

The King's Representatives

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The King and His Glory / Salt; Light; Light of the World / Matthew 5:13–16

King Jesus gives His representatives on earth (present and future) two critical expectations.

Pre-sermon Comments

[2 Corinthians 2:15](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

[2 Corinthians 2:14](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and manifests through us the aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

Sermon Text

Matthew 5:13–16 LSB

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out to be trampled under foot by men. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ “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.

Introduction to our Text

[Matthew 5:13](#) (LSB) ¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out to be trampled under foot by men.

We use it to make leather, pottery, soap, detergents, rubber, clothes, paper, cleaning products, glass, plastics, and pharmaceuticals. It sits largely unnoticed

on hundreds of millions of café and restaurant tables around the world. ~
Andrew Wilson

Proposition and Outline

In Matthew 5:14-16, King Jesus gives His representatives on earth (present and future) two critical expectations. As His disciples, your King expects you to:

Today!

1. **Be a Preserving Agent in the World ([Matt 5:13](#))**
 - a. **Jesus proclaims, “You are the salt of the earth!”**
 - b. **Jesus expects you “To be salty!”**

Next time!

1. **Have an Illuminating Presence to the World ([Matt 5:14-16](#))**
 - a. **Jesus proclaims, “You are the light of the world!”**
 - b. **Jesus expects you “To let your light shine!”**

King Jesus Expects You to Be a Preserving Agent in the World

Review

[Matt 1](#) - Salt of the Earth Genealogy

Matthew 1:1 LSB

¹ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Matthew 1:18 LSB

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

Matt 2 - Jesus Himself was the salt of the earth

Matthew 2:1-2 LSB

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ² “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

Matthew 2:4-5 LSB

⁴ And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he was inquiring of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ And they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

[Luke 1:80](#) (LSB) ⁸⁰ And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the desolate regions until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Matt 3 - John the Baptist was salt of the earth

Matthew 3:1-2 LSB

¹ Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 3:4 LSB

⁴ Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

[Matthew 3:16-17](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ And after being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him, ¹⁷ and behold, *there was* a voice out of the heavens saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Matt 4 - Jesus’s disciples were the salt of the earth

Matthew 4:1 LSB

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Matthew 4:11 LSB

¹¹ Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and *began to minister* to Him.

[Matthew 4:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

[Matt 5](#) - Are you His disciple?

Matthew 5:1-2 LSB

¹ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ² And He opened His mouth and *began to teach* them, saying,

Matthew 5:3-11 LSB

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

[Matthew 5:12](#) (LSB) ¹² “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Jesus proclaims, “You are the salt of the earth!”

[Matthew 5:13](#) (LSB) ¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out to be trampled under foot by men.”

What are the functions of salt?

Salt Gives Flavor

[Colossians 4:6](#) (LSB) ⁶ Let your words always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should answer each person.

[Ephesians 2:2-3](#) (LSB) ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom we all also formerly conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Salt can be used as an antiseptic which burns

Christians are to sting the world, prick its conscience, make it uncomfortable in the presence of God's holy gospel. ~ John MacArthur

2 Timothy 4:3-4 LSB

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Think of the action of salt on a wound. If you get salt into a wound, it hurts, and when God's children are amongst those who are "raw" toward God, their presence hurts. The man who is wrong with God is like an open wound, and when "salt" gets in, it causes annoyance and distress and he is spiteful and bitter. The disciples of Jesus preserve society from corruption; the "salt" causes excessive irritation which spells persecution for the saint. ~ **Oswald Chambers**

Salt Causes Thirst

Matthew 5:6 LSB

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

[John 4:10](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

John 4:13-14 LSB

¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst—ever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

God uses salt in judgment

Genesis 19:26 LSB

²⁶ Then his wife, from behind him, looked *back*, and she became a pillar of salt.

Luke 17:32–33 LSB

³² “Remember Lot’s wife. ³³ “Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it.

[Deuteronomy 29:23](#) (LSB) ²³ ‘All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and nothing sprouting, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which Yahweh overthrew in His anger and in His wrath.’

[Judges 9:45](#) (LSB) ⁴⁵ So Abimelech fought against the city all that day, and he captured the city and killed the people who *were* in it; then he tore the city down and sowed it with salt.

[Psalm 107:34](#) (LSB) ³⁴ A fruitful land into a salt waste, Because of the evil of those who inhabited it.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 LSB

¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

Salt was used as sacrifices in the Old Testament

[Leviticus 2:13](#) (LSB) ¹³ ‘Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall bring salt near.

[Romans 12:1–2](#) (LSB) ¹ Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Salt Preserves

‘Ye are the salt of the earth.’ What does that imply? It clearly implies rottenness in the earth; it implies a tendency to pollution and to becoming foul

and offensive. That is what the Bible has to say about this world. It is fallen, sinful and bad. Its tendency is to evil and to wars. It is like meat which has a tendency to putrefy and to become polluted. ~ Martyn Lloyd Jones

[Genesis 6:5](#) (LSB) ⁵ Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[Romans 1:18](#) (LSB) ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

[Romans 1:24–25](#) (LSB) ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

As God's children and as the temples of His Holy Spirit, Christians represent God's presence in the earth. We are the salt that prevents the entire earth from degenerating even faster than it is. ~ John MacArthur

Conclusion:

Jesus expects you “To be salty!”

As His representative, He expects you to:

- **Give flavor to a bland world.**
- **Be a purifying and cleansing agent in the world**
- More than anything, your presence should have a preserving effect on the world around you.

The Lord's Table

1 Corinthians 11:23–34 LSB

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was being betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when He

had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.”²⁵ In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes.²⁷ Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.²⁸ But a man must test himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.²⁹ For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.³⁰ For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.³¹ But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.³² But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.³³ So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.³⁴ If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will direct when I come.

Further Quotes for Your Consideration

A Christian is salt, and salt is the most concentrated thing known. Salt preserves wholesomeness and prevents decay. It is a disadvantage to be salt. Think of the action of salt on a wound. If you get salt into a wound, it hurts, and when God’s children are amongst those who are “raw” toward God, their presence hurts. The man who is wrong with God is like an open wound, and when “salt” gets in, it causes annoyance and distress and he is spiteful and bitter. The disciples of Jesus preserve society from corruption; the “salt” causes excessive irritation which spells persecution for the saint. ~ **Oswald Chambers**

Like it or not, you’re the salt of the earth. The only question is whether you’re salty or whether you’ve lost your salty flavor. You are the salt; you either have savor or you don’t. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

There is a sense in which salt cannot really become unsalty. But contamination can cause it to lose its value as salt. Its saltiness can no longer function. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

During a period of ancient Greek history it was called *theon*, which means divine. The Romans held that, except for the sun, nothing was more valuable than salt. Often Roman soldiers were paid in salt, and it was from that practice that the expression “not worth his salt” originated. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Jesus also calls us to be light. **You are the light of the world.** Whereas salt is hidden, light is obvious. Salt works secretly, while light works openly. Salt works from within, light from without. Salt is more the indirect influence of the gospel, while light is more its direct communication. Salt works primarily through our living, while light works primarily through what we teach and preach. Salt is largely negative. It can retard corruption, but it cannot change corruption into incorruption. Light is more positive. It not only reveals what is wrong and false but helps produce what is righteous and true. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Christians cannot lose their salvation, just as salt cannot lose its inherent saltiness. But Christians can lose their value and effectiveness in the kingdom when sin and worldliness contaminate their lives, just as salt can become **tasteless** when contaminated by other minerals. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

As God’s children and as the temples of His Holy Spirit, Christians represent God’s presence in the earth. We are the salt that prevents the entire earth from degenerating even faster than it is. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

In preaching this is often made an admonition, “ought to be.” But the admonition would be far stronger if the incontrovertible fact were stressed that all believers *are salt*; their very faith makes them salt, and if they are not salt they are not believers. ~ **Richard C. H. Lenski**

The church, on the other hand, is set in the world with a double role, as salt to arrest—or at least to hinder—the process of social decay, and as light to dispel the darkness. ~ **John Stott**

The function of salt is largely negative: it prevents decay. The function of light is positive: it illumines the darkness. ~ **John Stott**

There are two pictures of the Christian in closing: salt and the light. Salt speaks of inward character that influences a decaying world; light speaks of the outward testimony of good works that points to God. Our task is to keep our lives pure that we might “salt” this earth and hold back corruption so that the Gospel can get out. Our good works must accompany our dedicated lives as we let our lights shine ~ **Warren W. Wiersbe**

As Christians we are citizens of a country, and it is our business to play our part as citizens, and thereby act as salt indirectly in innumerable respects. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

The Master is conveying a warning: salt must be salty or it will be thrown out; light must shine. ~ **Leon Morris**

The section comes fittingly after the beatitudes: it is the little people, those with no merit of their own to plead but who have been accepted by God in all their lowliness, who are the salt and the light. Jesus has spoken of their blessedness; now he turns to their responsibility. ~ **Leon Morris**

The church, as salt, functions as a retardant to decay and a preservative in a disintegrating world. ~ **R. Kent Hughes**

“You are the salt of the earth” is that the world tends toward decomposition and is actually rotting away. ~ **R. Kent Hughes**

Salt seasons, purifies, preserves. But somebody ought to remind us that salt also irritates. Real living Christianity rubs this world the wrong way. ~ **Havner, Vance**

Unsalty salt is a contradiction in terms (“like water losing its wetness,” Betz); if it is not salty, it is not salt. ~ **R. T. France**

The purpose of salt is to fight deterioration, and therefore it must not itself deteriorate. ~ **D. A. Carson**

Next time: King Jesus Expects You to Have an Illuminating Presence to the World

Jesus proclaims, “You are the light of the world!”

Jesus expects you “To let your light shine!”