**The Sermon on the Mount / Living Transformed Lives / A Call to Live Counter Culturally**

**Matthew 5:13-16**

**Jesus’ Audience: The Crowds and the Disciples**

* Matt. 5:1 points to him speaking to his disciples, and Matt. 7:28 mentions Jesus addressing what appears to be an outer circle of the “crowds.” So even though Jesus is primarily teaching his disciples the kingdom’s ethics, he is also addressing a listening outer circle of people listening in.
* Sitting in this crowd, listening to Jesus are peasants and uneducated men and women. And the reason I’m telling you women is that, in the 1st century, most Jewish men began in the synagogue with a daily prayer that says, “Praise You, God creator of heaven and earth, that I was not born a gentile or a woman.” But Jesus here is speaking to gentiles and Jews and uneducated peasants and educated Pharisees. He’s talking to this massive cross section of society, and he’s saying, “You are the salt of the earth. You are the lights of the world.” Remember he is primarily talking to the disciples.

**Matthew 5:13-16:**

13“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before others, so thatthey may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

**Salt of the Earth: The Usual Sermons on this:**

* People usually take salt and what salt does, and we say, “since salt does this, that means we are this…” So it kind of works like this:

**Salt is a preservative** – So then, we are as the church a preservative against moral decay in society…

**Salt brings flavor** – So then, we as the church flavor society…

**Salt is a fertilizer** – So, then we as the church create ground where spiritual growth can occur…

**Salt makes on thirsty** – So, then we as the church, when people are around us and when people see us, they become thirsty for the things of God.”

* In many ways these interpretations are right and on to something, and are helpful. But I do think we have missed something important as well.

**My Aim:**

* I want to talk to you about core issues of salt and not just salt as a preservative, salt as a flavor. It does play some into it, but what I want to talk to you about is kind of core scheme underneath all of that.
* Here’s what I want you to say: **Salt is breathing spiritually**. What I mean by this is that *the Holy Spirit grabs a hold of our heart* and begins to *chisel* and *shape* and *mold* us more and more and more, over a period of time, **into the image of Christ**. So we’re not talking about integrity or character but rather the root or the well that integrity and character comes out of. And so the Holy Spirit begins to work on that thing in us, our soul, our spirit, transforms in us, moves in us, chisels at us, *creates in us*, **so that we become the type of people that** preserve against moral decay, add flavor to life, and causes other people to be spiritually thirsty…

**Major Point: Sanctification**

* We call this breathing spiritually, that I just described the **Sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit** (The doctrine of Sanctification).

**Definition:** *Sanctification* is a progressive work of both God and man that makes Christians more and more free from sin and more and more like Christin their actual lives. God and his children cooperate in this work, both playing distinct roles. And while Christians can expect to progress in their sanctification, they will never achieve perfection until Christ returns.

**Indictment: The Holy Spirt/Transformation is missing in much of our Lives: Chandler**

* **“I have seen an unhealthy passion for information and knowledge (sometimes entertainment) and little to no passion or zeal for transformation.** So, in the end we have belief down, but we haven’t been changed at all. In fact, it seems like there is a mountain of sermons and resources and programs that are meant to increase our knowledge, but there’s no accountability or structure of authority that enables us to apply the information that we’ve gained. So in the end, we’ve become masters of information but not necessarily master of life. And so what’s occurred on a whole is we can confess and cry out the things that we believe, but few of us operate in those things at all.”

**?Question?**

* How does this take place?

**Answer:**

* Well, for starters, we have to submit our will to God. Submission is required for sanctification and saltiness.

**Luke 14:25-33: The Cost of Discipleship**

25Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, 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 bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.** 28For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33So therefore, **any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple**.

* Jesus makes it clear to all what discipleship requires. It demands a total commitment, even in the face of opposition like that being raised against Jesus. He is honestly setting forth the demands of what it means to walk after him. **Discipleship is not possible without total commitment**. Also, **discipleship requires preparation for going the distance**, including realizing what one is getting into by responding to Jesus. Vs.33 Discipleship requires a renouncing of Idols in our lives. Jesus is to be our sole king of our lives. A person’s greatest possession must become following Christ.

**Notice the Next Two Versus: Look at Luke’s Placement of Jesus Teaching**

34“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

**Major Point:**

* To believe but not to practice is worthless. To master information without application leads to no transformation, which leads to no ability to be a light.

**Outcome: There is No Being a Light without First being Salty**

* It is the Holy Spirit working in us and us submitting to itthen that enables us to become the light to the world around us. We have to notice that this text starts by saying, “You are the salt of the earth,” and that becoming the salt of the earth leads to then being the light of the world. So what ends up happening to make us salty, if you will, is a submission to the Holy Spirit’s power in our lives to shape and mold us that leads to transformation that then is attractive to the world around us.

**Some Thoughts: How did we get here?**

1. **I think there’s been an undue emphasis on width rather than depth**. We are too focused, as churches, on teaching you information, rather than focusing on and spending time helping you actually do it.
* We keep going, “More information… more information... you need more information… you need to figure out this theology… here’s the doctrine of the Holy Spirit… here’s the doctrine of this… here’s the systematic approach to this… here’s more of this… And we are gathering information… more information… ect… **No one is saying hey, are you practicing what you know?**
1. I think there has been **an absolute disintegration of genuine, real community**.
* Upon coming to Christ *we MUST HAVE* ***encouragement*** *and* ***rebuking*** *constantly*. We need people to be able to come up and grab us at the right time when we aren’t strong enough to be honest about our own struggling heart, but since they could sense it and feel it, because they know us so well, they come after us (pursuing friendships). Also, we need men and women in our lives that we are willing to receive what they might say to us (our own wiliness to be vulnerable and honest).
1. A **lack of submission to authority**.
* What I mean by that is the church has been created by God to be that place where those who are spiritually strong care for, love on, encourage, and rebuke the spiritually weak. And ***what’s happened in our consumeristic society is that it’s not about growing deep anymore, but it’s about us feeling better about ourselves by coming into church***. So what we want is somebody who can entertain us and music that we somewhat enjoy, and that’s what we want. So what’s happening on a massive scale is people aren’t joining churches, aren’t submitting to any kind of real authority, but instead they’re just coming and going to places to be entertained. But this isn’t the call of the church.
1. Finally, we live in a **culture built on speed; however, spiritual growth and depth is no superhighway, but rather a slow crawl**.
* Discipleship, getting rid of sin in our lives, really being invested in a church and in people’s lives, learning to walk by the Spirit, at times even genuine repentance… none of this happens quick. We can’t come a few Sunday with a little effort, and expect true life transformation. Spiritual maturity, growth, and depth happen slowly and gradually.

**Final Words:**

* Day by day churches in our country are dying and sadly losing their importance in our society. And it’s happening because salt has lost its saltiness, because so few of us apply what we say we believe.

**So What Now:**

* Where do you need to be obedient? What did you give up on too soon?
* What has God been asking me to do where you’ve said no?
* Where am I not doing the things that I know I need to be doing and I need to begin to do?