



World Christian Fellowship

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Christian and World relationship.

Be a Salt.

Andrew Murray, a great man of God, and about the effect he had on his children.

"Eleven of his children grew to adult life. Five of the six sons became ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Four of his daughters became ministers' wives."

Nine out of eleven.

Even the second generation made a good showing. Ten grandsons became ministers of Christ and thirteen became missionaries.

Matthew 5:13-16, *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

What should the church's relationship with the world look like?

There has been great debate on this throughout church history. Some believe the church is to be totally separate from the world. This has been seen in how some Christian communities isolate themselves from the world in monasteries. They are not to touch the world—listen to its music or entertainment. They are to be totally separated. Though this is not as popular today, some do this in different ways.

They go to church with no unbelievers, are home-schooled or go to a Christian school, go to Christian colleges, work in Christian organizations, and literally never have contact with the world. I heard of one family that would not let their children go to youth group because some unbelievers were attending.

Other Christian communities seek to mimic the world in order to influence it. Church services play secular music, believers enjoy the same entertainment and wear the same clothes as the world. In this community, it is often hard to tell the difference between Christians and nonbelievers. This is frequently all done in the name of being “seeker sensitive.”

There are commendable aspects to each of these practices: One emphasizes holiness and the other emphasizes evangelism. However, they both miss the mark.

What does Scripture say about the church's relationship to the world?

What we have in these very simple four verses is the picture that our Lord gives of the Christian in the world, the function of the believer in the world.

Our Lord is saying that the Christian who lives according to the Beatitudes is going to influence the world as salt and light.

President Woodrow Wilson, "I was in a very common place. I was sitting in a barber chair when I became aware that a personality had entered the room. A man had come quietly in upon the same errand as myself, to have his hair cut, and sat in the chair next to me. Every word the man uttered, though it was not in the least didactic, showed a personal interest in the man who was serving him. Before I got through with what was being done for me, I was aware that I had attended an evangelistic service, because **Mr. D.L. Moody** was in that chair.

"I purposely lingered in the room after he had left and noted the singular effect that his visit had brought upon the barber shop. They talked in undertones. They did not know his name, but they knew that something had elevated their thoughts.

And I felt that I left that place as I should have left the place of worship. My admiration and esteem for Mr. Moody became very deep indeed." Influence.

What message do you leave the world?

When you pass by, what are you saying?

John 17:15-16, *I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*

1 John 2:15-17, *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

The sum of those verses Jesus says is this:

I want you in the world, but not of the world.

I have sent you to the world, but do not love the world.

How can believers be in the world but not of the world?

Sent to the world but not permitted to love it?

What a paradox.

How can we influence it, then?

The solution comes in verses 13-16.

We must be salt and light.

Salt, in order to be effective, has to be mingled with the substance it's affecting, and yet salt is distinct from that substance.

Light, in order to dispel darkness, must shine upon the darkness, and yet is distinct from the darkness.

You are going to live a Beatitude kind of a godly life in the world, and you will be persecuted. However, when that happens, that does not mean you change your function.

Do not let persecution alter your function in the world. Your influence is to be what God designed it to be, and it must not be altered even though you would be persecuted.

1 Peter 2:9, *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;*

A chosen generation,
A royal priesthood,
A holy nation,
A people of His own.

Purpose?

"In order that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

The reason you are what you are in His kingdom is to manifest this influence. Christians cannot bend to the world. We cannot bow to the world, even when the world sets about to persecute us. We do not alter our commitment.

We who are the sons of the kingdom are to be salt and light in the world, and never, under any condition, be it persecution, be it face-to-face abuse, be it behind the back, malicious slander, never are we to alter that function one bit. We must face the music, in biblical terms, we must take up the cross and follow Christ.

Genesis 1, when God created man, to **Genesis 6**, until God looked at man and said, "All I see is only evil continually."

God said there is only one thing to do!

Save 8 righteous souls and drown the whole rest of humanity.

He did. He locked up eight of them with all animals in a big boat, and the rest of them drowned.

God made a perfect world. Sin entered, evil, polluting influence took over, and God had to destroy the entire world by the 6th chapter of Genesis. He had a new start and gave them a new start.

By **19th chapter of Genesis**, one part of the world at least, **Sodom and Gomorrah** had become so rotten, so vile, and so corrupted that God had to come in and destroy everybody in that place by fire and brimstone.

The time is coming, according to **2 Peter 3rd** chapter, when God again is going to rain fire out of heaven and destroy the world in a holocaust of fire like men have never dreamed.

It is the same old story. Man just gets worse and worse. He is infected with the germ of sin. There is no antidote apart from God, and he will not have God because he loves his darkness rather than light. He loves his decadence and does not want purity.

Jeremiah 17:9, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”*

Our Lord is saying since we have a decaying, corrupted society shrouded in darkness, this society needs salt to retard the corruption and light to brighten the darkness.

God has a plan. The plan is the dominion of the disciples!

He sets us up in the world as a holy priesthood, as a kingdom of priests, as kings and priests.

You are My kings, and you are My princes in the world, and you are My priests and prophets in the world, and your job is to retard the corruption and bring light to the darkness.

Sadly, instead of the church influencing the world this way, the church is influenced by the world.

V 13, *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."*

Literally translating verse 13 would be this: *"The only salt of the earth is you."*

By the way, the "you" is plural. He is talking about the collective body of believers.

You do not put one grain of salt on anything.

It only functions in combination with other pieces of salt, other grains of salt. The church, to influence the world, **must be collective salt**. It is not enough to be all alone at it. We have got to be at it together, **collective influence**.

It is not what we should be, it is what we are.
Like it or not, you are the salt of the earth.

The only question is whether you are salty or whether you have lost your salt flavour. You are the salt.

1. What does it mean for us to be salt?

How does salt manifest itself?

Salt is very valuable. It always has been valuable in human society. Today it is not like it used to be, but do you know that in the Greeks' day, salt was divine.

In fact, they called it *theon*. They called it divine.

Salt was very important.

The Romans said nothing was more valuable than sun and salt, because in a day without refrigeration, the only way they could preserve meat was to salt it. They would literally rub the salt in. You know you have read about the old deals when they travelled across the sea and kept their jerky.

Roman soldiers were paid with salt.

If you were a bad soldier, you were not worth your salt.

Salt was used throughout the ancient society as a sign of friendship. There were salt covenants.

Today in the Arab world, if a man partakes of salt with another man, if two Arabs today partake of salt that means that they are under each other's care.

Even if a worst enemy came in and ate with a man, and ate his salt, that man would be obliged to care for that enemy as if he were his fast friend.

So salt was used for pay, salt was used to bind friendships, salt was used with covenants.

God speaks of a covenant of salt that He made with David. It was common in that time of the world to add salt to a covenant.

2 Chronicles 13:5, *Should you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt?*

There was not any notary public.

God prescribed salt as a necessary part of the sacrifices, partly to be a preservative. The sacrifice some of it would be eaten by the priests, and some of it would be taken back, and perhaps as a symbol also of this covenant concept.

Leviticus 2:13, *And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you 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.

We are the valuable people in the world!

We are the ones who are honoured in the world.

Salt was used to season food. In fact, food without salt has got something missing. People just have a terrible time when they must go on salt-free diets.

You are supposed to eat some things with salt. Take eggs for example.

Job 6:6, *Can flavourless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?*

So maybe the idea of salt used to season things.

Isaiah 30:24, *Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground Will eat cured fodder, Which has been winnowed with the shovel and fan.*

Salt was used to preserve.

Ezekiel 16:4, *As for your nativity, on 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 clothes.

The first thing they would do wash the baby, and the second thing they would be to rub salt all over the baby.

In the process of birth, there may have been some nicks, or scratches, or wounds that occurred to the baby, and this would act as a healing agency. So, they would rub salt all over the baby.

So, it was used for healing value and new-born babies were even washed with salt.

It could also serve a destructive purpose.

If you wanted to really mess up your neighbour's field, you were having an argument with your neighbour, you would just salt his field; that would do it.

Abimelech, when he captured Shechem, wanted to show his displeasure with them, and so he salted their fields as a punishment.

Judges 9:45, *So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who were in it; and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.*

Salt became a symbol, then, of something that was sterile and something that was barren. Salt could be something virtuous, something valuable, as the commodity used in a salt covenant.

1. Purity

What colour is salt?

It is white.

Some feel that this is what Jesus is emphasizing.

In those days, sometimes there would be a little pile of salt outside, and it would just glisten against the rather brown, drab background of that particular part of the world.

Matthew 5:8, *"Blessed are the pure in heart,"*

The believer is to be sort of the glistening, white, pure, righteous person in the world of drab, brown, gloomy, dark, decadent evil.

We are to be examples of purity, we are to hold up the divine standard in thought, speech, and action. We are to be pure and pristine, glistening, and white.

2. Flavour.

Some say that Jesus is simply saying, 'You are the flavour of the world. The world is tasteless, dull, drab, lifeless and you are the flavour of the world; you are what salts life.

Salt stings.

We are to be salt in the world, and whenever we see a place where there is already a problem, we just throw ourselves in and make it sting.

2 Corinthians 2:15-16, *For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

We are honey to the believers, but we are salt to the unbelievers. Many Christians never see this all they think about is living comfortably, do not upset anybody and make them angry.

3. To create thirst.

The salt is to create thirst. It is in your body because it creates thirst and makes you drink, and you have got to drink in order to stay alive. If you do not drink, of course, you do not drink

water then you get bloated and die, and salt is involved in that.

Without salt in food, there would be an improper intake of liquid. Where there is an improper intake of liquid, there would be dehydration and death, or severe sickness. This would be particularly true in the desert countries around the land where our Lord was speaking.

An essential part of every traveller's baggage was a sack of salt to prevent dehydration.

Romans 11, where God allows the Gentiles to make Israel jealous.

We are around and we are saved, and we have the Messiah, and we are supposed to make Israel thirsty.

2. Growing in Our Saltiness

How can a person grow in saltiness and therefore maximize one's effectiveness in blessing the world and other believers?

a) You must be different.

Salt must be different than the medium that it is placed on. When seasoning something, we do not put meat on meat or

veggies on veggies. We add salt, and it flavours and preserves the food.

Therefore, believers must be different than the world.

- When the world cheats and is dishonest, believers must have integrity.
- When the world curses and swears, believers must only speak edifying words.
- When the world enjoys ungodly entertainment, believers must seek to enjoy only things that glorify God and bless others.

If we are just like the world, we will only further their decay, instead of retarding it or promoting positive change.

Are you different or just like everybody else?

b) Allow ourselves to be sprinkled into ungodly places.

If salt is kept in the saltshaker, it is rendered ineffective.

Sadly, that is how many Christians are.

We are kept in the church and around other believers and therefore have no positive impact on the world.

We must allow ourselves to be placed in companies, schools, and nations that are corrupt, so we can help bring righteousness.

This is difficult because being righteous when others are not always brings persecution. In addition, it often leads to loneliness—feeling like we are the only faithful ones.

1 Kings 19:10, *So he said, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”*

However, Christ was persecuted and experienced loneliness—he was alone in the wilderness and at his betrayal, when all his disciples left him. These negative experiences are, at times, necessary to bring positive change.

To be effective, we must allow ourselves to be sprinkled into ungodly places.

c) Commune with other faithful Christians.

In the Greek, “You are the salt of the earth” is plural. Christ was not referring to individuals specifically, but individuals as part of the community of believers. The more salt placed on something, the more flavoured it becomes.

Similarly, like iron sharpening iron, we must surround ourselves with other salty believers to be encouraged, challenged, and built up, so we can be more effective in the world.

If we are not cultivating our faith in church, small groups, and ministries, we will not be very effective around the lost.

In fact, without faithfully communing with other salty believers, we will probably start to conform to the world rather than changing it.

Romans 12:2, *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

d) Commune with Christ.

It is only because we have Christ's nature in us that we are salt—apart from that, we are just like the world.

Therefore, to grow in saltiness, we must continually abide in Christ.

John 15:5, *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

Christ said that he was the vine and that we are the branches. If we abide in him, we will produce much fruit.

We must abide in Christ to be our most potent suitable for application to the world.

e) Do not be discouraged by our insignificancy.

It does not take much salt to flavour something. Sometimes we may be the only Christian, and at other times, we may be part of a small minority.

After Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension, he only had 120 followers praying in an upper room (**Acts 1**), but soon they filled the Roman Empire. Today, Christianity is the largest religion in the world.

It does not matter how small we are individually, as a local church, or as a population. God only needs one disciple to stand in the gap to save a nation.

Ezekiel 22:30, *So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.*

Jonah 3.

We should not be discouraged at our insignificance.

God delights to make his power known through a small, faithful minority.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29, *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

3. De-Salted

V 13, *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*

What does Christ mean by salt losing its flavour or saltiness?

Salt, by nature, is a very stable compound and, therefore, cannot lose its essential properties.

NaCl remains NaCl!

Therefore, what does Christ mean by salt losing its flavour or saltiness.

In the ancient world, salt was often found on riverbanks or sea beds, and sometimes, the salt had mixed with other minerals—making it less salty and even repulsive. It was not fit for food and could not be thrown into a field or garden, as it would kill the vegetation.

Therefore, it would typically be thrown on a road or path and eventually ground into the dirt, as people walked over it.

How does this apply to believers?

A true believer cannot lose his essential nature as salt since Christ dwells in him.

However, he can lose his effectiveness by mixing with the world.

The process begins with friendship with the world.

James 4:4, *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever*

therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Then becoming stained by the world.

James 1:27, *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

Then it leads you to loving the world.

1 John 2:15, *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Finally, being fully conformed to the world.

Romans 12:2, *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Then we look no different at all with the worldly people.

There is an opposing principle working in the world system that draws people away from God. We must be careful of mixing, as it will not only draw us away from God but also faithful believers. This leads to ineffectiveness in our ministry to the world.

In fact, like contaminated salt which cannot be thrown into a field or garden without killing the vegetation, worldly believers

are dangerous. Instead of drawing people to God, they push people away from him. Worldly believers not only promote sin in the world instead of retarding it, but they also promote sin in the church.

1 Corinthians 5:6, *Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*

Sin spreads and contaminates others.

Christ said one either gathers or scatters.

Matthew 12:30, *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*

There is no in between.

We are either bringing others to Christ or pushing them away. Which are you doing?

4. What does “trampled on by people”?

Refer to God’s discipline.

Hebrews 12:6, *“For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he accepts.”*

To live a compromised life only brings the discipline of our loving Father.

When Jonah rebelled against God, God brought a storm into his life—leading the sailors he was with to throw him off a ship and into the sea (**Jonah 1**).

With the prodigal son, the father allowed him to leave the household. The son lost his wealth by gambling and intermingling with prostitutes. He eventually became a poor servant caring for pigs and eating their food. It was when he reached rock bottom that he turned back to the father's house (**Luke 15**).

No doubt, God often disciplines believers by allowing them to follow their sinful desires and receive the full consequences of their disobedience.

Many times, this happens until they come back to their senses, like the prodigal son did. This is how a person is often “re-salted.”

God works in them through discipline and God's Word to turn them back both to Himself and righteousness.

If they will not turn back, sometimes, he just takes them home. Ananias and Sapphira, because of their lying to the church and God, received an untimely death (**Acts 5**).

God's discipline is meant to help us become salty again, even if that only happens in heaven.

This is not only true individually as believers but also corporately as church communities.

Revelation 2:5, *Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.*

Christ told the church of Ephesus that He would remove their lampstand symbolizing their effectiveness in the community—because they lost their first love.

The church of Ephesus no longer exists today.

Sadly, this is true of many great historic churches. At one time, they were vibrant and salty positively influencing their community, but now they are full of liberality and false doctrine.

They exist but only to the detriment of the wider community. They are soon to be removed totally. We must hear that salt that loses its saltiness is only fit to be trampled into the ground where it eventually disappears.

Have you lost your saltiness?

If so, the Father's discipline might be the best thing to meditate on, as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Proverbs 9:10, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

Conclusion

Believers are the salt of the earth they are valuable.

They preserve society from decay, and they flavour it—creating a thirst for Christ.

Are you allowing yourself to be salt or have you become dangerous by compromise—only fit for the discipline of God? Lord, help your church to be salty!

We are a preservative. We are an antiseptic.

As we live in the world, a holy, Christ-like character, and as we are pure white in the world, and as we do flavour the world, and as we do sting the world a little bit, and as we do make the world thirsty for God, all that in combination can be added to the thought that we preserve the world from going completely corrupt.

Once we leave, it only takes seven years for the world to go to the pits of hell. We check the rottenness and decay of the world.

Our presence in the world is to hold back crime. The Spirit of God in us is the one who hinders, **2 Thessalonians**.

Our presence in the world should change certain kinds of conversation; it ought to affect barber shops, like D. L. Moody's did.

It ought to affect kids, like Andrew Murray's life did.

Genesis chapter 18.

God was at the decision-making point.

Genesis 18:23-32, *And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? ²⁵Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" ²⁶So the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."*

²⁷*Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak*

to the Lord: ²⁸Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it." ²⁹And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty."

³⁰Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." ³¹And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." ³²Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?"

And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

You want to know something?

Just ten righteous people could have spared that entire population.

Believers in the world preserve the world from the wrath of God!

We are an agency to retard God's inevitable judgment. One day, God is going to judge this world, and before He does, He will pull all His believers out. He will pull us all out, and then He will fire His judgment at the world.

Our Church sits as a place to be salt. Not just in Harrow, London but to the ends of earth.

This is the power of our influence, the power of our silent witness.

Helen Ewing life story:

"When I was saved, during a mighty movement of the Spirit in the city of Glasgow, Scotland, a young lady was also saved. Her name was **Helen Ewing**. She was just a slip of a girl, but at the very threshold of her new life in Christ, she was crowned...she crowned Him as Lord absolutely and was filled with the Spirit. The rivers of living water simply flowed from that young girl's life. Although she died at the age of 22, all Scotland wept. I know hundreds of missionaries all over the world who wept and mourned for her." Imagine! Died at 22.

"She had mastered the Russian language and was expecting to labour for God in Europe; she had no outstanding personality. She never wrote a book, never composed a hymn. She was not a preacher, never travelled more than 200 miles from her home. When she died, people wrote about her life story. Although she died so early in life, she had led a great multitude to Jesus Christ.

She arose every morning of her life at 5 o'clock to study God's Word, to commune, and to pray. She prayed for hundreds of missionaries. Her mother showed her diary, one of many diaries, and there were at least 300 different missionaries for whom she was praying at all times. It showed that God had burdened that young heart with a ministry of prayer. She had the date when she started to pray for a request and the date when God answered it. She had a dynamic prayer life that moved God and moved man.

In Glasgow University, there was a remarkable little girl who, wherever she went on the campus, left the fragrance of Christ behind her. 'For example,' he said, 'If the students were telling dirty stories, someone would say, "Helen is coming," and as she passed by, she unconsciously left the power of God.'"