



THE MOUNT MESSAGE: SALT & LIGHT

The EXPERIENCE Bible Study

Third Baptist Church

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SALT & LIGHT

(Matthew 5:13-14)

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1. The life of discipleship is conceived throughout as *life within* the community of faith.
2. This community is charged with a *mission* to the world.
3. Jesus perfectly models this new kingdom approach

The Disciples As Salt: (vs.13)

1. The saying as multiple layers of meaning, since salt has many connotations in Matthew's tradition and context.
2. For Matthew, salt references "**sacrifice**" (Leviticus 2:13); **loyalty & covenant fidelity** (Ezra 4:14, Numbers 18:19; eating together was called "**sharing salt**" and expressed a binding relationship); **purification** (2 Kings 2:19-22); **seasoning** (Job 6:6; Colossians 4:5) and **preservative**.



The Disciples As Salt (cont.)

1. The saying serves as a warning that if the disciples *deny their mission*, they (too) will be thrown out as *useless*.
2. Salt becomes ineffective when it becomes impure due to *being mixed with other elements that cause it to lose its function*.
3. The condition of our hearts will always determine the “saltiness” of our beings.
4. Being “*salt of the earth*” is equivalent to being “*salt of the world*”
5. The world does not belong to Satan! It’s the *creation* of God, the *scene* of the disciples’ mission, and the *place* where God’s will shall finally be done



Importance of Being Salt

1. Salt does not **EXIST** for itself, neither do the disciples.
2. The life of the disciple is to be turned outward to the world for the “**field is the world**’ (c.f. **Matthew 13:38**)
3. **The disciples are what they are, as pronounced by the words of Jesus!**
4. **The disciples are not told to try harder in being salt, But as followers of Jesus, THEY ARE SALT.**
5. This is a call to believe what Jesus said and to accept and to love out this new reality that is created in the call to discipleship.

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The Disciples As Light: (vs.14-16)

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1. The light metaphor presents the disciples as *illumination* for the world.
2. The primary function of light is **NOT TO BE SEEN**, but to let things **BE SEEN AS THEY ARE**.
3. The metaphor of the “*city on a hill*” presents the disciples as unavoidably being seen.



The Disciples As Light (cont.)

1. The salt & light sayings picture the idea of missions being inherent to discipleship – as saltiness is essential to salt and shining is to light.
2. These metaphors by Jesus kills all religion that is purely *personal and private*.
3. The disciples are called to active mission of letting their light shine to all.
4. The disciples don't generate light anymore than they generate their own saltiness. *They have already been lit for the sake of the world.*
5. The purpose of the disciples' engaging in their acts of righteousness/justice (vs.6) is to glorify God – this is the *authorization* to continue what Jesus began.



Closing: Textual Challenges

1. Matthew presents numerous *moments of tension* within his writings (ex/ 5:16 & 6:3) that should **not** be regarded as contradictions in the Bible because they represent a dimension of scribal wisdom teaching (ex: Proverbs 26:4-5)
2. Matthew's aim in this portion of scripture is to *stimulate imagination and personal responsibility*, which highlight the radical nature of Jesus' message.
3. Talking about the kingdom of God generates a certain sense of "*wildness*" that *gets lost if the message of Jesus gets domesticated*.

