

## **Citizens & Saints Part 2**

### **The Salt of the Earth - Matthew 5:13**

Today is part two of our Citizens and Saints series!

A)When you become a Christian - God immediately declares you are His Saint

B)Saint = set apart ones. As followers of Jesus we have been set apart for God and from the world.

C)Paul in the book of Philippians declares that we have a dual citizenship.

1)Citizens in this World - For us the USA - but we are also Citizens of Heaven

**That is our challenge:**

**A)How do we live as Citizens of this place -but knowing we have been set apart for God**

B)To live as Citizens of Heaven's Kingdom while living in this Kingdom.

C)When Jesus taught his disciples to pray - He said: Pray to your Father in heaven - Pray Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

D)That is what we are longing for - His Kingdom to infiltrate this Kingdom.

1)Knowing - that will ultimately not happen until Jesus returns and sets up his Kingdom on planet earth

But in the meantime Jesus commissioned his followers to represent him and His Kingdom

A)while living here on planet earth

B)Last week we began to talk about what that looks like -

C)We Started in the book of Genesis -TRUTH: Made in the Image of God -

1)made to be Image bearers

D)Distorted by the Fall -

We noted last week how Jesus left heaven and came into our world -

A)He was the perfect man. Perfect image bearer

B)John described him this way: We beheld his glory - He was full of Grace and Truth.

And Jesus the perfect image bearer declared this about himself - I am the light of the world, he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life!

A)Jesus was here to show us the way - show us how to live

B)Well here in Matthew 5 - Sermon Jesus preached - Sermon on the mount - His Kingdom Manifesto

C)He said something radical of us his followers - V.14 - You are the light of the world - and light is not meant to be hidden

<sup>16</sup>Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

D)Light Reflects and Exposes -

1)we talked last week about how we are to reflect what God stands for - what God loves

E)Expose what is wrong and Evil in this world -

1)the things that are against what God loves and stands for.

**Here in V.13 Jesus gives us another analogy of how we are to live as Saints/ Citizens in this world**

A)Another way that we are to represent Heaven's Kingdom while living in this Kingdom.

<sup>13</sup>“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. NKJV

B)I love Salt - put it on everything -

C)Company looking to hire : potential prospect makes it to the last part of the interview process

1)Take them to lunch - If the person salted their food before tasting it - interview over -

D)Not getting the Job - too set in their ways { Tip

**Now what did Jesus mean that his followers are the Salt of the earth?**

A)Salt was a commodity that was greatly valued in NT times

B)We don't think of it that way because - salt is so common in our society.

1)Salt packets by the 100's at fast food restaurants

C) But Roman soldiers were paid in salt – Salarium – get our English word Salary from it

1) Salt rations were so valuable to them they would revolt/strike if they changed.

So Jesus is using this analogy to emphasize the Value that his Followers can have on Society.

**A) Salt had 4 main uses in the first century that give meaning to this analogy from Jesus**

B) Salt was used to Cleanse and Purify, to Preserve, meat and fish

1) as a healing agent, and to enhance flavor

C) Each one of those uses sheds light on what it means for followers of Jesus to be the Salt of the earth.

D) Before we discuss the nature of this analogy -

1) by unpacking each one of those uses of Salt in the 1<sup>st</sup> century

**Let's consider the Roman world that Jesus came into - sending his followers into. -**

**A) Start with noting: The Roman world was Sophisticated**

B) Romans pioneered the widespread use of concrete,

1) a strong and versatile material that enabled them to create large, complex structures with intricate designs.

C) Roman architects perfected the use of arches and domes,

1) allowing for spacious interiors and large spans in buildings.

The Romans built extensive networks of aqueducts to transport water over long distances,

A) Showcasing their understanding of engineering principles and water management.

B) The Romans created an amazing Road Network facilitating trade and travel across the empire.

C) That elaborate Road System also helped in the spreading of the gospel all over the Roman empire

**But Despite its sophistication- the social climate of the Roman Empire was marked by**

**A) Economic Inequality**

B) The expansion of the empire led to a concentration of wealth among the upper classes,

1) while small farmers were often displaced from their land, causing a large population of impoverished urban dwellers.

C) This led to a social climate that was also marked by Violence and Unrest

D) The combination of economic hardship and political instability often led to riots/ violent clashes

1) between different social groups.

E) The reliance on slave labor created tension and unrest,

1) particularly when large-scale slave revolts occurred.

**Lastly the Social climate was marked by Political corruption:**

A) Bribery and manipulation within the Senate, along with the growing power of the emperor,

B) led to a lack of accountability and public trust of GOVT officials

C) Does this sound at all familiar - a highly advanced culture marked by social, economic and political strife -

1) People don't trust the GOVT - growing crime problem.

D) That is the world that Jesus came into and that is the world he was sending his followers into.

**One other thing that we need to mention - The Moral climate**

**A) The Moral climate of the Roman empire was greatly depraved**

B) According to Kyle Harper - an expert in the history of the late Roman world,

1) A professor of classics and senior vice president at the University of Oklahoma.

C) Rome was a culture of extreme promiscuity and inequality.

Roman Sexuality was about male Dominance -

A) A real man dominated in the bedroom as he did on the battlefield

B) Those who had power—male citizens—were able to express their sexuality by taking who and what they wanted.

C) A Roman man would have sex with his slaves whether they were male or female;

1) he would have homosexual encounters even while married;

D) even rape was generally acceptable as long as he only raped people of a lower status.

E) The only thing that was looked down upon was having sex with another man's wife.

Prostitution was part of the official, public face of Roman life,

A) not something hidden or in the background- It was seen as a proper outlet for a man's sexual energy.

B) If a man had sex with prostitutes before marriage, he would still be considered a virgin.

1) And if he had sex with prostitutes during marriage, it was not considered adultery.

They would even engage in pederasty

A) Which is a sexual relationship between an adult man and an adolescent boy.

B) See in the Roman world It was NOT considered shameful for older men to pursue boys

1) nor was it shameful for boys to give themselves to older men,.

C) The only thing that was considered shameful was for a grown man to play the passive role

1) in a homosexual relationship

D) So a consensual homosexual relationships were kept in the dark.

Women were not generally held in high regard in Roman culture.

A) Women were often seen as weak physically and mentally.

B) They were considered inferior to men and existed to serve the men as little more than slaves at times."

1) A woman's value was largely in her ability to bear children

C) and if she could not do so, she was quickly cast off.

D) Because lifespans were short and infant mortality high,

1) women were often married off in their young teens to maximize the number of children they could bear.

So that was the world that Jesus entered into

A) and that was the world that He would send his followers into to impact as Salt / Light

B) A sophisticated world marked by social, economic and political strife - pp didn't trust the GOVT

C) A Culture who's morality DECADENT and sexually deviant -

1) a world where women were oppressed

D) A world that had a growing crime problem

E) In other words - a world that was not much different from the world that we are living in today.

**But here is what is amazing to consider -**

**A) Within a few centuries of the birth of the church and the spreading of the gospel**

**B) the Roman empire was completely transformed**

**C) Christians literally turned the Roman world - upside down - or right side up**

**1) Largely because of Christians commitment to live out this idea of being Salt and light**

So in the remainder of our time this morning - before we celebrate Communion

A) I want us to consider what it would have meant for the followers of Jesus in the 1<sup>st</sup> century to be the Salt of the earth.

B) How we can do so today.

**C) Consider the four uses of Salt in 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman Empire.**

## #1 Salt purifies and cleanses:

A) In that culture: Baby was born – they were wiped down with water and then salted –

B) Picture the OBGYN – Salt shaker

1) Salt killed the bacteria on the skin and kept disease from impacting the babies.

C) So Salt was used as a purifier

Now consider how the early Church brought cleansing and purifying to their world

A) Through their teachings and way of living

B) The Teachings of the early church - radically challenged the normal ways of life in the Roman world - For example

C) Jesus taught this about Children:

“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to fall away—it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea.

Matthew 18:6

D) That is a heavy statement that would fly in the face of any and all child abuse.

E) Paul the apostle taught that fathers - were not to provoke their children to wrath.

The teachings of Jesus and the apostles elevated women.

A) The first person Jesus revealed himself to as Messiah was a woman at Well in Samaria

B) The first person to see Jesus risen from the dead was a woman Mary Magdalene - Mark 16:9

C) Peter referred to women as fellow heirs of the grace life. - 1 Peter 3:7

1) Equal in their relationship to God as men

D) In Christianity women were important members of the body of Christ and to the life of the church.

Christianity radically challenged the view of women and marriage in the Roman Empire

A) Paul wrote that Men were to love their wives like Christ loved the church -

B) Instead of being the Dominant King of their houses - men were to be servant leaders -

1) Putting the needs of the wife and children before their own

C) As men began to live that out - it stood in radical contrast to the whole mindset of Rome

When Paul wrote in Ephesians that a woman was to submit to her husband -

A) That wasn't a radical or offensive thought like it is seen today - Especially by Feminist

B) The Wife being submitted to her husband was the norm - but what was radical

1) was the idea that a wife was to submit to her husband as she would to Jesus -

C) Submission out of love and respect - not a subservient obedience

D) So the teaching of the word of God and the Living out of the word of God

1) had a Cleansing and purifying effect upon culture

That can happen in our culture today as well -

A) If we the church take seriously the instructions to live out our faith

B) Follow the Word of God - in our marriages and family life

C) The world is desperately wondering if it is even possible to love and be committed to one person over the course of a life

D) Strong Christian marriages prove that is possible - preferred - it is the way that God designed it

According to Harper - Rome taught that men didn't have a choice when it came to their lust

A) If they didn't indulge their lustful desires they would go wild.

B) The gospel of Jesus proclaims that men and women don't have to live in bondage to their lust

C) Christianity taught that when it comes to lust every person has a choice -

1) Paul said that every man should know how to abstain from sexual immorality - and possess his own body for Sanctification and honor

D) Paul wrote in Romans 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Paul was declaring - Your choices determine who or what you are going to be in bondage to.

A) But through Christ power living in your life through the Holy Spirit -

B) you don't have to live in bondage to your flesh

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Romans 6:12-14

C) So as the church embraced the Word of God and began to live according to the truths written there in

1) They had a purifying and cleansing affect upon their culture

D) Their lives stood in stark contrast to the normal way of life in the Roman empire.

E) So Salt had a Purifying and cleansing affect

**Salt was also used as a Preservative:**

A) Many of the Disciples were fishermen - there was no refrigeration or ice in the first century

B) Catch fish they would pack it in Salt - to keep it fresh.

1) Meat was also packed in Salt to preserve it and keep it from DECAYING

**OUR WORLD IS DECAYING!**

A) When things decay, they fall apart! - Favorite sweat shirt.....

B) We are seeing Society Falling Apart all around us: Morality is decaying "Marriages, Families,

1) Law & Order, - decaying

C) Sometimes the tendency of Christians living in a decaying world

1) we want to isolate ourselves from the world

D) As parents We rightly want to protect our children from the decay that is taking place all around us.

Sometimes we can take this isolate mentality too far.

A) In John 17 - Jesus prayed for the church - he said this- <sup>15</sup> I am not praying that you take them out of the world

B) Jesus knew if he takes us out of the world - the world is not going to be reached.

<sup>15</sup> I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

<sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them Set them apart by the truth; your word is truth.

B) Jesus was advocating them and for us - Be in the world - but not of the world.

C) We are in the world to be a preserving influence

The early church Christians seemed to understand that in order for them to be Salt in Society

A) They had to get the salt out of the salt shaker

B) They couldn't isolate themselves - they had to infiltrate and permeate the culture.

C) Go against the grain of the social and culture norms of the day.

D) One area where the early believers did this well was in the relationships between slaves and masters.

In the first century Slavery was a little different than in our American history

A) In the Roman world - slaves were considered the work force of the empire

B) The NT teachers taught that there needed to be a radical change in the relationship between

1) Slaves and Masters

C) In order to preserve the Imago Dei -

1) the idea that all human beings despite the color or country - made in the image of God

D) All humanity needed to be honored and respected

As the gospel spread throughout the Empire -

A)The NT taught the church that - Slaves in the church were to be treated as fellows Bros and sisters

B)They were members of the body of Christ

C)Masters were taught to treat their slaves with respect and dignity

1)and Slaves were to treat their Masters the same way

Paul even told one master by the name of Philemon -

A)Who had a slave who stole from him - got saved in prison

B)Forgive him and take him back not as Slave but as a brother

C)Forgive because you have been forgiven so much yourself

Jesus summed up all the commandments into these two:

A)Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength  
2<sup>nd</sup> Love your neighbor as yourself

B)The Church was called upon to Preserve that mindset -

1)by being the most loving and forgiving people on the planet

C)Jesus even took one step further encouraging his followers to love their enemies

1)and pray for those who persecute you.

D)The Love that the Church had for each other and their enemies melted the hearts of many of their critics

E)Tertullian -Early church father and historian wrote

“The Roman government was disturbed about the early church. Roman spies went into the Christian gathering and came back with a report something like this: “These Christians are very strange people. They speak of One by the name of Jesus, who is absent, but whom they seem to be expecting at any time. And, my, how they love Him and how they love one another.”

Imagine how the world would change today

A)if the church today took seriously are calling to be a preserving element

B)If we followed the model of the early church and realized - we need to get the salt out of the salt shaker

C)That means we can't isolate ourselves in our little Christian bubbles

We need to infiltrate and permeate our culture - by rubbing shoulders with unbelievers -

A)building relationships with people that don't know Jesus

B)Running for School boards - being on PTA's - being involved in places where we can have a voice and have that preserving affect

C)To be a voice of Reason in the midst of the Chaos  
1)Voting for things/ candidates that will preserve the truth of God's word in our culture

D)So Salt was used to Purify and cleanse - It was used to preserve

**#3 Salt brought healing:** The Roman soldier would often rub salt into their wounds on the battle field – so valuable – life saving  
A)Baseball – Red clay – Scrapes - Go to the beach – Healing

B)One of the things that I have discovered as a pastor is this:

1)90% of the people who come through those doors are carrying some type of hurt

C)Been said - Hurt people - hurt people. - Horrible cycle

D)People are hurting - people are carrying baggage -  
1)the longer I am alive on planet earth the more I realize this

E)I Love to ask people their stories -

1)Learn to listen - inevitably this is what you discover - there is a hurt in there - shaped them

F)In Many ways it has defined them -

1)It plays a part in how people see the world - how they react to others and interact with others

But Jesus declared in Luke 4 that he came in the power of the Holy Spirit who *has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor;*

*He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,*

*To proclaim liberty to the captives  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

So Jesus came into the world to bring healing to those who were hurting

A)He realized how broken the world is -  
COMPASSION

B)Now he sends us out into the world to being  
HEALING AGENTS

C)BRING Help, care and compassion to the hurting  
around us

You know what it takes to put salt on an open  
wound? - Trust!

A)Salt on an open wound stings - trust you to get  
close and do it right

B)So too the truth of God's word - stings - confronts  
and convicts

C)So in if we are going to be those who impact  
hurting lives with the healing of the gospel -  
1)have to build trust

D)Apply salt to an open wound requires some  
intimacy

E)Not shot from afar! - Up close and personal  
relationships with unbelievers -  
1)Problem for some of us

Questions show of hands

#1 How many of you when you when you got saved -  
had some unsaved friends who also got saved after  
you did?

#2 How many of you had unsaved friends who didn't  
want to hang out with you anymore? Lost those  
friends

#3 How many of you after you got saved and plugged  
into the church have found most if not all your  
friendships are with other Christians?

Listen that is normal - it is comfortable

A)We get involved in the church - home group -  
serving in the church

B)Before we know it - realize I am rarely engaging  
with non-Christians anymore. -

1)No unsaved friends - only acquaintances

C)I think this is how many Christians lose their  
Saltiness - They no longer have unsaved friends.

If we are going to be the Salt that Jesus wants us to  
be -

A)We are going to have to get intentional about  
building relationships with unsaved people

B)Take a Co-worker to lunch get to know them -

C)Frequent the same restaurants - coffee shops -  
Gym -

D)When your Kids are in youth sports don't just  
gravitate toward the other saved parents

1)Get to know the ones who are not saved

E)Get to know them - show interest in them, show  
them you care -

1)Eventually they will open up about a hurt - Share  
Jesus with them

**F)So Salt Purifies, Preserves, Brings Healing**

**#4 Salt enhanced the flavor of things** - The Greeks  
called salt "charitas" (grace) because it gave flavor to  
things.

A)SALT SEASONS WHATEVER IT TOUCHES!

B)So too our lives can add the incredible flavor of  
Grace to this world – through our speech – through  
our actions

“Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside,  
redeeming the time. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always *be* with  
grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how  
you ought to answer each one.” ~ Colossians 4:6

President Woodrow Wilson told the story of being at  
barbershop one day

"I was sitting in a barber chair when a man came  
quietly into the same shop as myself to have his hair  
cut and sat in the chair next to me. Every word the  
man uttered, showed a personal interest in the man  
who was cutting his hair.

What he was saying was very genuine and I didn't  
detect any form of ulterior motive other than the  
personal welling being of the Barber.

But before I got through with my haircut I was aware I had attended an evangelistic service, because Mr. D. L. Moody was the man in that chair. {Billy Graham of his day.

THEN HE SAID THIS: So POWERFUL  
I purposely lingered in the room after he had left and noted the singular affect that his visit had brought upon the barber shop.

People were talking about this man even though they did not know his name, but they knew something had elevated their thoughts, and I felt that as I left that place, it was like I had left a place of worship."

WOW!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Lord help us to leave that type of impact upon the places we enter!**

**A)Happens when we get our eyes off of ourselves –**

B)become others centered and people oriented – seeking the personal wellbeing of others

C)Jesus was that Way! – He was called the friend of sinners – they enjoyed being around him–  
1)He added Flavor to his world.

**Sadly that is not always the case with some Christians today -**

A)They come off as Holier than thou

B)They project an us against them mentality

C)That is not the way Jesus did it! - We are to be Image Bearers of Him

It is interesting that in this analogy Jesus said

A)that Salt that loses its flavor it is good for nothing but to be trampled underfoot by men

B)Here is the point of that statement - Salt that loses its flavor was used to cover the roads and walk ways in the winter months

C)People would walk over it without even thinking about it -no after thought we are walking on Salt

When Christian's lose their Saltiness -

A)when we quit have a purifying preserving - healing and flavor enhancing effect on our culture

B)the world walks over us and by us without even noticing us

**Close with this thought**

**A)If you suddenly were called to move to another State – left your place of work – place where you lived.**

**B)Would you be missed? Would people even know you were gone?**

**C)Do people even know who you are? Because you have made an effort to engage your culture?**

D)Not asking these questions to make anyone feel bad – I am just asking the question – Consider – Are you making an impact?

**E)Salt Creates thirst - Are we creating a thirst in others who need Jesus?**

Augustine wrote "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You,"

A)Meaning that humans are created with a deep longing for God

I like the way Author Mark Matlock- Author of the book Faith for the Curious framed it in an interview he was doing this week. "So if we think about the image of God as being that mirror that reflected the Glory of God in all of us as human beings, but then sin fractures that mirror - that means all people have this little shard of God's image in them and it's trying to get bigger. They are looking for an upgrade, how do I get this thing out of me that I feel deeply inside of me even though I am not sure what it is."

B)We who have met Jesus understand - that is how it happens

1)We have been called to model what that relationship looks like to the rest of the World.

C)We need to embrace that We are here to make an Eternal Impact

1)That is why we exist here on Planet earth!