

If we fail to return to distinctive preaching

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Gray

Introduction

1. Matthew 5:13
2. Salt has/had many functions, it was used back then to even pay taxes. One of the main sources of Salt for Palestinians was the Dead Sea or the Salt Sea. So oppressive were these taxes that the people adulterated the salt with sand or other earthy material (the salt to begin with was not our nice pure table salt). The government purified the salt by spreading it in big vats or tanks, filling them with water and drawing off the concentrated salt solution or brine. All that remained was the earthy insoluble material. Indeed, the salt has lost its savor because it was no longer salt; it was fit to be trodden under foot.

And this was not the only way that salt could lose its savor. The surface waters of the Dead Sea, on evaporation, have a chemical salts content of about 31% sodium chloride, 13% calcium chloride, and 48% magnesium chloride, together with other impurities. The calcium and magnesium chlorides are hygroscopic (take water out of the air) and will thus literally dissolve the sodium chloride. A bitter tasting composition results. It was the custom to store vast amounts of this salt in houses that had earthen floors. In time, the salt next to the ground spoiled because of the dampness. Since it would be harmful to fertile land because of its salt content, no man would allow it to be thrown on his field. The only place left was the street, where it was trodden under foot of man. Thus the Bible was proved scientifically accurate, even in its many small details—for this was just a lone example.¹

3. Salt was used in sacrifices Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19
4. Salt must be used to be good, it is different than what it is used upon, it preserves, saves, prevents putrefaction and it flavors.²
5. The title of the sermon is:
 - a. **If** this shows possibility
 - b. **We** the people of God 2 Timothy 2:11-13
 - c. **Fail** – fall short of, live up to therefore we can fail
 - d. **To be distinctive** different or separate 2 Corinthians 6:17 also implies a consequence.
6. What are the consequence if we fail Hebrews 2:1-3?

II Discussion

1. If we fail... we must act out of character
 - a. We must change our nature.
 - b. The church is the called out meaning we are something different
 - c. Called out of Darkness Colossians 1:13-14; Acts 26:18
 - d. Called out of this untoward generation. Acts 2:40
 - e. Called to be something
 - i. Saints Romans 1:7
 - ii. Saved Acts 2:40

¹ Coffman commentary on Matthew p.56

² The Sermon of the Mount, The constitution of Christianity by Eldred Stevens p. 61

- iii. Peace in one body Colossians 3:15
 - iv. His kingdom 1 Thessalonians 2:12
 - v. Holiness 1 Thessalonians 4:4
 - f. Called to be different from the world John 17:9,14,16; Ephesians 4:4; 1 Peter 4:17
 - g. Must change the nature of the church.
- 2. If we fail... we must ignore the Holy Writ
 - a. We are to be a separate people 2 Corinthians 6:17
 - i. How are we to be separate?
 - ii. What is discussed in the passage?
 - b. We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness Ephesians 5:11
 - c. The word will set us apart. John 17:17 Sanctify
- 3. If we fail... we will not follow the example of the early church. The early church was known by:
 - a. The persecution they faced, we're they like the religions of the day? Acts 4,5
 - b. The preaching they did. Acts 5:28 preached anyway
 - i. What kind of Gospel did they preach?
 - ii. No other Gospel, 1 Timothy 1:3
 - iii. No other name Acts 4:12
 - iv. Not another Galatians 1:6-9
 - c. The people that were converted Acts 2:5; 6:7 Saul
 - d. By what they sought to preserve Acts 20:29-30
- 4. If we fail ... we will turn away from the restoration plea
 - a. We are to speak as the oracles of God. 1 Peter 4:11
 - b. Go back to the Jerusalem church
- 5. If we fail... we make no difference where there is a difference.
 - a. Exodus 11:7 there is a difference between the Egyptian and Israel
 - b. Isaiah 5:20 some would call bad good
 - c. Ezekial 22:26 The priest had put no difference between holy and unholy
 - d. Those that are without the church and those within. 1 Corinthians 5:12; Colossians 4:5; 1 Peter 4:17
 - e. To fail to make a difference where there is a difference is a terrible tragedy.
- 6. If we fail... we neutralize our influence³
 - a. Matthew 5:13
 - b. Can we substitute salt for sugar? There is a difference!
 - c. When sugar and salt lose its distinctiveness they no longer exist

III Conclusion

1. If we fail lost souls now and for generations to come.
2. We dare not fail but we can, the price is more than we can afford to pay if we don't keep up our distinctive preaching
3. Are you distinctive in your living, Matt 5:13
4. There is a clarion call for us to do this now.

³ Sermon given by Winfred Clark 3/28/91