

What is it to be Salt and Light? (Matthew 5:13-16)

We have been thinking about the story of Jesus as it is rightly presented to us in the Gospel of Matthew:

- The completion of the story of God and Israel [humanity] (or, the story of redemption):
 - Loving creation, sinful rebellion, gracious redemption

Remember, the beatitudes were about the fact that God helps those who cannot help themselves (= us! **Poor...**)

- That he brings a blessing to the unexpected and undeserving
- This is gracious redemption
 - Israel's choosing: not big/strong; rich/powerful; right/righteous
 - God's grace and God's purposes for the unexpected and undeserving

But there is one more thing that follows in the biblical story line after redemption, and that is restoration

- God, in Jesus, redeems us from the penalty and power of sin and then he begins a process of restoring us (and the world) to the intended state before the brokenness of sin
- (Ultimate is eschatological)
- That intended state is a close relationship with God **wherein we share in His work**

God is restoring things to original intent

- Creation: **Genesis 1:26-28** (**intent** = nearness; co-ruling; blessing)
- Fall: **Genesis 3:17-19** (**fall** = life is hard, then you die)
- Redemption: **Exodus 19:1-4** (**redemption** = God did Himself... what they could not do for themselves)
- Restoration: **Exodus 19:5-6** (**restoration** = nearness; co-ruling; blessing)

Redemption is the act of God saving

- Restoration is the act of God bringing us near (**own possession**) and sharing His work (**kingdom of priests**)

Redemption/Restoration

- **Isaiah 61:1-6a**
 - Redemption; Cf. Beatitudes (vv. 1-3) (=blessed are)
 - Restoration; Cf. Salt and Light (vv. 4-7) (= you are)
- **I.e. Having been redeemed and restored, we become restorers** (already happened and in process)
 - **1 Peter 2:9-12**, NASB
 - **Revelation 1:4-6**, NASB
 - **Revelation 5:8-10**, NASB (1995 Updated Version)
 - Revelation 20:4
 - I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge... they will be **priests** of God and of Christ and will **reign** with Him...

What Jesus is doing in our text (Matthew 5:13-16) is calling His disciples back to this intended role (priests/kings)

- Representing (priests); ruling (kings) (cf. the metaphor of **salt and light**)
- Adam; Israel; Church (our text... calling the unexpected and undeserving)

But, because Adam failed to walk in it and Israel failed to walk in it—**Jesus walked among us as Priest and King**

- Only in Him and with Him are we **salt** and **light**
- He took the **curse** for us to **redeem** and **restore** us
 - He became: **Poor in Spirit**; man of **sorrows**; **persecuted**
 - He is the ultimate **salt** and **light**
 - E.g. Metaphor of light **John 1:1-4, 9**, and **8:12**, NASB
 - **Isaiah 60:1-3**, NASB
 - = God's light on us; Subsequent light to the nations
 - Then, Jesus says we are the light
 - See the progression? (Cf. Exodus, Isaiah, Matthew)
 - **Matthew 4:13-16** and **5:13-16** (comparison)
 - Redemption (Jesus as light) | Restoration (His people also as light)

This idea of **salt** and **light** corresponds to God making us **priests** and **kings** (or queens)

- Mediating and ruling (representing and walking in righteousness)
- Only because **Jesus has come as the ultimate** priest and King (Mediator and ruler)

Both **salt** and **light** are images for **impact** on something else (without pressing the metaphor)

- How we **influence** the world (those around us)
 - Part of the ongoing process of **restoration** and **renewal**
- The **danger** of **diminished** influence (not **salty**; hidden **light**)
 - E.g. Israel when they were not dealing with wickedness in themselves and their land
 - God called them to repent and then said: **Isaiah 58:8-12**, NASB (**your light**; **repair** and **restore**)
 - Cf. **Matthew 5:16** (good works as witness)
 - A hard call...
 - But... **2 Corinthians 2:14**, NASB

So, how might we think about our impact? (how is God leading us in His triumph in Christ... sweet aroma?)

- That is the Christian adventure
 - It can look different for all of us in our unique life spaces... (friends, vocation, parenting, platforms)
- How, as one saved by Jesus, do I now make my life count for His purposes?
 - How can I mediate God's presence and love? (**Faithful priest**)
 - How can I co-rule with Christ in righteousness? (**Good king/queen**)

1 Peter 2:9-12, NIV

- Next week we will talk more about what it means to "**live such good lives among the pagans...**"
- What does salt and light... *good faith* look like today?
 - This week: Try to live into it: **You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world**