

MESSAGE MINDER

February 20, 2011

You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world.

Matthew
5:13-14

SALT & LIGHT



YOU Are Salt and Light!

By Jonathan Stone

Imagine what it might have been like to be on the side of the mountain that day, listening to Jesus as He declared the truth about the nature of the Kingdom of God. Perhaps you traveled far to be there and hear from the teacher who was suddenly generating excitement in villages throughout the region. Perhaps you were wearied from your journey, not just the journey to that mountain, but the path that life had taken you on. Perhaps you wondered who He might be referring to as He opened His sermon.

As He begins to talk about “the poor in spirit” your interest is immediately piqued. While you think that you can relate to spiritual poverty you simultaneously assume that He must be talking about spiritual giants, not flawed, average people like yourself. He moves on to talk about “those who mourn.” Again you want to relate, but once again you are overwhelmed by the feeling that He must be referring to people more spiritual than yourself. Back and forth

your thinking goes as He delivers the Beatitudes. When He reaches the final point you have given up on being one of “those people” to whom He is referring. As He speaks about “those who are persecuted” you are left to wonder, “Who are these spiritual superheroes?”

Suddenly, as if He had heard your thoughts, He turns and looks you in the eyes. He repeats His point about the persecuted, but this time He says, “Blessed are YOU when people insult YOU, persecute YOU and falsely say all kinds of evil against YOU because of me.” Could it be true? Could He be telling you how meaningful your life is, how valued you are in the sight in of God?

Your heart begins to race and He seems to flash a proud grin at you as He speaks of your reward in Heaven. You are overwhelmed by the sudden feeling of God’s unconditional love for you. As you are wondering if He could possibly speak

anything more loving and affirming to you He declares that, “You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world.”

How can this be? How can your life move so quickly from seemingly being so worthless to being so esteemed by God? He goes on to question whether or not salt would just be left to sit around and lose its saltiness. He wonders out loud at whether light would be created and then never used, only hidden under a bowl where it is of no use to anyone. Of course not! Salt is made to make things salty. Light is made to give light to all who can see it. Your life is not something that has lost its value. Your circumstances are not something to which you have to be ashamed. The things that the world would condemn you for are the very things that you can display for all to see. You really are the salt of the earth! You really are the light of the world! Now you know that you can shine your life before others and glorify your Father in Heaven.

For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light...trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Ephesians vv. 5:8, 10

Family Activities

- 1) Have a conversation with your children about influence. Jesus asked the rhetorical question about who might flavor salt if it loses its saltiness. The point is that salt flavors food, but nothing flavors salt. Salt is the true influencer in the equation. So it is with us, and so it should be with our children and their relationships. They are the source of flavor in the world, not the other way around.
- 2) Discuss ways that we can bring “flavor” into other people’s lives. Everyone pick some specific plans for being salt in certain circumstances. Each person in the family choose a “salt project” in which this will implemented. Share the results with the rest of the family.
- 3) Discuss with your family the functions of light (enlightens, gives directions, exposes hidden dangers, gives life, etc.). Decide how you can be a source of light in the life of others. Commit to sharing with each other your successes and struggles to shine light in the lives of others.
- 4) Commit a week to prayerfully seeking to live out the beatitudes each day. Have a short discussion together on your progress each evening.

The Purpose of Salt

- 1.) Salt is a preservative. In a day when there was no refrigeration salt was used into meat in order to keep it from spoiling. It was also an antiseptic, which kept spoiling meat from becoming rotten. This is how God uses us in the world.
- 2.) Salt is a spice used for flavoring food. God uses us to provide taste and flavor in the world.
- 3.) Salt is a healing agent. Salt can be used to heal sore throats, small cuts, and sores in your mouth. It also can restore certain electrolytes and minerals to the body. God uses us to bring healing to others in the world.
- 4.) Salt is a fertilizer. In Jesus’ day salt was used to enrich soil as a fertilizer. God uses us to enrich the lives of others and promote growth in them.
- 5.) Salt causes people to become thirsty. God uses us to cause others to thirst for the true living water.

Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

Leviticus 2:13

