

The Spice of Life

“You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven

Matthew 5:13-16 (part thereof)

This year is the year set aside particular to focus on being intentional Christians; being intentional about our relationship with Jesus and intentional about live as Christ followers on a daily basis and in every aspect of our life.

We have often heard the term “He/she is a real salt of the earth person” or “He/she is a real light in the community”? We use these phrases to describe a person of good character or someone who helps and cares for people in need. Salt and light are common and so in one sense the idea of salt and light is easily understood (considering the above phrases). But in another sense do we really understand the significance of what Jesus meant when He used these terms? We are very fortunate in that we have light at the flick of a switch, most of our roads and places around the town are fairly well lit up. Salt is a rather common commodity which every household has. Perhaps because it is so common and because we have heard this phrase so often we tend to glaze over it. The problem then is that we miss the richness of this text and we risk missing the message and challenge God wants to show us. We must read this, and other familiar passages, with open ears and open hearts.

Firstly there are two grammatical elements which are striking in this passage. Jesus speaking to his disciples (remember we are his disciples) says, “You ARE the salt of the earth...you ARE the light of the world.” We do not have an option! If we call ourselves by the name Christian (Remember the story of Alexander the Great from last week’s Padkos) then we ARE salt and light, we ARE Jesus’ witnesses in the world. Are we being effective salt and light? The original Greek word for ‘you’ is used in the plural form. Jesus was speaking to several people. As much as each of us are individually salt, we are all together salt and light. If we are to be effective we must remember that we are not alone, solitary Christians but part of a wider body who encourage one another and work together to be a flavourful force in our society and community.

Secondly, salt and light do not exist for their own sake and benefit. Salt exists to enhance the flavour of food not for itself. Light exists to shine in the darkness so that people can see clearly the objects around. Light does not exist to shine for itself; it is of not benefit to at all to itself. We do not exist for ourselves but for others. We exist to bring value to others’ lives. Imagine a world where every person lived to bring value to every other person. As Christ followers we are to be the spice of life.

We must remember that the value we bring and the good works we do is not just to make peoples circumstances better or to do good. It is all because of and to the glory of God. It is the glory of God which sustains our light and salt which means our good works do not depend on our emotions or circumstances. Our good works should not draw attention to ourselves but to God.

Is your Christianity visible and evident to others? Are we as much a Christian in the factory, the workshop, the shipyard, the mine, the schoolroom, the surgery, the play ground, the kitchen, the golf course and sports field as we are in church? Are we adding value, as individuals and as a church body, to others’ lives or looking out only for numero Uno?

"God, we are your salt of this earth and light of this world. Reveal to me where I am being tasteless salt or hiding my light under a basket. Please be gracious to me, forgive me for my selfishness and give me strength to change and live in a way that brings value to others' lives. Help me to be your witness Jesus in every circumstance and opportunity that others may know the love and life which you bring and which you have given to me. Amen"