You Are the Salt of the Earth and the Light of the World
Matthew 5.13–16
Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • July 4, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2021
Scripture Reader and Reading: Nash Crisp – Genesis 18.22–26
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Ye Are the Light of the World

Prelude:

I. **Since you live The Beatitudes, you are heaven famous. Therefore,**

A. you are the salt of the earth and

B. you are the light of the world.

II. **When the disciples of Christ live The Beatitudes,**

A. which Jesus delivered in *Matthew 5.3–12,*

B. they are not only famous in heaven, but

1. their influence on *earth* cannot be measured.

2. I believe that is what Jesus taught next in his Sermon on the Mount.

III. **I propose to you today two things:**

A. First, that the earth remains because disciples of Christ are here,

1. acting as a preserving agent and

2. acting as a flavor enhancer

   a) so that God does not spew the earth out of his mouth.

   b) The presence of the disciples of Christ makes the earth tasteful to God.

B. Second, that disciples of Christ have or are the light

1. that the world needs

   a) for seeing their own sin and

   b) for seeing the way, the truth, and the life that is in Christ.

2. We are a letter of Christ, as Paul said:

   > 2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.
– 2 Corinthians 3.2–3

a) People read you.
   (1) If they know that you are a Christian,
   (2) they read you with certain expectations.
b) If they do not know that you are a Christian,
   (1) they still read you,
   (2) just like we all read everyone we meet.
      (a) However, as an epistle or letter of Christ,
      (b) they will read things
         i) that they do not see in other people.
         ii) They may not realize what they are reading in you, but
            (1) they will see your light.
            (2) They will see you as salt,
               (a) making the place where you are
               (b) a better place, whether it is work, or wherever.

IV. Listen to Jesus reveal your influence

A. as the salt of the earth and
B. as the light of the world.

Persuasion:

I. Matthew 5.13 • You Are the Salt of the Earth

13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

A. You keep the earth around so that God will not destroy it yet.
   1. We know that one day he will destroy it.
2. However, so far he has not.
   a) He has not because he is still waiting for people to repent.
   b) Also, by our very presence we flavor the earth,
      (1) making it palatable to him
      (2) so that he holds off destroying it.

3. **Genesis 18** shows this in action:

   20 And the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”

   23 And Abraham came near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25 Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

   26 So the LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.”

   – Genesis 18.20–21, 23–26

B. While we tend to over salt our food,

1. the truth is salt does add seasoning to various foods,

2. even as Job acknowledged:

   6  “Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?”

   – Job 6.6

   a) God made the earth this way, because
   b) we need at least some salt.
      (1) I learned this firsthand when several years ago,
(2) I started developing muscle pain in various parts of my body.
   (a) I remembered in high school football in the early 70s,
      i) that our coaches gave us salt tablets, because
      ii) of the great amount of sweat that we were doing,
   (b) I also remembered how my Dad suffered muscle pain.
      i) He salted his food to make the pain go away.

3. The doctor put me on a low or no salt diet in 1981.
   a) It started to catch me to me a few years ago.
   b) So I started using salt again,
      (1) not overdoing it, and
      (2) my life improved because the muscle pain went away.

4. I know there are medical reasons for low or no salt,
   a) that is why my doctor put me on that diet, but
   b) I do not recall whether he thought I used salt to an extreme;
      (1) doctors usually just assume things about their patients,
      (2) that you are an American and therefore you eat a certain way.
         (a) So they fight extremism with the other extreme, and
         (b) that can cause problems.

5. My point is:
   a) Salt is not inherently bad.
   b) We need it for life.
   c) We just need to avoid over using it.

C. Jesus warned that, “if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”
   1. If salt gets watered down or corrupted,
   2. you do not want to use it on your food.
a) What good then is it?
b) About the only thing you can do is
   (1) thrown it out on a walking path, Jesus said,
   (2) where you do not want weeds growing.

3. What did he mean?
   a) He implied that if we lose our flavor as salt,
   b) we have lost our purpose.
      (1) If we remain in that state,
      (2) we are no longer of any use to him, and
         (a) he will cast us away.
         (b) He will cast us away at the Judgment.

D. Of course, if we realize what we have done,
   1. we can go back to him, and
   2. he can remake us.

E. To say that we are the salt of the earth
   1. states what we are to God.
   2. Because of our presence, he continues to accept the earth.

F. What he taught next relates to what we are to the world.

II. Matthew 5.14–16 • You Are the Light of the World

14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.
15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

A. You provide the light that the world needs that they might see.

B. In Proverbs 4, Solomon showed
   1. the difference between the world and the people of God,
2. revealing why the world needs us to be their light:

18 …the path of the just is like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.
19 The way of the wicked is like darkness;
They do not know what makes them stumble.

– Proverbs 4.18–19

a) As disciples of the Lord Jesus continue to follow his teachings,

(1) their way in life is like the shining sun,
(2) which keeps growing brighter throughout the day.

(a) It helps them to understand life.
(b) It helps them to see why they stumble.

b) However, the wicked live in darkness.

(1) When they fall
(2) they do not understand why.

(a) Therefore, they need the light that we provide.
(b) We are light but it is because

i) we get our light from the Lord Jesus Christ.
ii) We understand what he meant when he taught:

12 “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall
not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

– John 8.12

C. Before my conversion,

1. when I started associating with members of the church,
2. I could see how different their lives, their attitudes, and so on, were.

a) Their lights were shining,
b) although I could not identify that at the time.

D. Right after Jesus told his disciples

1. that they are the light of the world,

2. he then indicated that they, we, cannot hide that light.
   a) How do you hide a city that is set on a hill?
   b) You can’t, and so we cannot hide our light.
      (1) We should not try to hide it and
      (2) the truth is
         (a) we probably have more of the teachings of Christ in us
         (b) than we realize.
            i) It comes out in the way we treat people.
            ii) It comes out in our attitude that is on display.

3. In verse 15,
   a) Jesus explained more of what our function as the light of the world is.
   b) He did not light us as lamps,
      (1) only to hide us under a basket.
      (2) No, he puts in a place where it is dark and
         (a) then we can let our light shine and
         (b) the people around us can then see.
   c) We should not, therefore, hide what we are in Christ.
      (1) Just be the polite, considerate, patient, selfless people
      (2) that you normally are.

E. Next, verse 16, Jesus explained further how we are the light of the world.

1. Without covering up our light,

2. we let it shine before men, before the people of the world
   a) by letting them see our good works.
b) We do not look for people to do good works for us,
   (1) although what that happens we accept it, but
   (2) we understand our purpose is to do good works for the world.

3. If we are followers of Jesus Christ,
   a) should it not be
   b) that we are here doing our best to contribute to an improved world?
      (1) Therefore, we want people to see our good works, but
      (2) not that we may receive praise,
          (a) no, we want them to glorify our Father in heaven.
          (b) You can do things in such a way
              i) that you bring attention to yourself, or
              ii) you can do things in such a way
                  (1) that you are a conduit for heaven.
                  (2) People can tell whether you are showing off or
                      (a) whether you have genuine concern
                      (b) for the people for whom you are doing the work.

F. If they glorify our Father in heaven,
   1. they will have made a major step
   2. that will lead to their salvation.
      a) That is no guarantee that they will be saved, but
      b) there will be some who in time will turn to Christ. As Peter said:

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.
Exhortation:

I. **When you walk out of here today,**
   A. please understand what you are to God,
   B. that by your very presence you are keeping him from destroying the earth.

II. **When you walk out of here today,**
    A. please understand what you are to the world,
    B. that you are the light that they need so desperately.

III. **Let us, therefore,**
    A. be what God wants us to be and
    B. be what the world needs us to be.

IV. **For those not disciples of Christ,**
    A. we invite you to become part of us.
    B. 