

THEME: The Christian Power to Change the World

Text: Matthew 5:13-16

Proposition: God has purposed you to Bring Taste and Be the Light to a tasteless, purposeless and dark world.

Salt and Light Matthew 5:13-16

¹³ “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 city 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.**

Introduction

The stories about burning of schools, impunity, nepotism and major corruption scandals as well as compromising evil, drug peddling in the highest levels, all indicate a rotten system of morals, and governance that needs transformation. People in the country are now poorer than they were thirty years ago. When resources are scarce people develop barbaric attitudes and it becomes a survival for the fittest culture. How are Christians salt and light to the world as we read in Matthew 5:13-16?

WHAT IS THE CHURCH DOING?

Churches appear to be more interested in consuming their energies upon **feeling good than living holy lives** and giving themselves in service to others. Homes of confessing Christians look no different than their worldly counterpart. There is a lot of immoral behaviour among people who profess to be Christians. And as there is a lot of Hypocrisy. The world now does not take Christianity seriously. Surely is there any hope? Is there any future in such a tasteless, purposeless and dark world?

I. The Power and Authority of a Christian. (Power to do good).

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive **POWER** when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you **will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Matt 10:1 & Mk 3:15; 6:7 Lk 9:1; 10:19 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

The Power of a Christian is **not an emotion** physically worked up through the senses. It is not something that you can generate, or work up, yourself. It is not a "loosened tongue"

that suddenly becomes loose and loud "spiritual" - sounding phrases. It is not falling over backward "under the power." It is not being robbed of all strength and falling down while "under the power." It is not something that makes people shout or shake or laugh insanely and uncontrollably.

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and Power (Acts 10:38) and he went around doing good and healing the sick. Jesus was not doing the things that people do today. But he went about **Doing Good**. Jesus served and helped other people.

The disciples of Jesus went around under that power doing good. Healing the sick and being witnesses. E.g Peter and John who healed the blind beggar in Acts 3:1-8.

This same POWER OF GOD operated actively in those Christians continually. They actually did do greater works than Jesus - until even the shadow of Peter passing over the sick healed them! (Acts 5:15) And evil spirits fled. THEY DID THE VERY WORK OF GOD!

II. **Responsibility of a Christian in the Kingdom (To Prevent Decay or Preserve, To make Tasty)**

If salt has no flavour there is no use having it in the food in the first place. If as a Christian you are unable to affect your community, your environment, your country or your world, then you are of little value. God has purposed you as a Christian to be the salt of the world. To make the world a habitable place and a tasteful and enjoyable place to live in. Those who reject this responsibility and cease to fulfill this purpose in their lives are by definition no longer true disciples and therefore will be cast out by God. As Salt was used as a preservative so should Christians act as preservatives of a decaying and purposeless world. There has to be a distinction about us as Christians in the way we live, think, talk, relate, serve, and give, in order to make an impact on a decaying world. The Israelites were distinct people of God. The only place without hail or darkness during the plagues of Egypt was at Goshen (Exodus 9:26; 10:23) indicating people of God are distinct. Firstborn children of Israel did not die indicating they were a distinct people of God. God did all those miracles of even saving them through the Red sea to display His power and show that His chosen people are distinct, he protects them and leads them. But they have to show the light and live as distinct persons.

III. **2nd Responsibility of a Christian in the Kingdom (To Lead the Way or Vision Bearer)**

God has purposed you as a Christian to be light of the world.

What is Your Position as a Christian?

The first image is that of a city on a mountain in the ancient world. "**A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.**" Many of the ancient cities were made of white limestone so that as the sun began to set its rays caused the city walls to glow, being noticeable for miles around. It was especially helpful for travelers that found themselves on the road at night. With no street lights or torches for

traveling, the illuminating glow of a city with the tiny oil lamps in every home provided light for their journey. There was a dependence upon even the faintest light to help direct one's journey. *Jesus Christ has put us in a position to be noticed for His glory.* Plans were made to put the city in that kind of distinguishing and noticeable location. When the Lord saved you and put the light of His own life within you, he put you right where he wanted you to be so that you might be that city that cannot be hidden. He has positioned you in the world to stand out and be noticed. By your "**good works**" - works of love and charity to others, works of kindness and service, works of humility and gentleness, works of caring for those in need that you are like a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. In God's providence he has you at a particular work place or neighbourhood or school so that you might be to those about you, a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. You are not to be secret with your Christianity.

IV. What is Your Occupation?

As "**the light of the world**" *you are to busy yourself with helping others see Jesus Christ.* A lamp was not lit and placed under a basket so that no one could profit from its light. It was to be placed on a stand to serve the purpose. Neither have you been lighted by the gospel of Jesus Christ so that you can hide your Christianity. **The light is not just for you alone,** You are to see your occupation as a lamp lighting the way to Christ wherever the Lord has placed you. Christians should be the vision bearers because they are supposed to be showing the light and leading the way. People perish for lack of vision.

Do your activities as a Christian and your good deeds witness Christ and attract people to Jesus? Can your deeds as a Christian make the community, country and the world any better? Can your leadership style bring hope to many?

Illustration: The story of the sick lawyer who went to live with his sister (Whose son was a pastor). The lawyer accepted Christ as a result of the good deeds of his sister not the preaching and reading of books from this pastor.

"The light of a holy example is the gospel's main argument" What kind of argument is found in your life for being a follower of Jesus Christ? Let your light shine so that the Father might be glorified through your good works, and so that all who see you might find an attraction to Jesus Christ. God has purposed you to Bring Taste and Be the Light to a tasteless, purposeless and dark world.