**“SALTLESS SAINTS” or “GOOD FOR NOTHING!”**

**TEXT**: Matthew 5:13

**THESIS**: To show how Christians and the Church has lost its testimony and witness to a lost world.

**INTRO**:

 A. Jesus likened believers to salt. Salt is one of those necessities of life. Without it many things are bland and tasteless. Believers are to provide for the world what salt provides for food. Salt makes things more palatable - believers are to make living in the world more palatable for the unsaved by getting them saved and thus giving them a purpose in life. Salt makes some things sweeter (watermelon, for example - do not knock it if you have not tried it!). Believers are to make life sweeter for others by their works and gifts. Salt is a preservative and keeps things from going bad. Believers are to do all they can to keep biblical morality in society (e.g., homosexuality, abortion, etc.). When a believer stops doing this he is “good for nothing…”

QUOTE: Matthew Henry: “Salt is the remedy for unsavory meat, but there is no remedy for unsavory salt.”

 B. We, as Christians, and collectively as a church are in danger of becoming “good for

nothing…”! We are bordering on becoming “SALTLESS SAINTS.” Here are some of the symptoms…

**I. SYMPTON #1: CONFUSION**

A. Failure To Discriminate: (Lack of Discernment)

1. Discerning Christians are an increasingly rare breed today.

2. Doctrinal uncertainty has neutralized and paralyzed churches and Christians.

3. Unholy alliances between doctrinally diverse groups prevails.

ILLUS: The blasphemous “Promise Keepers” ecumenical movement unites the cults, sects and denominations trampling underfoot doctrinal distinctions. Building stronger homes takes precedence over doctrinal purity. At the 1994 Promise Keepers regional conf. In Portland, Oregon, Bill McCartney asked: “Promise Keepers doesn’t care if you’re a Baptist. Are you born in the Spirit of God? Pro9mise Keepers doesn’t care if you’re Pentecostal. Are you born in the Spirit? Now hear this! Promise Keepers doesn’t care if you’re Roman Catholic. Are you born in the Spirit?” The problem withthe unqualified question is that it can mean whatever you want it to mean. To each of the above it has a different meaning. This philosophy fits with the spirit of the age that minimizes objective Biblical truth in favor of subjective experience.

As for me - I am a promise keeper, therefore I cannot support Promise Keepers! I have kept promises I made to the Lord when He saved me in 1956 so I cannot support P.K. which is contrary to His Word. I made promises to my wife when we were married in 1960 so I cannot support P.K. which seeks to substitute unscriptural psychology and self-esteem programs into the family. I made promises at my ordination in 1963 so I cannot support P.K. which claims that doctrine is less important than unity. I made promises to this church and agree with its doc. Statement and Covenant so I cannot support P.K. which usurps the authority of this local church and espouses things contrary to both. Stay tuned…

**II. SYMPTOM #2: COMPROMISE**

A. Removing The Reproach: (Fear of Controversy)

1. Synthesis is the reigning principle of the day:

a. To synthesize simply means to put different things in the same pot and mix together until a new material has been produced.

b. The original ingredients totally lose their identity: result - a synthetic (“not real”)!

2. The idea is to remove anything offensive to “reach” as many as possible.

ILLUS: Promise Keepers again, re: homosexuality. Officially P.K. states that it “shares the same historic and biblical stance taken by Evangelicals and Catholics” yet they conclude that this “abomination” (KJB) is “a complex and potentially polarizing issue to be understood in the context of psychology and genetic research…(and that) homosexuals are men who need the same support, encouragement and healing we are offering to all men…we, therefore, support their being included and welcome in all our events.” What ever happened to condemning sin, calling for repentance and receiving the Savior?

The success of P.K. and E.C.T., etc. is the large crowds and “decisions”. But even a broken clock is right twice a day!!! Ends do not justify the means…there is a right (Bible) way and a wrong (man-centered) way to get the Gospel out.

3. The seriousness of the situation cannot be overstated; right and wrong, good and evil, light and darkness have become non-issues.

4. All distinctions are removed and everything is thrown into the pot and mashed together.

ILLUS: I once had a friend who mixed all his food together on a plate before eating it! He said it saved time. It was all I could do to sit at the same table with him! Steak, potatoes, butter, a salad with dressing, along with a glass of cold grape juice is my idea of a tasty meal, but I don’t want it put into a blender, mixed together and then have to drink the concoction!

5. Sound doctrine or our view of sin is not determined by consensus, but by God’s Word.

6. The fear of controversy and failure to stand on the truth is a sure pathway to spir. demise.

**III. SYMPTOM #3: COUNTERFEITS**

A. Personality Over Truth: (Pleasing Men, Not God)

1. TV not only elects Presidents, but it also popularizes preachers!

ILLUS: The high priest of selfism, Robt. Schuller writes: “For the church to address the unchurched with a theocentric attitude is to invite failure…I believe that the decline (in church attendance) is the result of our placing theocentric communications (God’s Word) above the meeting of the deeper emotional and spiritual needs of humanity.”

Someone correctly quipped: “When small men cast long shadows it is a sure sign the sun is setting.”

2. The popularity of charismatic preachers and entertainment-centered ministries is due largely to TV influence.

ILLUS: Does God threaten to kill a preacher if he fails to raise millions of dollars? Will I get a 10-fold return on every dollar I send to a TV evangelist? Am I a “little god” who can command the big God’s angels to do my bidding? NO!

**IV. SYMPTOM #4: COMPLACENCY**

A. Apathy Replaces Activity: (Service Demands Dedication)

1. American Christians have no shortage of information, what we lack is inspiration and ded-ication!

2. Jesus told His disciples to “watch and pray” - instead they slept and snored!

ILLUS: Someone advertised the formation of an “Apathy Club” on a college bulletin board. It gave the time and meeting place. When the hour came for the meeting no one showed up. The reason? Lack of interest!

 Frankly, I too have to fight apathy and complacency and my flesh wants to give in to fatalism. In my devotions recently, I perfunctorily prayed for revival. As soon as I caught myself I realized that I was simply mouthing words and didn’t believe it was possible. I had to confess my unbelief as sin and pray fervently again for revival in my life and in our church.

3. Repentance must precede the revival we long to see; sin must be judged, confession, brokenness and turning back to God is what is needed.

V. SYMPTOM #5: CONTENTION

A. Division Instead Of Unity: (Strife Vs. Solidarity)

Mk. 3:25

And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

1. Many churches are in a state of constant civil war!

2. Griping, sniping, criticizing, complaining and knitpicking have done more to discredit the work of God than the cults and sects and denominations.

Jn. 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

ILLUS: Parents who specialize in belittling their pastor, the Christian school and staff, etc. should

 not be surprised if their children are never saved nor ever volunteer for Christian service.

3. As with all sin, contention is merely a symptom of a deeper problem.

4. Without the power of God’s Spirit it will be impossible to keep the balance of truth and love.

QUOTE: Evang. Harold Vaughn: “You can be doctrinally right in the flesh and you can be compassionate in the flesh. But you only do both simultaneously in the power of the Holy Spirit. The world will never take us seriously until the devil does. The devil will not take us seriously until God does. God will not take us seriously until we take Him seriously!”

CONCL: The above symptoms can only produce a devastating disease which can only be cured by deep revival among God’s people in the church. “SALTLESS SAINTS” are “good for nothing…” They are valueless to the world and to the church as well. The text Script. Offers no remedy for savorless salt, but if you have not lost all your saltiness (testimony), ask God to help you to be revived NOW!

F.H. - 1/26/97