

— Matthew 5.13 —  
Contemporary Issues 2024  
**You Are the Salt of the Earth**

Mat 5<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

► According to Jesus, when a society begins well, as ancient \_\_\_\_\_ did by God’s grace and as \_\_\_\_\_ did by God’s grace – and that society goes bad, it’s only for one reason: God’s people within that society lost their \_\_\_\_\_.

► Salt’s main benefit, ancient and modern, is as a \_\_\_\_\_ to add flavor – and it’s a preservative to boot.

Job 6<sup>6</sup> “Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? <sup>7</sup> My soul refuses to touch them; They are as loathsome food to me.”

I prefer the old word “savor,” which is both a wonderful flavor and the process of \_\_\_\_\_ it. In the OT, salt was a regular feature of God’s relationship with his people – so much so that he called the covenant a “covenant of \_\_\_\_\_ forever.”

Lev 2<sup>13</sup> [Y]ou shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

Exo 30<sup>35</sup> You shall make ... an incense, ... salted, pure, and holy.

Eze 16<sup>4</sup> “[O]n the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.”

Num 18<sup>19</sup> [I]t is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants

► Jesus’ Spirit-inhabited people, the church, is what makes life \_\_\_\_\_ the way it’s supposed to. It is the one place people can taste what \_\_\_\_\_ was created and redeemed to be, that savor of life is the only thing that can sustain life in any society to keep it from going bad.

► Jesus does not command us to \_\_\_\_\_ the salt of the earth; he simply states a fact – we \_\_\_\_\_ the salt of the earth. If we lose our Spirit-given savor of life, then the earth loses savor that makes people want more and that preserves society from the downward death spiral that they always turn into when left to themselves (Rom 1.18-32).

► Jesus says if we lose that Spirit-given savor, then we bring ourselves under his historical \_\_\_\_\_ –

we will no longer \_\_\_\_\_ on the heights of the earth, nor have God’s splendor upon us, but will come under the power of unbelievers until we are effectively are in \_\_\_\_\_.

Isa 58<sup>14</sup> “[Y]ou shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth”

Eze 16<sup>14</sup> “Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you ... <sup>15</sup> But you trusted in your own beauty, [and] played the harlot because of your fame ... <sup>27</sup> [T]herefore I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you”

► We see this cycle in Scripture. Under David, God caused Israel to ride on the heights of the earth, but by the time of Daniel, God’s people were back in captivity, because they had thoroughly \_\_\_\_\_ their savor. Were they hopeless? No, for God’s people were still the salt of the earth, but they needed their savor back – they needed God to rise up and grant repentance and \_\_\_\_\_ among his people. That’s what we see Daniel praying for.

Dan 9<sup>1</sup> In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, ... <sup>2</sup> I, Daniel, understood ... the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

God’s people are back in captivity, but that’s not the end of the story, for God has made redemptive promises, and he is going to \_\_\_\_\_ them.

<sup>3</sup> Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. God’s sovereignty does not negate, but rather establishes the importance of Daniel’s prayers – it is why Daniel is confident to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_. People who embrace God’s sovereignty are not frozen people \_\_\_\_\_ to act, but faithful people \_\_\_\_\_ to act – people who live with \_\_\_\_\_ submission, \_\_\_\_\_ humility, and grateful expectation.

<sup>4</sup> And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy [Heb., *hesed*, unfailing love] with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

Daniel appeals to God’s unfailing \_\_\_\_\_ and covenant promises.

<sup>5</sup> we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled,

Daniel was one of the most faithful believers in history – he was not personally \_\_\_\_\_ of any of the sins he was confessing – yet he identified with God’s people, \_\_\_\_\_ them on his \_\_\_\_\_ before the Lord in prayer.

<sup>5</sup> ... even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.

<sup>6</sup> Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.

The root sin that led to all their other sins was departing from God’s \_\_\_\_\_, and therefore from God himself. As Nehemiah said, “[They] cast Your law behind their backs ... [T]hey would not listen; therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands” (Neh 9.26, 30). God’s word is always at the \_\_\_\_\_ – it was with Adam, with Jesus, with God’s people of old, and with God’s people in America. Our root sin was dethroning \_\_\_\_\_ as the sole supreme authority, placing \_\_\_\_\_ on par with it as supreme authority over every area except salvation. This led to: (1) a deistic \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture’s teaching on God, man, and their original relationship; (2) the privatization of Christian \_\_\_\_\_; (3) trading away the victory of Christ’s first advent – changing the great commission from a D-day invasion order to a Dunkirk evacuation order; (4) the \_\_\_\_\_ of neutrality; (5) the rise and victories of man playing \_\_\_\_\_ in the form of modern totalitarianism; (6) the death of \_\_\_\_\_.

“The state is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth ... We must therefore worship the State as the manifestation of the Divine on earth ... [I]t is only through being a member of the state that the individual himself has objectivity, truth, and ethical life.” (Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, section 258 (1820)).

“Socialism is precisely the religion that must overwhelm Christianity. ... In the new order, Socialism will triumph by first capturing the culture via infiltration of schools, universities, churches and the media by transforming the consciousness of society.” (Antonio Gramsci, ‘*Audacia e Fide’ in Avanti!*; reprinted in *Sotto la Mole, 1916-1920*, p. 148).

“Evolution is promoted by its practitioners as more than mere science. Evolution is promulgated as an ideology, a secular religion—a full-fledged alternative to Christianity, with meaning and morality ... Evolution is a religion. This was true of evolution in the beginning, and it is true of evolution still today.” (Michael Ruse, editor of *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Darwin and Evolutionary*

*Thought* (2013) and author of *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism* (2015). The quote is from Ruse’s *Huffington Post* article “Is Darwinism a Religion?,” July 21, 2011, online at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-ruse/is-darwinism-a-religion\\_b\\_904828.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-ruse/is-darwinism-a-religion_b_904828.html)).

“[The very notion of truth is] un-Darwinian.” “[The idea of objective truth] is a remnant of the idea that the world is a divine creation, the work of someone who had something in mind, who Himself spoke some language in which He described His own project.” (Richard Rorty, “Untruth and Consequences,” *The New Republic*, July 31, 1995, pp. 32-36; *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 21).

Dn 9 <sup>7</sup> O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face ... <sup>8</sup> ... to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

God’s judgment upon his people by returning them to captivity was \_\_\_\_\_ that God was faithful.

<sup>9</sup> To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. ... <sup>19</sup> O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

God has placed his \_\_\_\_\_ upon his people – he has inextricably joined us to his kingdom and his gospel – and he loves to be reminded of that by his \_\_\_\_\_.

► Daniel is our example of how to \_\_\_\_\_ in such times as ours, when God’s people have lost their savor, and we have largely become captive to those who hate us.

### Congregational Prayer

**Heavenly Father, your hand of judgment is heavy upon our nation and upon us as your people, and we tremble for we know we deserve it to be far heavier than it is. At the highest levels, our nation has promoted the murder of the unborn, the destruction of marriage and morality, the cultivation of envy and hatred, and the enslavement of citizens by making them dependent on the government for daily bread. And beneath it all, we have proudly refused to acknowledge you or give you thanks. Father, as your children, we know we are not innocent, for we have failed to love you and one another, and we have failed to live out your gospel, and so our light has been dim and our salt tasteless. Father, according to your unfailing love and your covenant promises, forgive us and awaken our hearts; convert our fellow citizens and those every land, that they would rejoice in you, your word, and your kingdom. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.**