**THE INFLUENCE OF A TRUE DISCIPLE: THEY SHINE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD**

**Matthew 5:13:** “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

 **What is influence?** To make an impact with someone or to someone. To influence is to lead others to follow ideologies. Or to help someone with what you know about having a better life or a better perspective in life. For example, influencing your depressive friend, to have a rest or change environment from work and enjoy life. But the influence I am talking about is spiritual influence. Influencing disciples of Christ to follow Jesus faithfully and grow spiritually in the Lord. As Christians, we will answer the question, how can a disciple of Jesus make a spiritual influence in this troubled world?

 We are living in a world that is dying dark and corrupt. People are wicked in God’s eyes, totally depraved, desperately sick, no hope apart from God. We are seeing the world with greater immorality, greater perversion, greater war, greater crime. Greater virus, greater earthquake. Wickedness and troubles and sufferings are growing and growing, no one can really stop destruction of mankind.

 Whether you believe me or not the world is dying, it is not getting better, even though most of our dreams will be fulfilled in this world we will still have troubles in this world. Everything will be destroyed but the kingdom of heaven is eternal. Heaven and rewards are waiting for us. This is the place of perfect comfort satisfaction and completeness, the glory of God. Remember the world is groaning and groaning praying for the Son of God to come with His children joining Him.

**Romans 8:18-22 says**, “18 **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.** 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to **futility**, not willingly, but **because of Him who subjected it** in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be **delivered from the bondage of corruption** into the glorious liberty of the **children of God**. 22 For we know that the whole creation **groans** and labors with birth pangs together until now. . . (NKJV)

But while waiting for the coming kingdom of God, let us make a spiritual influence today. But how can we make an influence in this troubled world? How can we help people know God and that they too will believe and glorify God the Father in heaven? Jesus gave an engaging description of how His disciples can make a spiritual influence in this dying troubled chaotic world:

**YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH**

**13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**

 Disciples are called to be the salt of the earth. Jesus directly described and called His own as the salt of the earth. “**You are the salt of the earth.**” People who do not know Christ do not know what it takes to be a salt of the earth only the disciples the true Christians can be salt of the earth. But Jesus said, salt should have a taste. A salt must have a taste. **We know what a salt taste like right?** When we taste a seawater it tastes like salt. We use salt when cooking our food and we use salt for food preservative. In ancient time, having salt at home is a sign prosperity, sign of life and survival. In New Testament, Roman soldiers are being paid using salt. Finding salt and making salt is easy and cheap now a days and it can be reproduced using seawater. We know there are a lot of benefits salt in our body. I love salty food but too much is not healthy for our body.

 “**but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again?** How can a tasteless salt become useful? This is ironic because most salt has alway a taste. In the ancient time they can make the salt tasteless. Dead Sea water in Israel has the highest salinity compared to other seawater in the oceans but it can be contaminated with other minerals in the sea.

 In reference to the disciples of Jesus like you and me, a true disciple of Jesus cannot be a salt that is tasteless or without flavour. To be a tasteless disciple is a foolish or unwise, lack of wisdom in life, dull, uninteresting, bored, or sluggish disciple. A tasteless disciple has no passion for life and no compassion to serve people. **How did Jesus described a salt that is tasteless?** Jesus gave an interesting answer,

 **You are no longer good for anything**. A tasteless salt is nothing, worthless and no purpose to exist. If the salt is tasteless it means no longer good for anything, it it useless no more benefit to people. How will we dispose this tasteless salt? **“Except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.”** A tasteless salt should be thrown out to the field and on the road and be trampled under foot by men. Tasteless salt should be placed outside the house or on the road or in the field and allow people to step on them anyway they are useless salt.

 True disciples of Jesus Christ are the salt of the earth. How do we know we are the salt of the earth? True disciples of Jesus has a consistent passion for Christ and has genuine compassion to help people. They have **passion** to know and follow Jesus. They seek wisdom, guidance and counsel from God. They have **compassion** for people to know God, giving them hope, courage, strength and energy to know, love and serve God. True disciples **defend the truth of God’s Word from false teachers of the world.** Defending the Word of God is to rebuke and correct the many wrong teachings the churches are getting.

 Defending the Word of God against **progressive postmodern culture.** What does it mean? They are changing and deconstructing the truth of God’s Word according to what they think and believe and what the current culture and the trend are saying. **Seeker friendly** **culture.** They are bringing the worldly culture of the world to the churches. The problem we are becoming like the world more than like Christ. **Prosperity gospel theology.** Finding your best life here on earth is true Christianity. Money and prosperity are signs of blessing but sickness and poverty is a sign of cursing from God. Prosperity gospel theology is not a pure gospel truth.

 Churches want to be the sugar or honey or sweet of the earth. False teachers will say a true Christian is rich, successful, heathy, prosperous, no problem, no harm or no virus will harm Christians. For them, Christianity is all about being the honey of the earth. If you teach these you are giving the church a false hope. Good people also suffer in this world we are not exempted. Our goal is to be the salt of the earth regardless of our status, position or influence. **Ephesians 4:14 says,** “As a result, we are no longer to be children, **tossed here and there by waves** and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.”

 True salt, true disciples infect people to know God, excite people to follow Christ. They are useful for the master's use. Inspire people and stimulate people to know God and serve God. Like the virus spreading the virus and multiplying the virus to as many people as possible. A true disciple of Jesus is a salt of the earth. He is spreading the taste of the salt to others and they are being influenced to do the same. They are useful for the master’s use.

 **2 Timothy 2:21 says,** “Therefore, if anyone **cleanses himself from these things**, he **will be a vessel for honor, sanctified**, **useful to the Master**, **prepared for every good work**.”

 **A tasteless disciple is a false disciple of Christ**, a fake Christian, and they do not have the passion to seek the kingdom of God, no desire for God they do not seek God and they have no hunger and thirst for God’s Word and His righteousness. They do not consult God, they do not pray and ask God for help and counsel and they do not like church involvement. They are unwise, corrupt, fearful of the future, they love themselves more than God. They are purely tasteless and useless in the kingdom of God. Worthy to be thrown and trampled under foot. A tasteless disciples are useless worthless for the master’s use. They are thrown out from the playing court, thrown out of the game and thrown out to hell. Be trampled under foot because they are a bad influence in the kingdom of God and unworthy disciples of Jesus. They are separated from the useful vessels of God.

What are you? Are you the salt of the earth? Or are you a tasteless useless worthless salt of the earth? The goal of a Christian life is to be the salt of the earth. To be the salt of the earth is to make an influence for Jesus useful for the master’s use. Being a spiritual influence to the world is a tasteful Christian and not tasteless Christian being influenced by the world, copying the world and being like the world. Christians should influence the world for Christ not the other way around. You cannot be a true Christian if you are not a tasteful salt of the earth.

As I end this reflection, **Dr. Lloyd Jones** said about being the salt of the earth, ‘The glory of the gospel is that when the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first.’”