

## **Salt and Light – Sunday October 14<sup>th</sup> 2012.**

***“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.***

***<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup> nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.: Matthew 5:13-16***

Beloved in the Lord,

Today, maybe more than ever before, it is vital that we who bear the name “Christian” take heed that our salt is salty and that our light is shining brightly. It seems that society is sliding downhill very rapidly. Morals have collapsed, families are being torn apart. Today people more than ever are selfish, self-seeking, self-serving. People are looking out for number one and that is all. There are very few stable governments around the world. Things are no longer black or white, right or wrong. Everything is turned into a grey porridge.

It is time for every Christian to wake up, open his or her eyes and to take notice of God’s call. Jesus said: ***“You are the salt of the earth, You are the light of the world.”*** Our purpose, our mission is to be salt and light.

One of the main functions of salt, apart from adding flavour to things, is to preserve things, so that they will not go off. In olden days meat was salted to preserve it. Salt slowed down the corruption process.

Because the majority of people do not live for God, are alienated from Him by sin, they are living lives that are corrupted. Not only that, a consequence of their sinful lives is the corruption of God’s world, His creation. Sin has far reaching consequences. That is why Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans that the whole of creation awaits the coming of Jesus.

We read in Romans 8:19-22

***“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”***

Adam’s sin. not only subjected mankind to the slavery of sin, but also all of creation. Sin has very far-reaching consequences. We do not have time today to go deeper into this fact, but I do want to stress the universal effects of sin. Because of sin we have decay, corruption, death.

Jesus taught: ***“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”*** John 10:10

Salt does not stop corruption altogether, but it does slow the process down. Our God given task is to be salt in our families, in our community, in our work place, in the place where we live, wherever we may be or go. We are to function as salt. Working against the corruption and decay that is all around us. Adding God’s flavour to all things and situations.

The problem is that for many Christians their salt has lost its saltiness. It has become diluted. It has been soaking in the waters of compromise and all the saltiness has gone. For example: Many Churches today no longer teach about sin, eternal condemnation, hell, the need for repentance. Many so called ministers no longer believe the truth that Jesus stated in John 14:6 when He said: ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”***

This text is a foundation stone for Christianity, yet it is being rejected by so many who call themselves Christians. Many are preaching the lie that all roads or many roads lead to God. The salt has lost its saltiness! There are Churches that are ordaining open and practicing homosexuals and are bowing to the call to support gay marriage. The salt has lost its saltiness! There are Churches that have removed the cross as a symbol because some find it offensive. The salt has lost its saltiness! This salt is useless. We need to understand the gravity of the situation. If the salt in the Church is no longer salty, with what power will corruption be halted? If Churches are not standing on the Truth and power of God’s Word, how will people know the truth? If we are not salt, if we are not doing God’s work, who will? No one else has been given the function to act as salt and light, because apart from Jesus there is no truth. Apart from God’s Word there is no truth. There are not many truths – there is one Truth. There are not many ways to God – there is one Way – Jesus. There is life only in Jesus. We need to understand this beyond a shadow of doubt.

All around us people are dying in sin. Our God given role is to be salt. Let us not be shy or backward. Let us never compromise the truth. Let us never water down God’s Word in order to be liked.

People all around us need our salt to be salty. Someone rightly said that the only Bible someone may read is you.

If your witness is not salty then your faith is useless. Jesus said it this way:

***“but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.”***

Jesus also said the same thing using a different illustration in John chapter 15:

***“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may***

**bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”** John 15:1-6

I think that it is not hard for us to understand what Jesus is saying here. The key is abiding in Him, abiding in His Word. The more we focus on Jesus, the more we meditate upon the Word of God, the saltier our salt will become. The closer we are to Jesus, the more potent our faith and witness.

Of course the opposite is true. If we do not abide in Him, if we do not daily read His Word, if we do not live in and by The Holy Spirit, then our salt loses its flavour.

This brings us to the second illustration in our text – Light.

**Jesus said: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup> nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”**

It is important for us to understand that in Bible times, both Old and New Testament times, light was a symbol for truth, a right understanding about things. We still speak of a person as being “enlightened” today. A person who lives in Jesus is enlightened, because such a person is living in the truth, he knows the truth, and the truth has set him free.

Most people are living in the dark. They live out life with a darkened heart, with a darkened understanding. They are blinded to the light. They do not see the truth. Their understanding is darkened by sin and rebellion.

Our function, is to be the light that shines in a dark world. I like flying in the new modern aircraft that have a screen in the seat. There is a camera on the front of the plane that relays the forward image right to your seat. It is called the pilot’s view. Flying at night it is fascinating to watch the view as the plane comes into land. There are rows of lights that illuminate the runway. You can clearly see the path the plane needs to take. We are to be like these lights that show the way, that illuminate the path. Our light needs to shine brightly so that people see the way.

If we are truly Christians then we cannot hide that truth. The Light of Christ should be shining from us. It should be that when people meet us, when they interact with us or observe us, that there is something different about us. As they listen to the words that proceed from our mouths they should perceive something different.

In appearance, Jesus looked like any other man of His time. What distinguished Him was His personality, His love, His compassion, His gracious speech, His demeanour, His authority. He shone the Light of God. From Him flowed the Spirit of God. He had God's peace, God's joy, God's love and God's mercy.

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we have Christ in our hearts. How brightly His light shines through us is dependent upon how much we let it.

That is why Paul wrote:

***“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*** Rom. 12:1-2

Offer yourself to God and be the salt and light that He wants you to be, to His glory.

***Amen.***

Pastor Colvin S. MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.

All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.