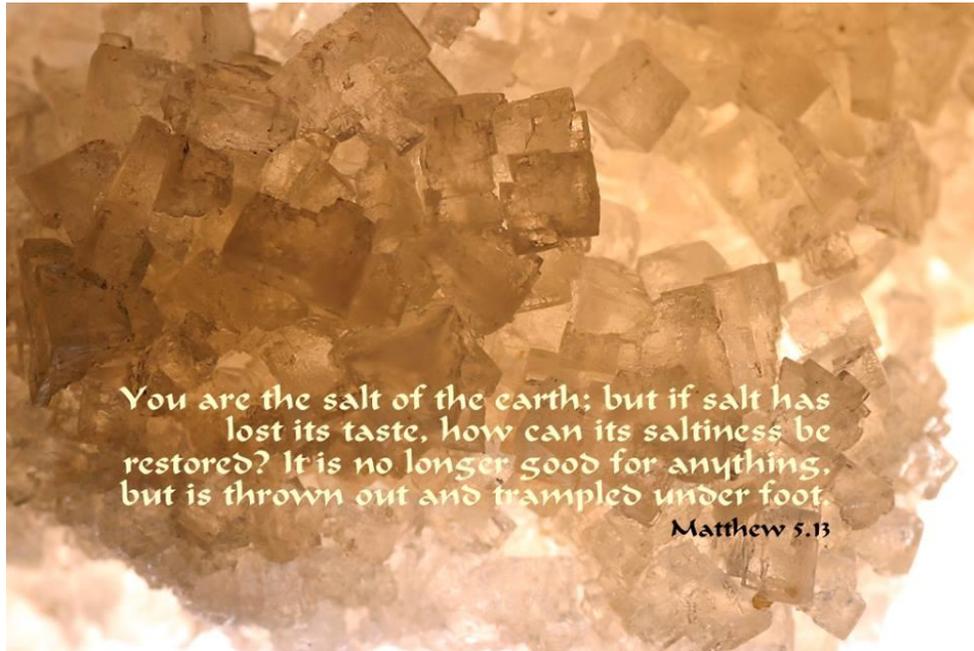


The danger of the salt of Christianity becoming tasteless and “good for nothing” (Mat 5:13)



Let's reject all movements that attempt to hijack and thus corrupt the transcendent goodness of Christianity, making it tasteless and "good for nothing" for our society (Matt. 5:13).

We Christians are uniquely blessed to be in a position to share God's matchless love with every human being we encounter. We not only have the examples of God's gracious love in becoming man (John 1:14-18) and self-sacrificial death on the Cross (Rom. 5:8; Luke 23:34), we also have the privilege of partaking of God's very own nature (2 Pet. 1:4) of love (1 John 4:8) for all human beings--friends and enemies alike (John 1:29; 3:16; Matt. 5:44-48). What a tremendous privilege we enjoy to be able to reach out and share God's love, grace, compassion, and hope to every person in our periphery. What a tremendous privilege and responsibility we have to be salt and light to a dying world that is otherwise without hope, eternal life, or Transcendent Love.

Indeed, we Christians have been called to be salt and light to our generation, to our nation. Unfortunately, history is replete with examples of Christians/Christianity being hijacked by socio/economic/politico (SEP) forces. I have noted this in the enslavement of blacks from 1650 to 1861 and in the Jim Crow days of the South for another hundred years. Although there were wonderful individual examples of Christians who loved the Lord and others, and thus pointed out the evils of slavery and segregation as unChristian, the vast majority of Bible-believing Christians in the American South and Nazi Germany engaged in racial discrimination due to SEP forces that hijacked the true essence of Christianity—an essence which is totally antithetical to racism or sexism of any kind (see Gal. 3:28).

When Christianity is hijacked by SEP forces, it loses its authenticity. Jesus described this loss in terms of salt losing its flavor (Matt. 5:13-16). Jesus said when this occurs, the Christian influence is “good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men” (Matt. 5:13). We can see the ineffectiveness of Christianity and of it being trampled under foot in the

history of Nazi Germany, in racial slavery from 1650 to 1861, in Jim Crow South, and today in various types of prosperity gospels, consumerism, and political movements on the Right and Left (1970-2018).

One example of Christianity being thrown out and trampled under foot by men was in America in the 1960s and early 1970s. The Summer of Love in 1967 and Woodstock in 1969 promoted free love, drugs, and the hippie counterculture. John Lennon, in 1966, pointed out that he had more of an influence over kids than Jesus did. Although there were many reasons for counterculture attacks (e.g., personal rejection of Jesus Christ, the Vietnam war, unjust social laws, injustice to minorities, governmental lies) on social, economic, and religious structures, one reason is the hypocrisy in evangelical white churches. Children of evangelicals saw the hypocrisy in their churches. They saw segregated churches. They listened to many sermons on the importance of segregation and preserving the status quo. They saw firsthand hatred against political opponents. They witnessed the lack of transcendent love and desire for social justice for all. Sunday after Sunday they heard messages from the Bible that were used to support segregation, slavery and an unjust status quo of injustices in society--often followed by hymns praising God's love and grace for all. What they often did not see was the transcendent love of Jesus Christ and its implications for equal justice for all human beings. What they saw was a Christianity that was hijacked by SEP, and was thus distasteful and dark. Instead of seeing Jesus Christ first and foremost in believers, they often saw tradition, racism, hypocrisy and shifting moral and political views.

Let us renew our efforts to live out the true/good/beauty of God's transcendent love and grace as noted in Matthew 5:44-48. May the world see Jesus' love in us first and foremost rather than, for example, some political hero. May the world see the One in Whom we are aligned above all else.