

Servanthood - The Influence of a Servant – Lesson Three

Matthew 5:13-16

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

In the tough, rugged, wicked world in which we live, what possible influence could the servants described in Matthew 5:1-12 have? We are a very small minority surrounded by a very strong-minded majority. Jesus never promised us that it would be easy; He did tell us that this is a battle zone and that there would be tribulation. Yet, He also added that the influence of this small minority would be nothing short of remarkable.

That the influence of His servants in society would be as significant as salt on food and light in darkness.

Though neither salt nor light is either loud or externally impressive, their presence is essential. **(Both are penetrators)**

Their absence is immediately noticeable, and their need unquestionable.

2 Timothy 3:1-13

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

In 2 Timothy 3:1 – 13, we find three undeniable descriptions of today's world.
PERILOUS – CORRUPT – DECEIVED

In verses 1-7, the key word in this description is “perilous”. Other versions translate this word as “terrible”, and “difficult”. The Greek root word means “grievous, harsh, fierce and savage.” The only other use of this word in the New Testament is Matthew 8:28, where Matthew is describing two demon possessed men as being exceeding “fierce”.

In verses 8 – 9, the key word here is “corrupt”. Corrupt means “depraved, perverted, putrid or perverse.” The description is of a world that is spiritually corrupted; unmoved by God, hard-hearted and dark within.

In verse 13, the key word here is the word “deceived”. The world is full of the false and hypocritical. Many abound in all areas of life, both secular and religious, which are deceived and are deceiving others. We are indispensable influences for God.

When Jesus speaks of the character qualities of servants, He uses “they, their and those”. However, when speaking of a servant's relation and influence on society, He says “YOU”. It is a personal thing!

In reference to salt and light, He doesn't say we are “like” or “as” salt and light; He says we “ARE” salt and light.

A society characterized by savage violence and the darkness of depravity and deception will, without a positive influence, deteriorate and ultimately destroy itself.

YOU are the salt of the earth.

Salt:

Is a Preservative – the very presence of salt halts corruption.

Is a healing agent – Salt aids in the body's healing processes.

Creates thirst – It increases the desire for water.

Adds flavor – It makes the bland tasteful and inviting.

However, when the salt loses its saltiness, or its preservative power, it is good for nothing.

Some positive aspects of salt:

It is shaken and sprinkled, not poured. Too much salt is not good, therefore it needs to be spread out, and distributed. Salt adds flavor, but it is obscure. No one comments on how good the salt tastes, but the salt brings out the flavor; a flavor impossible to obtain without the use of salt. Salt is like no other seasoning. It is strong and impossible to truly duplicate. Salt MUST be applied before it is of any use. Salt in the shaker is useless.

YOU are the light of the world. Note that Jesus called us what He called Himself; Light! We, as His servants shine with His light into a dark world.

What is the basic function of light? It is to dispel darkness. Darkness CANNOT remain when light is turned on. How do we dispel the darkness?

Matthew 5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

First, we cannot hide the light. Second, we cannot limit the light.

Some positive aspects of light:

Light is silent. It just shines! Light gives direction.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Light attracts attention. If you turn on a light in a darkened room everyone's attention will be directed at you. If you will let the light of the Spirit shine in your life, people cannot help but notice and watch!

I AM DIFFERENT – We MUST be different from the world – in thought, word and deed.

I AM RESPONSIBLE – We MUST accept personal responsibility for our salt being salty and our light shining.

I AM INFLUENTIAL – The mere fact that we are not like this world gives us enormous influence. Even when we aren't trying, the salt and light of the Spirit in our lives is touching others.