

40-05-09.wpd —People of Salt  
testimony, witness, evangelism, light, influence  
Mat 5:13

The change brought by the indwelling Christ can change the world.

**Mat 5:13.** *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 by men.*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

–The influence of Jesus Christ cannot be accounted for merely on the basis of His *parables, teachings, or even sermons*, like this "Sermon on the Mount." The world of humanity was touched by the very presence of God's Son moving and working among them. In the same way, our transformation by faith in Christ is to be an influence, not just by our words, but by who we are in Him— 2 Cor 5:17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is **a new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come! **HOM.idea.**

–Jesus identifies true believers with two metaphors to illustrate this, and the first of these is that **the people of God are "the salt of the earth."**

### **I. Salt has two well-known influences, both related to food**

A. Food sustains life and health, and God cares about every aspect of life and health on this earth [Early Christians had the OT's *creational view* of earthly life, a viewpoint later tainted by Gnostic teaching which despised physical life in the material world. Gnostic thinking gave the Church a bad reputation for being "*so heavenly minded, that it was no earthly good.*"]

Christ's "salt" illustration opposes this *other-worldly-mindedness*.

B. The most noticeable influence of salt on food is to enhance taste, making food more enjoyable.

1. Jesus did not say "*You are the salt of the church service on Sunday, so stay inside the salt-shaker.*"
2. He wanted us to scatter throughout earthly life, making society a happier place in all its *creationally ordained* aspects: in *work*, in *the sciences*, in *the creative arts*, and in *family life*. (We must not withdraw from earthly life, but invade every part of it with *salty* influence, bringing out the original "good" flavor God put into creation, so that people are led to "taste and see that the LORD is good." [Psa 34:8] )

- C. Another important effect of salt on food is its power to preserve [Ancient people without *refrigeration* or *canning*, used salt to keep food from spoiling. It came from salt mines caked with soil and debris. They added water, dissolved it, then strained out the brine to soak any food that need it for drying.]
1. Sin brought and continues to bring confusion and moral decay to humanity, and God wants Christians to be an influence to slow down or even totally prevent that process. [A lady in the ER totally out her mind from losing salt by a diuretic, got her right mind back with one IV bag of NS... one of the most amazing recoveries I ever saw!]
  2. Again, Christians cannot be "salt" in society by keeping their influence inside the salt shaker. (We must not fear mixing with non-believers any more than Jesus feared befriending sinners and prostitutes.)

**TRANS:** [People who know me often forego telling dirty jokes , or apologize for telling them, *in my presence*, and I don't have to say a word. *Why?* Because, being made in God's image, they know in their hearts what is *good* and what is *corrupt*, and though they can push that knowledge away momentarily, it is harder to do in the presence of salt.] The Bible teaches that we are to be in the world, but not of the world. Maintaining a direct relationship with Christ is the key to being "a new creation," not *of this world*, and that **transformational change, brought by the indwelling Christ, can change the world.**

### **II. On our own, without Jesus, our influence is less than worthless**

- A. "*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 by men.*" [When the ancients finished leeching the material from the salt mines, there was always enough brine in the leftovers to ruin the ground, if it was just "*thrown out*" on fertile soil. So, the most logical place to discard it was on footpaths where unwanted weeds could be killed and where people "*trampled*" it under foot.]
- B. Christianity without Christ's presence doesn't have a life-giving influence, but can actually have a lethal effect on society:
1. **Legalism** brings *death*, not *life*, by basing our relationship with Christ on rule-keeping— 2 Cor 3:6 (where it says, "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life") in the (TLB) the passage reads: "[God] is the one who has helped us tell others about his new agreement to save them. We do not tell them that they must obey every law of God or die; but we tell them there is life for them from the Holy Spirit. The old way, trying to be saved by keeping the Ten Commandments, ends in death; in the new way, the Holy Spirit gives them life." (That "*life*" is Christ & His life in us is salt.)

2. ***Liberalism*** brings *death*, not *life*, by abandoning the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and by doubting the divinity of Christ.

[Declining denominations JUST DON'T GET IT! They can't depart *from the faith* without losing all the spiritual and practical benefits of the faith!]

(Liberal Christianity, by rejecting the Bible as God's Word and making Jesus an enlightened man instead of the incarnated Son of God, has no authority but their own feelings to tell people about a *loving God*, a *forgiving God*, a *healing God*. The world realizes this fact and can find no real "salt" there. That is why the membership in these liberal churches continues to dwindle year after year until they have to close their doors.) Without Jesus, and without the Book that introduces Him, the salt is no longer effective. "*...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 by men.*"

### **CONCLUSION:**

–Christ's presence in us has turned us into "*salt*" for the world. **The change in us, brought about by the indwelling presence of the Savior of the world, can change the world.** Don't be afraid to get out of the comfort of the salt-shaker and into the world. The presence of Jesus in us is the Presence this world needs.