

Introduction:

- When we look at the life of Jesus, we look at the influence that one man, the Son of God, had on the entire history and culture of the world. Jesus was far more influential than Alexander the Great, Caesar, Mao, Marx, Mohammed, and Napoleon combined. Jesus shed more light on things than all the schools, and philosophers combined! He spoke more profoundly than the worlds best orators. No man was able to stand against His wisdom. He is influence, itself!
- As His followers, the ekklesia, we are called, by Him, to be people of powerful influence too!
- Our text for today comes from Mt. 5:13-16. It is part of the sermon on the mount and it follows Mt 4:19 where Jesus calls disciples to come and follow Him and be made into fishers of men.
- *"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."* (Matthew 5:13–16, NLT)
- Father just wants your heart. Salt and light influence the heart. And a changed heart influences the world!

I. The Lost Are On God's Heart This first point is somewhat a repeat from last week but we have to keep the lost, the scattered and those in danger of being destroyed in front of us.

A. Who are they, the lost? Who is it that is lost?

1. The lost are the people that are away from God. They are separated from God. They are dwelling in spiritual darkness. They are spiritually dead. The lost are those who have not yet found eternal life in Christ Jesus. They are those who are yet to discover the love of God, the depths of His mercy and His incredibly forgiving heart!
2. It is hard to admit you are lost.
3. In Luke 15 Jesus describes the lost as a lost sheep, lost coin, lost son. And as we saw clearly last week: If something is lost it is not in its right place. If something is lost it's ruined; destroyed; wasted or squandered. Jesus introduces us to three lost things.
 - a) The Lost Sheep - is lost because it wondered off and had no idea how to get back. It is alone, by itself and is living in danger of death and being destroyed. Is 53:6
 - b) Lost coin - it is lost and does not even know it is lost. It does not know that it needs to be found. Many, maybe even the majority of people that are lost and do not know it!
 - c) The lost son - is lost because he chose to be lost. He made a series of decisions to be lost and he knows the way back but is not sure he will be welcomed back. Ie. Adam and Eve/ God, "Where are you?"

B. How does God feel about the Lost?

1. Last week we saw: The point of the parables in Luke 15 is that God is greatly concerned about the lost and will go to great lengths to get that which was lost back.
 - a) What lengths are you willing to go to in order to get the lost found?
 - b) Do you have the heart of God and are you weighted with concern for those who do not know Jesus? God is going to great extremes to find the lost sheep (leaves 99), lost coins (tears the house apart) lost son (looks every day and welcomes him home)!
 2. God does not want anyone to perish! *"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9, ESV)
 3. God does not want anyone to die without Him. *"Do you think that I like to see wicked people die? says the Sovereign Lord. Of course not! I want them to turn from their wicked ways and live."* (Ezekiel 18:23, NLT)
 4. God was so concerned that He gave His one and only Son so that lost people would not perish but find everlasting life. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16, ESV)
 5. God is so concerned that when a sinner is saved and turns to God heaven throws a party because the lost matter to God. *"Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* (Luke 15:10, ESV)
- C. Three things we learn about God here:
1. The lost matter greatly to God. He has profound concern for the lost!
 2. The lost can be found. That is why the shepherd searched and the woman searched and the Father looked daily.
 3. God call us to join Him in search of the lost. He calls us to have the same concern!

II. We Are To Be Salt!

- A. When Jesus says, *"You are the salt of the earth."* He is telling us to be influencers in the world.
1. Salt influences in several ways. Jesus is pointing his disciples down a clear path He is calling them to. He is laying out His expectation of them/us. You are the salt of the earth. Salt is penetrating, quick and powerful. It is like the Word: *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12, ESV)
 2. Salt flavors. It is easy to over salt because of the power of salts influence.
 3. Salt Preserves, prevents spoilage. Ie. Salt pork.
 4. Salt purifies. It purifies air through ionization.
- B. We are commissioned by Christ to influence the earth with the message of the Gospel, of

Life, of the Kingdom!

1. We are to be the ones who influence our society. Not the other way around.
 2. Jesus did not shed His blood so that we could be like everybody else.
 3. Jesus did not sacrifice His life for us so that we could sit on the sidelines and be idle, out of the game, a non-participant!
 4. Jesus has called us to make a difference.
 5. Jesus has called us to set the tone, flavor of the Kingdom of God in the earth.
- C. When salt loses its ability to flavor, preserve or purify it has become worthless.
1. **Lost it's flavor** comes from (μωρανθη [mōranthēi]). The verb is from μωρος [mōros] (dull, sluggish, stupid, foolish) and means to play the fool, to become foolish, of salt become tasteless, insipid (Mark 9:50) Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Mt 5:13). Broadman Press.
 2. The point Jesus makes in this passage is: If we stop being salt, and we stop being a positive influence on our culture and society, we become worthless!
 - a) IE: I think that maybe my biggest fear in life, to be insignificant. I want to make difference in the lives of people around me and in my path! I want my life to be Kingdom Impacting on others.
 - b) I think most people ask themselves at some point. "Is my life making difference?" We ask that because want to make a difference. Jesus is saying, "Make a difference."
 - c) Jesus is answering that question: "Only if you are salty will you make a difference! Only if you are influencing others with the Kingdom will you make a difference."
- D. Man, by nature, sinks deeper into darkness the longer he lives.
1. In Scripture, mankind, of its own evil nature, are seen as entirely corrupt.
 2. Before the flood. "*And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.*" (Genesis 6:12, ESV)
 3. After the flood. "*...for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.*" (Genesis 8:21, ESV)
 4. David declares: "*They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.*" (Psalm 14:3, ESV)
 5. In the days of Isaiah (Is 1:5, 6); and in the days of Paul (Eph 2:1-3)
 6. The cure is for the church to be salt and influence this dark world.

III. We Are To Be Shining Lights!

- A. "*You are the light of the world!*" (vs 14)
1. The "you" here is emphatic, in other words, "You, my followers and none others, are the light of the world!" (Carson, Expositor's Bible Commentary, The, Pradis CD-ROM:Matthew).
 2. In the OT as in the NT, Light most frequently symbolizes purity as opposed to filth. It symbolizes truth or knowledge as opposed to error or ignorance. Light symbolizes

divine revelation and presence as opposed to condemnation and abandonment by God.

- B. But I thought Jesus was the light of the world??? Greatest influencer ever! "*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*" (John 9:5, ESV) While He was in the world he was the light of the world. Now He is with the Father and we are in the world. He is in us! Therefore we are the light of the world!
1. Where there is light, people can find their way. Where there is darkness they stumble and are lost.
 2. We can see again that Jesus is referring to us in terms that indicate we are indispensable. He needs us to shine the Light!
- C. Jesus compares us to a city on a hill and a lamp on a stand.
1. Like those ancient cities, and like a lamp on a stand, we should be easily visible to those who do not know Christ.
 2. IE. A lamp on a stand was a shallow bowl of oil with a wick. It would normally be stationary; placed on a fixed lamp-stand. As such it gave light to the whole room.
 3. Jesus speaks from common sense that it would be ridiculous for his disciples to hide their good deeds from the world.
- D. We shouldn't hide our light for two reasons.
1. First, it wouldn't make sense to light a lamp so that we would have light and then hide under a basket. That would defeat the purpose for which it was intended.
 2. Second, we have all learned from experience and junior high science class, that if we cover a burning flame it goes out.
 3. **Even so** (οὕτως [*houtōs*]). "The adverb points backward to the lamp-stand. Thus, men are to let their light shine, not to glorify themselves, but "your Father in heaven." Light shines that others may see, not to call attention to itself." Robertson, A. T. (1933). Word Pictures in the New Testament (Mt 5:13). Broadman Press.

Conclusion:

- Salt is meant to influence, light is meant to shine!
- If the light does not shine for others and the salt does not influence others they both are useless...worthless in Jesus words.
 - Salt has influence: flavoring, and preservation. Disciples are to make the world a better place.
 - Light shines for all to see. Jesus is the greatest light ever. When He is gone the church become the light of the world!
 - How do we influence the earth or the world? Stay lit and stay salt. A little bit goes a long way
- "The Master is conveying a warning: salt must be salty or it will be thrown out; light must shine to all or it is of no use." Morris, L. (1992). The Gospel according to Matthew (p. 103). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.