“Kingdom Influence: A World Well Seasoned”

Matthew 5:13-16

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 10/2/22)

The phrase “salt of the earth” popularly refers to unassuming, hard-working people. That’s not what we are talking about today. What did Jesus mean by this phrase? The earth is to be preserved for the glory of God. The earth is to be seasoned by the presence of His followers. Only Christ’s followers function as salt and light in a decaying, sin-darkened world. Jesus is talking to each of us: let’s be followers, not merely listeners.

Today’s passage starts with a promise: “You **ARE** the salt of the earth.” God will use you personally. Do you believe this? As we see in Lev. 2:13, salt was used in offerings to mark the enduring nature of the covenant with God. It reminded the people of God’s unending love for them (2Chron. 13:5). Salt reflects certainty and permanence. God’s people are precious, vital, and necessary to God’s work on planet earth. God’s promise to reclaim His world for His glory involves every one of His followers. The King’s people are precious, valuable, and necessary for the work their King is doing in His world.

Our purpose is to be a preservative in this decaying world. The world is rotten with sin. We are to be a preserving influence, as has been laid out in the Beatitudes. Your life, your attitude, your speech is to be lived out in such a way as to prevent decay. Salt is also a purifying agent (Ex. 30:35; Coloss. 4:6). Our words should add purity, holiness, and Godly wisdom. The King preserves His glory and purifies life on earth through His gospel-proclaiming and gospel-living people. The King’s influencers are humble and meek. They seek peace. Politics, as a means of repairing society, has not brought us peace. So, what shall we do? Bring peace God’s way! The Gospel is the only way. How does God’s Kingdom grow? One heart at a time, each surrendered heart living totally for Jesus. If you are salt, you must have direct contact with this rotten world if you are to have a purifying influence. Don’t just be salt sitting on the shelf!

Finally, Jesus gives a prophetic warning. The nation of Israel at that time was apostate. They had lost their witness to the world. They were living for themselves. They had lost their saltiness. There is a similar warning to us: You who pretend to be the people of God will soon be judged. Don’t miss this warning to repent and return to our King (Matt. 21:43). Another caution: just as the Dead Sea famously contains impure, contaminated salt, an impure Christian will be worthless. He will be useless for God’s redeeming purposes in the world. Christians who isolate, blend into the world, or are simply an irritant become useless for God’s Kingdom. So, cling to the promise, step into your purpose, and heed the warning. Don’t just **listen** to these words; be a true **follower** of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What would your marriage, jobs, and relationships look like if they were completely under the reign of King Jesus? How does one move closer to that ideal?
2. The harder man tries, apart from God (United Nations, education reforms, wokeism, etc.), the worse things get. Why is this so?
3. We are to be totally surrendered to Jesus, being salt and light in the sphere of influence in which we find ourselves. What is your sphere of influence? Do you have more than one?
4. How can we avoid contamination without going to live in a monastery?!
5. In the ancient world, salt had great value. But Jesus warned us that we will not be valued as salt was. We will be misunderstood and mistreated. Why? Why would the world treat us this way? Why should we rejoice anyway?!

“O Worship the King” (Grant)

1 O worship the King all-glorious above,

O gratefully sing his power and his love:

our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,

pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

2 O tell of his might and sing of his grace,

whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.

His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,

and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

3 Your bountiful care, what tongue can recite?

It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;

it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,

and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

4 Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,

in you do we trust, nor find you to fail.

Your mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,

our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!