

The Light And Salt Integrity

“You are the salt of earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:13-16)

Jesus in the passage for this message has described His disciples in what condition they should be. True disciples are the people who follow the Lord Jesus. They believe that He took their sins and paid the price by His suffering and cruel death on the cross. And through Jesus’ resurrection from the dead they have hope and life eternal. Jesus gave His life for them and in return they ought to give their lives to Him.

God is Spirit and is invisible. Jesus is the image of the invisible God, but now He is on the right side of the Father. Therefore, He as well is already invisible in this world. But the disciples can see Him by His words implanted in their hearts. The unbelievers and people away from Jesus and God cannot see Him because on their eyes He is invisible; their hearts are hardened and cannot accept God’s word.

Jesus is alive! So, how can the people see Him and His goodness? How can they feel His real love? The main medium is through His disciples; the true disciples whom Jesus described as:

1. The light of the world: Without light people walk in darkness. They cannot see their ways and their activities would cease without success. Light is very much needed. But how should the light be? It has to be bright, shining, clear and in a position that is effective for everyone so that the people and the world could see clearly. If the light is dim or it is covered, the vision would be unclear. People might be tempted to pass through a dim light, follow the wrong way, and accordingly may go astray. They could face accidents and acquire bruises. As a result, their bruises may heal but scars are always there which make their hearts callous and resistant to the word of God. ***“And if someone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.” (Mark 9:42)*** Hence, the disciples of Jesus must always make their light shine brightly before men to avoid mishap and death.

2. The salt of earth: Jesus used another common thing in this world to give insight to His disciples how they should be. Salt changes the taste of the big pot of soup. It may become palatable or unpalatable according to the salt that is put. But generally, salt must be for the advantage; to give good taste for meals and preserve foods from spoiling. ***“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.” (Mark 9:50)*** ***“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” (Colossians 4:6)*** By the law of the Lord Jesus, those who believe in Him, His disciples are the vessels who carry the love of God and His compassion to the whole world. They must be the catalysts to bring peace and reconciliation to the people around them and to the community where they live. ***“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)*** They are to bring the joy and the good news to the people living away from God. ***“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news.” (Romans 10:15)*** The disciples of Jesus are not only to give the nice taste or testimony of life, but they must convey the essential elements and correct ways of living to the people around them. As long as they are the disciples of Jesus they are always responsible and

accountable to God. ***“There is no salt without salty taste. It is either all or none.”*** If the salt loses its saltiness it is no more called salt but dust or dirt. If the disciples of Jesus lose their integrity, they are no more called disciples but just ordinary naïve people, they who know God but refuse to follow Jesus.

Jesus spoke about the light and salt to describe the indispensable matters that all the world is in need for and cannot live properly without. Salt and light have the criteria to change conditions and to bring transformations among people and societies. God counts on the disciples, and the world supposes to expect much good things from them.

A disciple, to be an effective light and salt should have integrity in life. *Integrity constitutes:*

1. Moral excellence: The hidden part of the disciple’s life or that is not exposed to the people should be holy, without depravity. To be an effective disciple he should be honest not only in front of the people but to God who knows all things. ***“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 4:13)*** You are kind to the people outside your house, but with your family you are doing the opposite thing. You may be fruitful in the church, but weary about your own life. By these attitudes you lose moral excellence. The material salt and light are not effective as what are or as how they are seen, but they are effective because of the substances that they bear that enable them to do the good work and accomplish the best purpose. A disciple that bears honesty and integrity outside and within is effectively used by God to change the world from sin. He has great influence to the people because the Spirit of God is always with him.

2. Wholeness: The completeness or soundness of a disciple is not the possession that he has or material things that he gains. Wholeness comes after maturity and wholeness is portrayed by the fruits of the Holy Spirit. ***“Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:20)*** A disciple with integrity bears good fruit of the Spirit and shares the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is in Him. ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22- 23)***

3. Integrity is more than a reputation: Reputation may mean what the people want you to be. But integrity is what God wants you to be. You may have good reputation, but you are compromising the teachings of Jesus. You accept the word of God but you do not apply it in your action and in your life. You may have good name but you are going with the world’s corruption. Your aim is to satisfy people but what you do is not pleasing to God. You are keen to be known among men in good status but you are not strengthening your personal relationship with God. Gaining reputation or good name may impress people. But if you lack integrity you can not be an effective catalyst to change the world in the way that God would be pleased with. When you lack integrity you will lack frankness and openness, you will hide things and you will not do what God wants you to do with sincerity. You may achieve your goals but your work in serving God is backed up by hidden wrong motives. And the people around you or those who follow you are led astray. You, as a disciple of Jesus is under God’s scrutiny.

My Dear and Beloved: If you want to be an effective light and salt in the hand of God, be a reliable person who brings changes in the atmosphere and environment you are in. There should be no gap between your words and deeds, or your claim and lifestyle. Your consistency and steadfastness to be an effective light of the world and salt of the earth depend on your integrity.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself in your hand, change me and mold me and transform me in the way that you wants me to be an effective disciples in your kingdom, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.*