*Introduction*

We look again this morning at "Jesus attitudes towards..." which as we go through the book of Matthew, we will see how differently Jesus interpreted the Scriptures to that of the Pharisees etc, and of course, we will see the correct attitude towards many of our behaviours.

Having looked at the Beatitudes last week we saw how our attitude should be in all sorts of situations, realising that we are not to look downwards, or around us, but up to Him.

So this morning, God willing, we are going to consider the next attitude that Jesus has towards his disciples and to us as believers.

Jesus calls us to be Salt and Light, but what does that mean?

READ: Matthew 5: 13-20

PRAY

First of all, let me say that if Jesus speaks about it, it has to be important...and we should take notice.

Let me tell you a few things about salt.

1. Out of all the salt manufactured around the world, where do you think the greatest percentage is used?

6% used in food

12% in water conditioning

8% de icing the roads

6% in Agriculture

68% used in Manufacturing and other industrial processes, e.g. PVC, plastics, paper pulp, synthetic rubber, firing of pottery, Tanning, Canning processes.

In 2013 the world mined 264 Million metric Tonnes

2. Which country do you think produces the most salt?

the top five producers being China (71 million), the United States (40 million), India (18 million), Germany (12 million) and Canada (11 million)

Jesus said ***13‘You are the salt of the earth***

he also said in ***14‘You are the light of the world***

Let us look at salt first.

The Bible has a lot to say about salt. Probably the first thing we think of is Lot's wife

***Gen 19:26 But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.***

When Lot and his family were escaping from Sodom and Gomorrah they were told NOT to look back, but she did and this was the result.

***Ex 30:34Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take fragrant spices – gum resin, onycha and galbanum – and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, 35and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred. 36Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the ark of the covenant law in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.***

God told Moses to make sure it was salted.

***Lev 2:12You may bring them to the Lord as an offering of the firstfruits, but they are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. 13Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.***

***2 Kings 2:19The people of the city said to Elisha, ‘Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive.’***

***20‘Bring me a new bowl,’ he said, ‘and put salt in it.’ So they brought it to him.***

***21Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, ‘This is what the Lord says: “I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.”’ 22And the water has remained pure to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.***

When salt was thrown into the bad water, it was healed, it became productive and good to drink.

So salt is something that is good, and Jesus says that we are the Salt of the Earth!

That is quite a statement.

If we continued to look at different verses throughout the scriptures we would see that:

Salt is very important to God in His dealing with his people.

It is a healer and it is to be part of the sacrifices brought before Him.

Therefore our Christian lives are to be salt to the rest of the world, that means, not only are we salt, but we are to flavour the lives of others with our saltiness.

Even Job knew that plain food needed salt to make it worth eating.

But salt has to be used properly. It is no good throwing a pile ofd salt on your dinner because that would make it inedible, you have to put just the right amount on in order to enrich the flavour and make something good to eat.

Paul says:

***1 Cor 13:1 If I speak in the tongues[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-28667a)***] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal***

We have a message from God, it is the Gospel of Christ, but if we do not speak it in love it will not be taken on board.

People have to know they have a need, before they will accept the message.

So Paul likens our saltiness to speaking in love, flavouring our message.

But Jesus takes it further by say we ARE SALT. This means that everything we do needs to reflect that, needs to point to Christ in a way that will make the message attractive.

Paul goes on to say:

***Col 4:5 Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.***

Here Paul is saying that seasoning with salt is like wisdom, knowing what to say, how to say it and when to say it.

When Paul writes to Timothy he says:

***2 Tim 4:2 preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.***

Our message is true and should not be changed to suit the world, or the next fad that comes along, Gods word is the same - ALWAYS, but we are to deliver it with patience and carefully.

As Christians, or followers of Christ, we have a testimony to maintain.

Our speech is one thing that is often criticized by the lost.

They say when we speak about the things of God and the Bible we do not have love. They say we are too critical of worldly things.

Often times we are because the Bible clearly admonishes us to live in the world but to be separate from it at the same time.

The closer we are to God the more we will view the world as He does. However, when dealing with the lost we must never forget that while we hate the sin they do we are to love the sinner in order to win them to Christ.

The Word of God can melt a persons heart, just like salt melts snow and ice, it goes to the root of the problem - sin, it shows the cause and it deals with it.

The Word of God can change a persons life, just like if you put salt on a cucumber, it will draw the water out and make it into something that you can make pickle out of.

The Word of God can draw out the sin from a persons life and make them a New Creation.

James shows us that even the wealthy, those who have oppressed us, need the salt of the Christian. He says:

***James 5:1 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. 2Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=james+5&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-30360a)***] 6You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.***

***7Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. 9Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!***

***10Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.***

***12Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear – not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. Otherwise you will be condemned.***

We are the salt of the earth and we need to show it by what we say and how we say it, and by what we do and how we do it.

Jesus also tells us that we are the light of the world. As we have spent our time on salt, let me just say this.

***John 8:12When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’***

Jesus is the light of the world, we too, as believers, saved by Grace are also the light of the world.

This means that we should always be like Christ and point to Christ.

Light takes away the darkness, it gives us no where to hide.

We are commanded not to hide it - ***let your light shine before others***. You are like a city on a hill, you cannot be hid! so don't try, shine your light on others so that they will see Christ Jesus.

Finally, there is a warning from the LORD in Matthew 5 about losing your saltiness.

***Matt 5:13 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 underfoot.***

Be careful how you live. Because if we live wrongly, worldly we will lose our saltiness, the light will grow dim.

This is a warning from Jesus!

If you give up on your Christian witness, you become like the world, you will no longer have flavour to draw men to Christ, you will no longer have the light of Christ which exposes the darkness of sin....

as James said:

***be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.***

*Conclusion*

I encourage you all, to be patient and persevere with all men - and especially those who are our Brothers and sisters in Christ. In your friendships be the flavour that makes the message of Christ attractive.

This world has a need of a saviour, they have a need for their sin to be forgiven, but in telling them that they are sinners, we need to show love and patience, we need to be His witnesses so that they can see in us the change that Jesus can make.

Be salt and light as you walk in the footsteps of Jesus - every day.

Amen