

RCMI L-Path Teaching
August 7, 2022

TITLE: THE DIFFERENCE MAKER [Believers Are Salt & Light]

TEXT: Matthew 5:13-16

B.I.: The Christian is called to be a difference maker that will have a global influence and impact on this world for Jesus.

INTRO: August Theme: **PRACTICAL CHRISTLIKENESS.**

- Big Idea: This series focuses on the principles that Jesus mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount encouraging us as kingdom citizens to build our lives, not just by listening to His teaching but by putting it into practice.
- Jesus is challenging those who really want to be devoted disciples of His to live up to a certain way of life which He wants us to live.
- The Christian is called to be a difference maker that will have a global influence and impact on this world for Jesus.
- You cannot influence the world if you are the same as the world. As Christians, we are to be people of influence, and so we must be different from the world.

I. We Are To Season Like Salt.

A. Jesus' declaration: "You are the salt of the earth." [Matt. 5:13a]

- Jesus says this is what you are. You are the salt of the earth.
- And if you are the salt of the earth, then it follows that no one else is. If the church does not fulfill its function as salt, there is no backup plan.

B. The meaning of the analogy:

- Jesus could have used any number of illustrations to tell us that Christians differ from the world. So why did he use salt here?

1. This world is in moral decay.

- The primary use of salt for the people in Jesus' day was to stop decay. This world is in moral decay, and Christians desperately need to keep it from going bad.

2. Christians act as salt in the world:

- So how do Christians act as salt in the world?
 - a. **Salt Cleanses: we must live pure lives in the world**
 - Salt is an antiseptic that cleans wounds and fights infection. Another thing about salt in a wound. **It hurts.**
 - Salt cleanses, and we act as salt when we live pure lives in the world.
 - b. **Salt Preserves: we stand up for what is right**
 - As Christians, we act as salt in the world when we stand up for what is right. Salt is a preservative that delays corruption and decay.

- o In the same way as Christians, we are to be a preserving influence in society. We are to fight against moral corruption. We are to stand up for what is right through righteous living.
- c. **Salt Flavors: we attract people to Christ**
 - o Salt basically makes things taste better. It adds flavor and spice. So as Christians we are not just to influence the world, but a positive influence.
 - o Without compromising the gospel message, we are to do everything we can to make the gospel attractive to the world around us.

C. Warning – when the salt loses its saltiness (compromise):

- You are the salt of the 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.”* [Matthew 5:13b]
- If salt loses its saltiness, it loses its purpose. The whole purpose of salt is to act as salt. The whole purpose of the church is to act like the church.
- Jesus is talking about compromise here. He is talking about losing your influence. When the church makes moral compromises to fit in with the world, it is no longer acting as salt in the world. When the church loses its saltiness, **it loses its reputation, and it loses its mission.**
 - 1) **The church loses its reputation** (it can’t be made salty again)
 - o When the church loses its reputation, it is so hard to get it back again.
 - 2) **The church loses its mission** (no longer good for anything)
 - o Christians have a mission to bring the gospel of Christ to all the world. But when you lose your saltiness, you lose your mission, and when you lose your mission, you lose the unique purpose that God has for you.
 - o Our mission is to be in the world but not of the world.

II. We Are To Shine Like Light. (Matthew 5: 14-16)

A. Jesus’ declaration: “You are the light of the world.”

- If you are a Christian, you are the light of the world. There is no other spiritual light in this world except for Christians. If you are a Christian, then you are light in this world, and you are to shine for Jesus.
- Jesus is the true light of the world, but as followers of Christ, we reflect his light.

B. The meaning of the analogy

1) This world is in darkness.

- o If the meaning of the salt analogy is that this world is in moral decay, the meaning of the light analogy is that this world is in darkness. This world is in the darkness of sin, deception, ignorance and rebellion.
- **It doesn’t know the way to God (Acts 26:17-18)**
 - o This world is in darkness, and it doesn’t know the way to God. We know that Jesus is the way, and we need to share it with others.

– **It doesn't know God's ways** (Psalm 119:105)

- o The world also doesn't know God's ways. God's Word shines a light on our dark paths and shows us the right way to go, the right way to live.

2) Christians act as a light in the world:

Therefore, as Christians, we are to act as light. And there are three ways we especially fulfill this role as light in the world.

a. **Light Shines: we stand out as followers of Jesus**

- o We are to be public spectacles for Jesus. There should be something different about your manner, different about your countenance, different about your life that makes you stand out as a follower of Jesus.

b. **Light Illuminates: we point people to God and his ways**

- o We should be bold in our witness for Christ, and our lives should back it up.

c. **Light Reveals: we show others how God wants us to live**

We are *"to show men what would result if all the world were obedient to the whisper of the Throne of the Most High."* - G. Campbell Morgan

C. Encouragement – when your light shines brightly (witness):

- The salt passage ended with a warning about the salt losing its saltiness. But the light section ends with encouragement about what happens when your light shines brightly. [Matthew 5:16]
- What will happen when your light shines brightly? Two things:

1) People will see your good deeds

- The word translated "good" in this verse means "attractive or pleasing" rather than good in the moral sense. When you let your light shine, people will see your good deeds. The testimony of your life should match the testimony of your lips.

2) People will praise your Father in heaven

- When God's light shines through you, people will see God in you. When people recognize you as God's children, they will praise God as your Father. When you fulfill your calling as light in the world, you bring glory to God.

CHALLENGE: Are you a DIFFERENCE MAKER? Are you exercising a Christian influence in the world around you? That is what God has called you to do. This world needs your Christian witness. So go and be salty, and let your light shine!

DISCUSSION:

- What do you mean by:
 - o You are the salt of the earth?
 - o You are the light of the world?
- Share personal steps on how you will be able to apply what you've learned so you can be a Difference Maker.

- Assignment: Exercise being a 'salt and light' to someone this week and share the experience with the group in your next meeting.