

I Love My Church

(Sharing)

Matthew 5:13-16

Here are two questions that need to be pondered this morning as we finish the series, "I Love My Church." How do people come to this new life in God? And how do people hear and discover, how do they experience the Kingdom of God?

The answer lies in Matthew 5:13-16

The answer: **God entrusts us to create the kingdom experience.**

Matthew 5:13 says **"you are the salt of the earth."** So to whom is this scripture speaking too? Its speaking to you!!! Notice how specific it reads, "YOU." Not someone else, not the Pope, not the clergy, but "YOU." You are the "salt of the earth."

So what does this mean? Salt brings taste. It's a flavoring agent. It brings taste to bland food. When someone brings you a plate of bland food what is the first words out of your mouth? Can you please pass the salt?

Jesus is making it clear how necessary and important we are for the welfare of the world. The only way you will ever know that salt is in fact salty is by experiencing it for yourself. No one can adequately describe the taste of salt, it must be experienced firsthand by you.

**"You are the light of the world."**

In Jesus' time they had small oil lamps, which gave little light in the average home that had few windows and they were most effective when placed on a lampstand. Even the smallest light that is lifted up will chase away darkness. Light removes darkness.

We not only carry the light of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, but we are that light! Because of the work of the Holy Spirit in us, our transformation has produced Kingdom light in us affecting every aspect of our being and affectively lighting up this dark world.

It amazes me that of what God entrusts His church with. Think about this: If you don't like how our city is? Ask yourself if you are salting it. Discouraged that our culture is so dark? Ask yourself if you are doing your part to light it up.

So how do we bring the "I Love My Church" experience to our culture?

**1. People will experience Jesus' community when we live its values.**

Look at Matthew 5:2-11

The salt and light come out of the Beatitudes. These are the characteristics of Jesus' disciples that allow God to establish His Kingdom in His way. The Beatitudes are a character profile of a person who says "I Love My Church."

Seasoning and shining isn't only about the message we declare with our lips, it's about how we go about our lives. Lifestyle is the emphasis here. Being salt and light is about the message we declare with our actions, reactions, and everything in between. We can't separate message from lifestyle. This is about who we are and how we are. The values in you as you live the Kingdom bring flavor to a bland, rotten world.

**2. We live the values of Jesus' community in our daily lives.**

I saw a story of a young man who OD'd on soy sauce recently. I know that sounds like a random thought but stay with me. This young man went into a coma as a

result of the excess of salt in his body. He did survive and had no lasting neurological problems.

I shared this story because it applies directly to how we live. We are called to bring salt and light to this world, not so they can be blinded by the sun or OD on sodium. So the question is, are we seasoning and shining or are we blinding and gagging?

Let me explain: Several months ago we had a man standing outside of our church for six solid weeks with a sign that says, "Go to hell or repent." After a few weeks I ran into this man at Subway and I asked him this question, how many people have you won to Christ with this sign? The answer was zero. In the many weeks he protested at our church I saw know one repenting, praying or being moved or touched in their spirit.

Now is there truth to the message of the sign? Yes!! But just because it is correct doesn't mean that it is effective. I'd argue that this is pouring a gallon of soy sauce down someone's throat.

Now let me give you an example of seasoning the right way. (Have Dana come up and share the favor the Lord has given her at work.)

It's really easy to carry a sign around in a crowd. It's alot more difficult to be Jesus in the ordinary and the mundane. It's in the day to day stuff, at the office, at school, at the gym, on the job that people need to experience Jesus when they experience us. People will experience Jesus from you in the normal, and in those moments the normal becomes extraordinary as people taste and see, from you, that the Lord is good.

In closing, I want to leave you with this question, in fact every church should ask themselves this question. If our church ceased to exist, would the neighborhood mourn? Would they even notice if we shut our doors? We must be a church that they would miss, not for our own sake or our own reputation, but because they are experiencing Jesus when they experience us.

There may be some one here today that needs to experience Jesus for the first time today. If that's you then come today and let Jesus clean you white as snow so that you in return will be **the salt of the earth.**