

Sermon – Salt of the Earth

Sunday 5 February 2023 Matthew ch 5 v 13-20

You are **the salt of the earth**

To put today's reading in context it follows immediately after the beatitudes and is part of the Sermon on the Mount.

This statement is not made to a select group – although the disciples were sitting close Jesus, he was also speaking to the crowds that had followed him.

So like the beatitudes this statement about being the salt of the earth like that of being the light of the world does not only apply to a select few but to all believers in all places and at all times.

Before the advent of refrigeration and freezer technology salt was far more significant in daily life than it is today. Salt was used in the preservation of food without which long sea voyages would have been impossible and survival over winter far more difficult.

Salt use is not as common today but it is still often used as a seasoning without which food can be considered to bland. Salt with eggs, with spring onions and in the production of bread.

When I was 11 at boarding school we made some bread in the house kitchen – but we did not add salt to it and as you can imagine the end product was rather disappointing.

We are all called to add savour to the world by our actions, our conversation our very presence but do we always do that. Whilst I was preparing this sermon I read an story that allegedly came from the Peanuts cartoon strip

The cartoon, showed Peppermint Patty talking to Charlie Brown. She said,

"Guess what, Chuck. The first day of school and I got sent to the principal's office. It was your fault, Chuck."

He said, "My fault? How could it be my fault? Why do you say everything is my fault?"

She said, "You're my friend, aren't you, Chuck? You should have been a better influence on me."

I guess one question might be are we an influence on the World or are we influenced by it?

Paul tells us in Romans 12:2

² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

As our reading said if the salt loses its taste it is useless. If we cease to be salt – if we become conformed to the world we will lose our ability to add savour to the world and to live effectively as Christians in society.

Many years ago a friend worked in an office where they had to clock in.....

I remember many years ago hearing a speaker ask the question – If Christianity was illegal would there be enough public evidence to convict you – do we openly live our lives in such a way that people know about our faith – know that we are Christians? And that does not mean we have to shouting on street corners or bashing people over the head with the largest family bible we can find.

But it does mean we should not be hiding our faith away or keeping it secret – people share their passions and interests all the time and we should be no different about our faith.

Later in our reading we were told to be the Light of the world and not to hide that light under a basket. In the same way the salt should not be hidden away in the salt shaker but needs to be freely flowing to be of any use.

We are called to be salt and light to the world – let us do what we can to fulfil that call.

Revd Mark Radcliffe