

# Extra Teaching Points

## Chapter 3

### [Matt. 5:13](#)

Salt was very valuable in Jesus' day.

- Salt was at times used to pay Roman soldiers.
- The word "salary" was derived from Salt.

**Salt was used not only to season food, but also as a preservative (without salt, food would rot) or a way to disinfect a wound.**

- **Christians are supposed to slow or prevent the rot of the society they are in.**
  - **When Christians lose their saltiness, the society around them begins to deteriorate.**
  - **As this decline occurs, the society loses more and more respect for Christians, and begins to trample them.**

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### IS OUR CHURCH/MINISTRY SALTY?

Our church/ministry is relevant to our society only as long as it is offering alternative answers to the questions about:

1. How to live
2. How to make and use money
3. How to love and raise a family...

... the very issues addressed in the Sermon on the Mount.

The average Christian in America has very little understanding of what Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount or how to live according to His teaching.

- This renders those churches/ministries largely un-salty and irrelevant.
- They are not preserving the American society so much as witnessing its downward spiral.

American society has gotten worse and worse over the last 50 years and seems to be degenerating at an increasing pace... and at the same time Churches have gotten larger and larger.

- **The mega church movement has developed simultaneously with the decline in American morals.**

Churches today have spent a great amount of time, money, and effort trying to contemporize themselves to the world around them.

- They use popular music, entertaining formats, and follow guidelines used by the entertainment industry in order to reach more and more people.
  - **More emphasis is placed on style and marketability than teaching people to obey Jesus' teaching... huge crowds are drawn but disciples are not being made.**
- **When the Church only draws big crowds using methods the world uses to draw big crowds, the Church becomes irrelevant.**

**The church is only relevant if it offers an alternative way of life.**

- How to use money
- How to earn it

- How to handle stress and conflict
- How to have right relationships
- How to have a good sexual relationship, etc
  - ... **the world already knows what it thinks about these things.**
  - **If the Church simply copies the world, the Church becomes irrelevant... loses its saltiness.**
- If the Church stands up and says “Listen world, you’re wrong about all these areas... we’ll tell you what’s right because God has revealed it in His Word. We’re going to teach it, demonstrate it, and you’ll see it in action among us,” then the Church will be relevant!
  - **It will be relevant because it offers a relevant alternative to the hopeless and meaningless life the world around is already experiencing.**

If the Church copies the world it presents itself as having no more meaning and no more purpose than the world has.

- The “flavor” of the salt is its difference from the world.
  - **Salt prevents the meat from rotting for the simple reason that it is different from the meat... It is not meat.**
  - **If salt becomes meat, it will rot with the meat!**

When the Church feels it has to tailor its:

1. Service styles
2. Dress styles
3. Entertainment styles
4. Dating habits
5. Marriage styles
6. Its opinions about money and divorce...

It may feel like it is becoming more relevant to the world and the world will be likely to look to the Church for answers.

- But in reality, the world looks at the Church as not having any better answers than they do!

**Usually people are attracted to a “better idea.”**

- **When the Church is following the world’s ideas, why would the world think the Church has better ideas?**

The people Jesus preached this message to apparently got His message.

- The book of Acts records the kind of impact you would expect salt to have.
  - Many of His listeners were martyrs.
  - Others lived that salty life and the world began to look to the Church for answers.
- The world was impressed with the believers in the first century.
  - Great fear came upon people who saw the holiness and power in the lives of the Christians.
  - Yes, they were persecuted, but that doesn’t mean they didn’t have great influence.
- **The Church grew in spite of persecution!**
  - **People became Christians knowing they themselves would be persecuted.**
  - Stephen, who was martyred, was a huge influence on Saul of Tarsus, who later became known as Paul the apostle.

**The world holds the value that staying alive matters more than anything else... that survival is the strongest human instinct.**

- **The first century Church challenged that value... their strongest value was not staying alive, but staying faithful to Jesus!**
- **They thought dying was OK, and that was a slap in the face of the world... and the world stood up and took notice.**

The first century world also took notice of how the Church handled their money, how they sold their excess wealth and gave to the poor, their purity and holiness as a community... and the world respected them.

- Persecution was, in a sense, a confirmation of the world's respect.
- The world wanted to back the Church off its distinctives and cause it to compromise with worldly values.
- **They tried to set fire to the Church to see if it would really stand the heat.**
  - **When it didn't fold, many persecutors converted!**

## **When men trample salt under foot, they are not persecuting it... they are ignoring it!**

In America there is no real persecution of the Church for the simple reason that very few people know the Church is really there.

- They know there are churches, but Christians look so much like the world that the world barely notices them... they walk right over Christians and ignore them!
- **If the Church wants to get the world's attention, it won't happen through marketing schemes, big events, fancy buildings, and entertaining services... it will happen when the Church really lives differently than the world around it.**

To persecute the Church is to take it seriously.

- In many countries around the world today the Church is persecuted.
  - In those countries the Church is taken seriously and the Church is growing.
- Where the Church is not experiencing any persecution, it is not being taken seriously.

The people Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount to, became salty, and they did prevent their society from going under for a full generation.

- About the time this generation died and Christians left Jerusalem, that's when society went down fast!

Unfortunately, a few centuries later, corruption entered the Church and it lost its flavor.

- Not only did it not prevent social decay and rot, it contributed to the downward spiral.
- That downward spiral did not begin to slow until the reformation movement.

In our society, as long as Christians:

1. Seek worldly respect and approval
  2. Are petty among themselves
  3. Take each other to court, etc.,
- ... the Church will be trampled under the feet of men and ignored.
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Salt is talked about in a few other verses:

- [Mark 9:49-50](#) probably means we become salty by going through fiery circumstances.
  - [1Cor. 3:13](#) says fire reveals the quality of what we have built.
  - [Mal. 3:2](#) says that fire refines us.
- [Col. 4:6](#) Probably means we should have a salty flavor in the way talk.
  - The idea is that the way we should talk should be pleasant, interesting and adapted to the needs of the person we are talking to.
    - When we are talking to people who are wounded, what we say may sting a little a bit, but it will help them heal.
    - At the same time “full of grace” is literally translated “charming, pleasant, and attractive.”
    - So saying things insensitively is not acceptable.

### **[Matt. 5:14](#)**

Like salt prevents rot, light provides insight, knowledge, and awareness. It gives direction and guidance ([Psalm 119:105](#); [John 8:12](#)).

[1John 2:8-11](#), [1John 1:7](#). Walking in darkness results in broken relationships. When we are walking in the light we have fellowship.

The idea of light and darkness is knowing where to walk... knowing where to go.

- People who live in a darkened world, under the dominion of darkness, need light to know where to go.

The Church is here to give light to the world!

- **The light we give is not just in giving instruction, but the way we live is supposed to illustrate the right way to be.**
- **[Rom. 12:1-2](#) Paul says we are living sacrifices so we can PROVE (NIV says “approve”) what the will of God is.**
  - **If people look at your life and it doesn't prove to them what the will of God is, then they are not getting any light from you.**

To be light requires not only that we know the truth and speak it, but that we live it visibly.

- A city on a hill can't be hidden!
  - God has not put the Church under a bushel.
- **There are Christians who will not speak up about sin, and what God says is sin, because they know people won't like that and won't agree with them.**
  - **These Christians are trying to avoid persecution, but it proves they are ashamed of their faith ([Romans 1:16](#)).**

## [Matt. 5:16](#)

The light that men are to see is your good works, which is simply your good behavior.

- Your behavior should be superior in moral quality.
  - You should exhibit enlightened behavior.
- Your life should advertise to your neighbors that you have light that they lack.

A lot of times when we do what Jesus says, it looks stupid at first. But the end result is what proves Jesus is right.

- Christians are often ridiculed and criticized for the way they raise their kids. But in time, the results bare out which way was right.

A Christian's life should look different than those around us.

- We should have more peace and joy than people in the world because Jesus has overcome the world ([John 16:33](#)).
- We should not be using drugs and alcohol to cope with the stresses of life.
- We should have peace in our relationships instead of strife ([Matt. 5:9](#)).

If the Church's light becomes dim or dark, how great is the darkness of the society that depended fully on the light the Church was supposed to provide ([Matt. 6:23](#)).

- If the Church is saying the right things but not living according to it's standards, then it might as well be saying nothing.
- It is simply advertising itself as a group of hypocrites.

**Jesus doesn't say that the world will see your good works and glorify you.**

- **We have to be pure in our motives ([Matt. 6:1](#)).**

We should try to do our good works in such a way that men don't glorify us, but God.

- The good works of the Church as a whole should prove that God's way is the best way, and then God will be given credit.
- **An individual person doing good might draw some personal praise or attention, but when a group is doing good, God will be honored.**

## Chapter 3 Follow Up Assignment

Q: Do people tend to persecute you for being righteous (Matt. 5:10), or ignore you because you really aren't that different from them?

- Do you earn and use money differently than those around you who don't love God?
- Do you handle stress and conflict differently than those around you who don't love God?
- Do you approach sexual and non-sexual relationships differently than those around you who don't love God?

Q: In [Rom. 12:1-2](#) Paul says we are living sacrifices so we can **PROVE** (NIV says "approve") what the will of God is. Is your life **proving** to others that God's will is "good, pleasing and perfect?"

- What does your answer tell you about the amount of light you are bringing to those around you?

Q: Do you speak up about what sin is or try to avoid drama and stay silent?

- What does your answer tell you about how you feel about the gospel? (Romans 1:16)