hades is being flattened. The result of this City of Light will be gospel peace (Is 2:2-4). When you stand like a City on the Hill, the world will get hysterical (Psalm 46:1-3), but one little Word shall fell him (Ps 46:6). Therefore, let your light so shine before men.