

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

Study #4 (Updated 8-11-17)

Read Matt. 5:13-16 (NIV)

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Q: Why does Jesus say, “You are the salt of the earth”?

- Salt was very valuable in Jesus’ day.
 - The word “salary” was derived from salt, because salt was sometimes used to pay Roman soldiers.
- Salt was used not only to season food, but also as a preservative (without salt, food would rot), and as a way to disinfect a wound.
- **Christians are supposed to prevent or, at least, slow down the rotting of the society they are in!**

Q: What happens when salt loses its saltiness?

- It gets thrown out and trampled underfoot.
- When Christians lose their saltiness, the society around them begins to deteriorate.
- When this deterioration starts, the society will lose more and more respect for Christians, and begin to trample them underfoot.
- When men trample salt under foot, they are not persecuting it... they are ignoring it!

Q: What makes a Christian “Salty”?

- **Mark 9:49-50** probably means we become salty by going through fiery circumstances.
- **Mal. 3:2** says that fire refines us.
 - The sea is full of salt, but it is only extracted through the process of boiling.
- When trials and hardships burn away everything else, what remains, in the Christian, is the pursuit of God’s righteousness; that’s how we get salty!

Q: What’s an example of being salty?

- **Col. 4:6** *“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”* (NIV)
 - *“Full of grace”* means full of *“divine influence upon the heart”*.
 - *“Seasoned with salt”* means the flavor of righteousness (what God requires, and what pleases Him).
- The idea here, is this: The way we talk should be pleasant, interesting, and adapted to the needs of the person we are talking to, in order to help them desire the righteousness of God... just as we do!
 - When we are talking to people who are wounded, what we say may sting a little a bit, but it will help them heal.
- **Saying things insensitively is not “full of grace” or “seasoned with salt”!**

Q: Why does Jesus say, “You are the light of the world”?

- Like salt prevents rot, light provides insight, knowledge, and awareness. It gives direction and guidance (**Psa. 119:105; John 8:12**).
- Walking in darkness results in broken relationships; but when we are walking in the light, we have fellowship. (**1John 1:7, 2:8-11**)
- The idea of light and darkness, is knowing where to walk... knowing where to go.
 - People who live in a darkened world, under the Dominion of Darkness, need light to know where to go.

Q: Why does Jesus say a city on a hill can't be hidden, and no one puts a lamp under a bowl?

- The Church is here to give light to the world!
- To be that light, requires that we not only **know** the truth and **speak** it, but that we **live it visibly**.
 - There are Christians who will not speak up about what is sin because they know people won't like that, and won't agree with them.
 - These Christians are trying to avoid persecution; but actually, it just proves they are ashamed of their faith (**2Tim. 1:8**).

Q: Why does Jesus want others to see your light, (i.e., your good deeds)?

- The power of the Gospel is revealed in *your* changed life!
 - When people see the difference in *you*, they will give God the credit!
 - A lot of times when we do what Jesus says, it looks stupid, at first. But the end result is what proves Jesus is right.
- A Christian's life should look different than those around us.
 - We should have more peace and joy than people in the world, because Jesus has overcome the world (**John 16:33**).
 - We should not be using drugs and alcohol to cope with the stresses of life (**Eph. 5:18**).
 - We should have peace in our relationships, instead of strife (**Matt. 5:9**).

BTW: Jesus doesn't say that the world will see your good works, and glorify you!

- We have to be pure in our motives (**Matt. 6:1**).
 - We should try to do our good works in such a way that men don't glorify us, but God.
- The good works of the Church, as a whole, should prove that God's way is the best way; and thus God will be given credit.
 - **An individual person, doing “good”, might draw some personal praise or attention; but when a group is doing “good”, God will be honored!**

What About You?

Q: Do people tend to persecute you for being righteous (**Matt. 5:10**); or ignore you because you really aren't that different from them?

- Do you earn and use money differently than those around you who don't love God?
- Do you handle stress and conflict differently than those around you who don't love God?
- Do you approach sexual and non-sexual relationships differently than those around you who don't love God?

Q: In **Rom. 12:1-2**, Paul says we are living sacrifices so we can **PROVE** (NIV says "approve") what the will of God is. Is your life **proving** to others that God's will is "good, pleasing, and perfect"?

- What does your answer tell you about the amount of light you are bringing to those around you?

Q: Do you speak up about what sin is, or do you try to avoid drama by staying silent?

- What does your answer tell you about how you feel about the gospel? (**2Tim. 1:8**)