

# A Disciple's Influence

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Matthew 5:13-16

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus described the character of those who would be His disciples. In our text, He made it clear that His disciples would have an impact on the world around them. He used three analogies – the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and a city set on a hill. Each one emphasizes a different aspect of the influence we are to have upon others and, in some ways, how the world will react to us.

## The Salt of the Earth

- If salt does not do what it is meant to do, “it is no longer good for anything...” – it is meant to improve taste and preserve food
- Salt is used to improve taste – a disciple focused on the kingdom of God will make life in the kingdoms of men more palatable; we do this by doing good to those who are around us (Galatians 6:10)
- Salt is a preservative – this does not mean that if there are more disciples, then God will delay judgment (Acts 17:31); instead, by our godly lives, we preserve what is good and right, and we persuade others to act in this way as well

## The Light of the World

- As lights, God's people would not be able to be hidden, nor should we try to be – no one lights “a lamp and [puts] it under a basket”; we must “let [our] light shine”
- Light shows the way – God's word is a lamp to our feet (Psalm 119:105) because it shows the way we are to go in order to please God; we act as lights by enlightening others, sharing the truth of God's word with them (1 Peter 3:15)
- Light exposes wickedness – Jesus described Himself as “the Light of the world” (John 8:12), and as such He exposed wickedness (John 3:19-20); we do the same (Ephesians 5:11); by our words and actions we show the difference between right and wrong (Philippians 2:15-16)

## A City Set on a Hill

- The fact that the city was situated on a hill was very significant
- A city on a hill is highly visible – we will stand out; we are not to be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2); others will “see [our] good works” (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12)
- A city on a hill is a target – Jesus told His apostles that the world would hate them because they were different (John 15:19); those who are not conformed to the world will face persecution (2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12)
- A city on a hill is in a position of strength – even though Christians will face persecution, we should not despair (Matthew 10:28); a city on a hill has natural

defenses; the Lord will be victorious (Revelation 17:14); we will overcome through Him (Romans 8:31, 37)

## **Conclusion**

- As disciples, we cannot blend in with the world around us – if we follow Jesus as we ought to, we will stand out
- But being different should not drive us to isolation – we must use our words and deeds in such a way as to have a positive impact on others; the goal of this is to lead them to the Lord and His truth