

August 1, 2021

"But I tell you..."

"You are the salt of the earth. But if 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 by men."

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:13-16



When you come into the fellowship hall at night it is really, really dark in here and it is really, really easy to walk into one of these support posts. But, if you turn on the switch by the back door it is instantly light and it is really, really easy to avoid the support posts. That's how light works. If light is present, darkness is not. If it is completely dark there is no light. With light it is always all or nothing.



In the same way salt will always flavor what you put it in. If it does not flavor the dish you add it to, then why would you add it? Salt flavors or salt is useless. In these verses Jesus makes two things very clear. One is that those of us who follow him are the **"salt of the earth"** and they are the **"light of the world"**. Our Lord is saying that his disciples will always be salt and light. They cannot become salt and light by working at it; they will be salt and light. The natural product of following Jesus, truly following Jesus, will be salt and light.

The second point that the Master makes is that salt that does not flavor or light that is hidden is useless. As those who follow Jesus our lives will flavor our world or we are useless. Our lives will be light, or we are darkness. So, in a very real way, Jesus' comments about salt and light are a litmus test of our faith. True and living faith will always impact the world where it exists. It has to. Faith that does not flavor; that does not light, is not faith.

So, the challenge for us in these verses is, I think, to reflect on our own personal impact on the world where we truly live. In my circle of influence, in my world, do I bring light or do I bring darkness? In my circle of influence, do I flavor my environment for good or for evil? Jesus concludes these remarks with ***"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."***

The ultimate test of the reality of my claimed faith is found in the praise that my heavenly Father receives as the natural product of my daily life, my words, my actions. A lamp that does not produce light is useless. Salt that does not flavor is useless. A believer's life that does not produce praise for God is useless.

Paul would tell the Roman believers, ***"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer you bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your reasonable act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by their renewing of your mind."*** (Romans 12:1-2) As I consider my reflection in the mirror that is God's word I must constantly determine, I think, the reality of my own transformation measured in my the light and salt of my personal influence.

SALT &
MATTHEW 5:13-16
LIGHT