

Matthew 5:13–16

Be What Christ Made You, Where Christ Put You

Saturday, December 30, 2023 ▫ **Read Matthew 5:13–16**

Questions from the Scripture text: What does v13 call them? What might be the condition of the salt? What can't be done with it? What is it good for? What two things does v14 call them? What can't be done to this city? What isn't done to the light (v15)? What is done to it? So that it does what? What are they commanded in v16? What should men see? Whom would they glorify for this? Where is this Father?

How should we respond to persecution? Matthew 5:13–16 prepares us for the morning sermon on the Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **when we are persecuted, we must resist the temptation to be less different or less visible, but shine as those made different by Christ in the place that He has assigned to us.**

You are salt, not dirt; embrace the difference Christ has made in you, v13. We might find that our blessedness at being persecuted (v10–12) is in some ways quite unpleasant. Even as we seek, by the Spirit, to obey the command to rejoice and be exceedingly glad (v12), our flesh might shrink from the persecution that is the occasion of this command. Can't I just enjoy having God as my great reward without having to be reviled and persecuted and slandered? No, you cannot.

If you're not salty, you're not salt. "loses its flavor" in v13 is actually a word that sounds like (and means something like) "moronic." It's fool's salt. And, the verse says that fool's salt is analogous to fool's gold. It's only useful for trampling. It's not actually "Christ's-kingdom-ly" salt but rather "Satan's-kingdom-ly" earth/dirt. To be un-salty may be enticing because we would not be persecuted. But we would not be rewarded. We would not be blessed. And we would have neither the Father nor the Son as our reward, either now or in the future (cf. Mt 7:12–27). To be unsalty is to have no cause for rejoicing or being exceedingly glad; it is cause for weeping and gnashing of teeth (cf. 7:23, Lk 13:27–28).

You are light; shine where you have been placed, v14–16. Also, let believers not shrink from where their Lord brings them to shine. If they are in Christ, they already are light, just as they already are salt. For these to whom Jesus was speaking, He has brought them up the literal hill. Perhaps they could already catch glimpses of sneering looks from others below.

But He uses the analogy of the placement of a city (v14) or the placement of a lamp (v15) to remind them that it was He Who had positioned them. Cities don't crawl down off of hills, nor do lamps off of stands. Let not believers, who find themselves sticking out as Christians where they are, shrink from either being Christians or being where they are.

Jesus arranges us where we are in His world so that just by being what we are, and being where we are, we will be seen by whom He wants us to be seen. As they persecute us for good works now, they bring glory to the Father Who has shown His heavenly character in us on earth.

And there will come a day when they can no longer persecute, when their own knees bow and tongues confess, and when God's justice and God's people are vindicated (1Pet 2:15, 19–20). When believers suffer for conformity to the Son and the family resemblance of their Father, let them not give in to shunning the circumstances but rather lean in to shining within those circumstances. (cf. Ac 4:29, 31; 5:40–42)

Where has the Lord placed you to shine? What does shining look like there?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving Yourself to us in Your Son. And thank You for the honor of being counted worthy to suffer for the Name. Grant unto us to rejoice and to keep shining, as those who already have You as our reward, in Christ; AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP73C "Yet Constantly, I Am with You" or TPH2B "Why Do Heathen Nations Rage"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew chapter 5 verses 13 through 16. These are God's words. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its flavor, How shall let me seasoned? That is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light to the world.

A city that has set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they like to lamp and put it under a basket. Put on a lamp stand. And it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works.

And glorify your father. In heaven. Amen, thus ends this reading of gods inspired. And an errant word. There's a temptation when we are persecuted for righteousness, when we are persecuted for the lord jesus to sick. And that temptation is to desire. Uh to have our great reward in heaven from verse 12.

Without having The reviling and persecution and slandering on earth. Can't i just have the reward? Without the persecution. However, It is god, who has made us righteous? This is one of the consequences, one of the Results of the reality of salvation by sovereign grace. It is a work of god, and so, Uh, the one who is saved cannot choose.

At a tone down his righteousness. And the god who has worked sovereign grace in us, is also the one who is assigned to us our place. Our place in our family, our place in the church, our place even by the Whatever choices we make circumstances arise yet all under the superintending.

Providence of god our place in the community and in the nation. And so, he deals with The temptation to desire. Um, Not. To be. So, write us or so christ-like which sounds insane and it is insane but that's what we're really Uh, thinking or failing or desiring if we're desiring, not to stick out so much.

Um, He illustrates that one with verse 13. And assault of the earth. And then he deals also with the temptation or the desire. To kind of. Um, Shrink from Our primary duties, the places where he has put us. And family. And in church, And in. The nation. With versus 14 through 16.

And the metaphor of the light. So, first with the Metaphor of the salt. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt literally, here is more is moronic now Uh, you don't have the ic. Um, English ending. But it is the same Greek root. As our english word for moron, And, They paraphrase the translation here.

If the salt loses its flavor, Other translations say if the salt loses its saltiness but we actually have an english idiom that perfectly matches. What? He's describing here, not so much with salt but with gold you've heard of moronic gold, haven't you? You know, well if we Translate the word moron.

You've heard a fool's gold. Haven't you? That's what the word moron means. That's what this word means. And so if the salt is full, salt is literally what it says. And wouldn't it be helpful to have a translation? That actually read that way. If the salt is full salt, Which isn't saying that it isn't salty.

It's saying that it only gets called salt by those who don't look close enough or by the, those who don't understand what it is. It's not salt at all. Just like as we're coming to james chapter 2 and we're going to hear seeing about faith without works is dead.

He's saying there that faith without works is not faith at all. And so salt without works. Or being called righteous without righteous works. Are being called christs without becoming more. And more like christ is. None of those things at all. And so, god is the one who makes the difference, in those whom he saves, we've seen

that over and over again, even just through the book of matthew, let alone through the whole bible.

And if god is the one who makes a difference. In those who say him, he says, if he makes them salt instead of earth, But then they don't actually turn out to be salt. What are they? Well, their earth. They're just dirt. They're not useful for any of the things that salt might be.

Useful for And so the issue here is not so much. The usefulness. Where it says, it's good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. The point is, That the The lord makes a difference in the believer himself in his nature, in his character, in his conduct And that if he's not different.

If is the same, Then he's just earth. And the throwing out and being trampled, underfoot, obviously, he's not even. Real earth. Um, but So, you can't have. Uh, you can't have the great reward in verse 12, which of course, is God himself as christ himself, Um, without your saltiness and yes they did actually use Salt for flavor as well.

I've heard this preached a bunch of times and the those who have preached, it have spent so much time. On how salt is a preservative? Not a Not for flavoring. Well, it's both. It's both, but Uh, the point of salt is not to preserve the earth. In this metaphor.

If he said you are the salt of the food or the salt, when the table, or the salt and the larder or whatever, they had at the time. For containing and storing food. Then the point would be You know what the salt does. But it's you are the salt.

Of the earth. Uh, let's It's not so much. About being a preservative, the earth here is going to be trampled too. The earth year is going to be destroyed. In the metaphor, the earth is not being preserved by the salt. No one preserves earth with salt. We're preserves the world with salt.

Uh, the point is God has made a real difference in us and we should not be tempted. We should not give in to the temptation. To wish that we weren't so different. We might. Uh we would be right and good in desiring from the heart and praying to god, that others wouldn't be different from us that they might have grace too.

But we shouldn't desire. That we wouldn't stick out from an ungodly world. The second place. Uh you are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Notice that the lord jesus has made himself a tiny little city on top of a hill.

He went up the mountain. And he assumed the posture of preaching that they were familiar with. In the synagogue, he sat down to preach and those who would not let a sermon from jesus passed by without going to, listen to it. Went up and they left. Those who were having a great festival for the fame of jesus at the bottom of the mountain, but jesus himself is preaching at the top of the mountain.

And so he's gathered them to himself, and Maybe they've even noticed people who are down at the bottom, giving them, the stink eye, you know, those religious fanatics up there have to go here, the sermon, Um, But he uses this illustration in the middle of the light illustration. So he mixes his metaphors.

Uh, praise god. That which they tell us is bad literary form. And god doesn't listen to them and he gives us good theology. Um, So he mixes his metaphoring switches to the city but he switches back to the light 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. And so, he's He's not here saying be shiny. Or light yourself. Or even place yourself somewhere. God is the one who likes the light lamp. God is the one who places the lamp. The problem is, if the lamp is alive, it may feel like crawling off of the lamp stand.

And not sticking out, like, Like it now. By God's grace to us. If we are all Uh being what we are in christ in the place that god has put us in the home. They'll be very encouraging to one another and you won't Uh, you want stick out in the home?

And if in the church, Uh you are practicing according to scripture, maintaining good church discipline and attending upon the means of grace and god is blessing and using, this means to conform the people in the church to christ. The more he does that the less you'll stick out in the church.

Although sadly. For much of the history of the church and almost all the churches, those who have been genuinely godly and maturing in the faith of stuck out. As a consequence of that. But when it comes to the world, And to men in general. Believers are always going to stick out.

And so whether it's in an age of the church like ours, Which is. And a very low condition. After much decline, even in the reformed and presbyterian churches. Or, Uh, more broadly in the world as a whole. God is the one who has made us to be light. God is the one in his providence, he has placed us where we are.

And we should be what we are. In christ where we are. That christ has placed us. And no. That whatever comes of it even if we are reviled. And persecuted and slandered. As. Verse 11 said. That men are bringing praise to our father in heaven. Because there are violin and persecuting and slandering for what for our obnoxiousness to sake.

Well, God forbid, although that's the case with some people. But for righteousness is sick. And for, christ's sake. And god the father is glorified not only in his son, who proclaims himself the light of the world, but by the greatness of the power of his salvation and his grace that he actually conforms redeemed, sinners to his son and shows that he has adopted them and entwined them by his spirit and united them to his son which shows forth in their character and their conduct, and how is god glorified that?

When we are persecuted. For righteousness sake. And persecuted. For christ's sake. And also, when Those who are not persecuting us. Admire the goodness or acknowledge by common grace on benefit that they receive from god. And even. Those whom God is saving. Often see and understand that there is light there.

When they see us shining. And upon further inspection, what do they find? The light has come from christ. Who is the light of the world? Who is the son? Who has light in him? That is the life of men. And, That the father is the father of lights. And so they glorify him then.

And also, as Uh, we could go and look at first peter two and see as well. That. They will glorify god and the day of visitation. When they despise him like they despised us but they will despise him in sheer terror. Because he is not just infinitely. Good, where we were just Imitatively good or derivatively, good.

Uh, but he is also almighty. And so they will wish for mountains. To fall on them. Uncover them. All right, so let us be what Christ has made us. Christ has put us and let us not shrink from it. Come up, man. Amen, let's pray. Thank you, father, for this reminder that you do save us and work in us.

High sovereign grace. And we pray that you would. Help us. To. Rejoice when we when your work and us. Makes a difference. Desiring. Indeed, that men would be saved, not that they would. Despise an attack us for it. But desiring, most of all that you would be glorified even so do it.

We pray. Not only in your only begotten son. Our lord jesus. But enough, you're adopted children. Who asked that you would do it by the work of your spirit and jesus name. Amen.