

Sermon on the Mount

Lesson #3

“Kingdom Purpose” Part I

Matthew 5:13

Scripture:

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, " All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 " Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Introduction:

When I was close to finishing preaching school, one of the members of the Church of Christ in Claremore had a relative in Parma Idaho who attended a Church of Christ there that was looking for a preacher. They talked me into going out for a visit.

I stayed with an older farmer that one day took me for a drive. I remember how beautiful it was. But one thing happened that I will never forget.

They grow apples there in huge apple groves. We drove for sometime past this one grove and I saw the most trees loaded with wonderful apples. I asked when the harvest would be. I'll never forget when he told me there would be no harvest. They had an early frost and the whole crop was ruined.

All those wonderful great looking apples would simply rot on the vine. I asked why they couldn't be quickly sold like those things reduced for quick sale. He stopped the car and told me to go pick an apple.

I walked up to a tree and picked one of the many great looking apples. I was convinced that these apples were getting a bad wrap and no-one cared enough to harvest them.

I came walking back to the car and he took out his knife and cut it into. It was rotten on the inside. When the frost came there weren't enough workers to go out and harvest the crop so they were exposed to frost and ruined for ever.

Transitional Statement:

Today in an attempt to explain our kingdom purpose Jesus is going to make some very important comparisons that speak volumes to his disciples as well as us today.

I. First Jesus tells His disciples that they are like salt to this world

Read with me.....Matthew 5:13 *"You are the salt of the earth;..."*

Now, I spent quite a bit of time this week wondering why Jesus compared His disciples to salt.

1. Why not cinnamon or nutmeg or sugar....?
2. Well with much thought I realized the great connection between salt and life.
 - a) Without salt we would all die.
 - 1) It is essential to the creation and sustaining of life.
 - b) Here in this passage Jesus will certainly make the same connection between His people and this world.

A. Salt is used for flavor.

1. This past Monday evening after I beginning this study I sat down for dinner and as I salted my fried tators and sauerkraut and wieners I was reminded of how salt adds flavor to things and certainly that is one of the thoughts here.
2. Job tells his friends in 6:6 *"Can something tasteless be eaten without salt,..."*
 - a. Salt makes palatable what would otherwise be tossed aside.
 - 1) You can give me all the fried tators in this world, but if you don't give me salt you can just keep them.
 - b. You see, salt actually draws out the flavor in things.
 - 1) It doesn't just take over and push the food out of the way.
 - a. But it helps push back the undesirable smells and tastes
 - b. And gently pushes the good flavors forward.
 - 2) So, Jesus wants us to draw out the best in people toward God

B. Salt breaks down what is hard.

1. In Colossians 4:6 we see Paul tell the Colossian church:

"Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."
2. Here Paul is reminding the Colossian to be giving and soft with how they communicate with other people.....as though seasoned with salt.

- a. Salt is a softening / tenderizing agent
- b. You know sin creates a hardness in people

1) 1 Timothy 4:1-2 *“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,”*

2) Sin gets into people and makes them hard.

3) So Jesus wants us to help break down the hardness in people.

C. Salt also represents a covenant between God and His people.

Numbers 18:19 *“All the offerings of the holy gifts, which the sons of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD to you and your descendants with you.”*

2 Chronicles 13:5 *“Do you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?”*

- 1. So closely connected with covenant is the word salt that even today the modern Arabic word for salt is the same word used for covenant. ISBE
- 2. You might remember the S.A.L.T. treaties of the 70’s and 80’s with Russia to stop the proliferation of nuclear arms.

- a. S.A.L.T. stood for Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.

- b. But it wasn’t by chance they choose this acronym....They choose it because of it’s universal connection with a covenant.

- 3. God desires everyone to be in covenant with Him.

- a. 2 Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”*

- b. Jesus surely wants His disciples to be covenant agents.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 *“...All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*
 19 *” Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

D. Salt is also understood as a preservative

1. Mark 9:43-50 Jesus tells His disciples:

*43 " If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, 44 [where **THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.**] 45 "If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell, 46 [where **THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.**] 47 " If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, 48 where **THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.** 49 "For everyone will be salted with fire. 50 "Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."*

a. Here Jesus is telling His disciples to get rid of what is rotten and preserve the good.

b. You know the idea that one bad apple will spoil the whole bunch.

2. Before refrigerators people rubbed their meat down with salt to prevent it from getting rotten.
3. Here Jesus seems to be pointing to the fact that we should fight rottenness in this world and work toward the preservation of the souls of men.

E. Salt is also the front runner in purification

1. In the Old Testament times babies were rubbed down with salt to clean and kill bacteria. Eze 16:4

a. I can't help but think about a baby calf I had one time that had pink eye so bad that it blinded the calf completely. I had mentioned this to my wives granddad who told me to through salt in its eyes. I laughed...but latter tried it and within a few days that calf could see and you couldn't tell anything had ever been wrong with it.

2. After God had taken Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind, some men of Jericho mentioned to Elisha that the water of Jericho was bad.

a. In 2 Kings 2:20-21

20 He said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. 21 He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.'"

- b. So we can also easily understand that Jesus wants us to be agents promoting purification.

F. Salt is also used to fight the enemy.

1. Judges 9:45 “Abimelech fought against the city all that day, and he captured the city and killed the people who were in it; then he razed the city and sowed it with salt.”
 - a. He sowed it with salt to kill the crops and prevent them from growing back.
 - b. So here salt is used as a weapon of war to prevent the enemy from continued growth.
 - c. As kingdom people should we not understand that Jesus wants us to stop ungodly growth at every corner.

G. In Roman times salt represented great value.

1. It was an item of trade.
2. And even part of the Roman soldiers salary was paid in part with salt.
3. When Jesus tells His people that they are the salt of the earth, He is surely also pointing to the fact that they represent the greatest of values.....God !

H. In the earliest of times we see the connection of salt to the worship of God.

1. Leviticus 2:13 *“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.”*
2. Ezekiel 43:24 *“You shall present them before the LORD, and the priests shall throw salt on them, and they shall offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD.”*
3. Exodus 30:35 *“With it you shall make incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure, and holy.”*
4. Ezra 6:9 *“Whatever is needed, both young bulls, rams, and lambs for a burnt offering to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and anointing oil, as the priests in Jerusalem request, it is to be given to them daily without fail,”*
5. So Jesus here may also want us to understand that we as Christians are meant to lead this earth in the worship of God.

Matthew 5:13 Cont.

"...but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men."

A. So how does salt become tasteless?

1. I didn't notice an expiration date on my salt.

B. I think Luke 14:26-35 gives us some insight.

26 " If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. 34 "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? 35 "It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

1. When we get evolved with too many things in this life, instead of us being kingdom agents affecting the world, we become diluted by the world.

2. Jesus wants us to affect the world...not the world affecting us.

a. In John 17 Jesus' basic prayer is that we will be in the world but not of the world.

Conclusion:

How is your spiritual salt?

- Do you bringing out the flavor in other people...their best?
- As a tenderizing agent, do you strive to break down what is hardness in others?
- Do you work toward helping others into covenant relationship with God?
- Do you work against rottenness, and for the preservation of life before God?
- Do your peers know that purity is a frontrunner in your life?
- Do you allow God to use you in His fight against Satan?
- Do you understand your great value in kingdom work?
- Do you help lead others to the throne of God in worship?

Church in John 4:35 Jesus says:the fields are ready for harvest