**February 5 2023      Restoring Beauty**

The Gospel passage for this Sunday St. Matthew 5:13-20, is the continuation of Sermon on the Mount. In this passage Jesus said you are the Salt and the light. We are the salt, the silent work of influence and the light, the visible manifestation of God in people’s lives.

The Salt and the Light are the two things that the value seems so insignificant but are part of our survival. We either complain because there are too much of these two things or we want more of these. When salt is added in the food it is hardly seen. Yet too little of it you can taste the difference and too much of it can ruin your food. The light is visible, it is needed during the night or when it is dark. Yet too much of it in the morning will make you say, “Turn it off” yet too little of it can make you feel unsafe. The salt and light works as salt comes into contact with the food and the light is turned on.

In the Sermon on the Mount we learned that the Beatitudes are the elements of Christian life. But the next section deals with the Christian influence. As Christians, people should be merciful or peacemakers and pure in heart, which will have a tremendous influence in the lives of those who have not given their heart to God.

In ancient times salt was seen as a necessity for life. Because of its seasoning and preservative qualities, salt was one of the most highly prized minerals. In many societies salt was so highly valued and was used instead of money. The English word salary is derived from the Latin word “Salarium” which refers to the payments made to a Roman soldier with salt.

Whenever a city was defeated the custom was to throw salt throughout the city. This meant that the city had been separated from its past. Elisha used salt to purify the water of Jericho.  As we read in II Kings 2:20-21 “Bring me a new bowl,” he said, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him.Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, “This is what the Lord says: ‘I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.” The normal procedures when a child was born the child will be rubbed with salt, as we read in Ezekiel 16: 4**“**On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths”.

In the Bible times and till today salt is used for seasoning our food. Who likes to eat food without salt? Even though salt is so small and yet hardly noticeable it makes a difference when applied to the substance. In order for our lives to be a living sacrifice for God, our body must be preserved and seasoned with the righteousness of Christ. Salt was also used to preserve food. During the old Biblical times they did not have the refrigeration systems that we have today. Salt was also used to have a covenant relationship we read in Numbers 18:19 “It is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord with you and your descendants with you.” So salt also represented a relationship. “It represented hospitality that cemented on friendship” There is an Eastern saying “There is salt between us”

Jesus said you are the Salt of the Earth; what did Jesus mean by this statement? It is the silent witness of the Christian believer. It is the influence that you have over other people’s lives to season, and preserve for eternal life. Christ is saying let your influence season people’s life for the kingdom. Salt changes things; a little salt can flavor a big pot of beans. It only takes on salt to flavor a whole community, a whole neighborhood and a whole workplace.

Someone once said, “The salt is no good if it never leaves the salt shaker, it is only a decoration to the kitchen table”. We deny the salt function when we fail to mingle with people that are lost; we deny the function of the salt when we fail to be kind, merciful and as peacemakers.

To deny the salt function is to deny the principles of the kingdom of God. We are not to draw away from society, we are not of the world but we live in the world. And if we as Salt don’t rub against those who have no flavor, those who are perishing who will? Jesus said, “You are the salt” It is emphatic He didn’t say you are the earth. Jesus said “you are the salt”. If you like to know more about Salt and Light please join us in our Sunday worship at 11:00 AM.