

What Work Does the Church Perform on Earth (*Matthew 5:13-16*)?

The Bible has much to tell us about the subject of the local church. In order to know exactly how we ought to serve God in our local community, all we have to do is consult and obey the scriptures. As we continue to consider this topic, one question we must ask is, "What work is the church to perform on Earth?" The answer is simpler than one might think and is given to us in **Matthew 5**, at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.

A great deal of activity is performed in this world in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, though many things claim to be Christian, not all of it is. The word Christian comes from the word Christianos (Kree-stee-ah-nos), which means *little Christ*. In other words, true Christians are people that believe on the Lord Jesus alone for salvation and follow Him, with the goal of becoming more like Him. This title was first given to the dedicated believers in Antioch, because they emulated Christ in word and deed (**Acts 11:26**).

I. It Is the Salt of the Earth (*Matthew 5:13*)

Jesus Christ commands His followers to perform two specific tasks on Earth. The first one is to be the salt of the Earth. Jesus tells us that **useful salt is good for His use, while useless salt is cast out**. What is useful salt? It is the believer that helps to preserve this world with the Gospel message.

Salt was used in Jesus' day as a valuable commodity to keep food products, especially meat, from rotting. People would put meat and salt in a barrel with alternating layers, which would preserve the meat for future consumption. If the meat was already rotten, the salt could not help it, so it would have to be thrown out. In other words, we can learn that **salt is a preservative and not a restorative**.

Some churches work very hard to restore this world to something that they think would please the Lord God. Some try to get moral, conservative, even Bible-believing candidates into political office in hopes of restoring our country to a state that pleases God. Others spend much time, effort, and money on programs to outlaw sinful practices, rehabilitate the addicted, and end poverty. In reality, these things, while noble, are not what we were given to do by the Lord Jesus Christ. These churches are trying to do a restorative work in the world, when our work, as the salt of the earth, is simply preservative.

The Bible tells us that, as the world lingers on, society will not grow better and better, but worse and worse (**II Timothy 3:13-14**). History confirms this statement to be true. As this world grows worse and worse, making its way toward eventual destruction, it is the believer's duty to act as a preservative. The preserving work we perform is simply that of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ (**I Corinthians 15:1-4**). Think of a believer in Jesus Christ as a firefighter that is trying to pull as many people as possible out of a burning building or a rescue swimmer that is trying to pull as many people as possible off a sinking ship. The Gospel is able to save the lost from a burning Hell and it is the church family's job to give it out (**Matthew 16:18**)! Sadly, not everyone will believe the Gospel, which is why this world will be preserved and not restored. However, some will believe in Jesus Christ and be saved. It is worth giving the Gospel to see even one more person believe in Jesus!

So, what about the believers that do not obey this command and do not want to be the salt of the earth? Jesus tells us that these believers are "good for nothing," because they are doing no eternal good! As a result, these people lose the blessing and power of God, because of their rebellion, and are

easily trodden underfoot by the world, flesh, and Devil. Whenever we choose to sin against God, we open ourselves to the possibility of spiritual disaster (*1 Peter 5:8*).

What about you, friend? Do you give the Gospel, as a faithful witness for Jesus Christ, when God gives you the opportunity? According to the Bible, are you salt that is good for His use or would He deem you as good for nothing? If you need help to learn about, follow, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, according to His Word, we are always available. If you would like to learn more about the Gospel or how to be a faithful witness, please contact us anytime and we will be glad to help you. If you simply need counselling or a friendly ear to speak to and shoulder to lean on, we are always here to be an encouragement and blessing.

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