**Valuable in Christ**

***13****“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.*

***14****“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.****15****Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.****16****In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16, ESV)*

 We find our value in Christ, which shines out when we spread His light and taste everywhere. Greetings in the Lord as we continue to talk about the characteristics of God’s people. We know that followers of Jesus are called to have certain values and that their lives are called to be different than the unbelievers. Today’s message will go into more detail about that very truth. A Jesus-follower cannot somehow stop knowing or suddenly hide from his or her own renewed identity in Christ. Today we’re going to talk about a believer’s value as a reminder of their life-mission. Again, we find our value in Christ, which shines out when we spread His light and taste everywhere. Let’s see, then, these words within their context…

 A genuine Christian finds the value of their life and work in belonging to the Lord. This may seem a little strange to some of us. However, let’s just remember Jesus’ topic of teaching in when He said these words. God’s people were (called to be) a blessed people because they did not carry themselves like those who were worldly; rather, they were like their humble, merciful, patient, peaceful and meek Lord Jesus. Jesus’ followers were called to rejoice in their differences from the worldly, rather than in their similarities with unbelievers. The passage above from Matthew 5:13-16 stresses that fact that the previously uttered Beatitudes from verses 3-12 were cause for every believer to find their worth and work in the glorification of the Lord. Without the Lord being glorified, a human being’s worth and work is of no value. If the followers of Jesus lived without trusting the Lord (Jesus), they would be like salt that was not salty and light that was kept hidden so it wouldn’t shine. However, just as salt cannot be non-salty or the sun cannot hide from giving off light, the believer must not flee from his or her own “saltiness” or hide the light of Christ that is found within from shining in the world.

 A preacher once preached before the King of England. The king was greatly displeased by the boldness in the sermon and ordered preacher to preach again on the following Sunday and apologize for the offence he had given. The next Sunday, after reading his text, he thus began his sermon: "O preacher, do you know before whom you are to speak this day? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away your life, if you offend him. Therefore, take heed that you not speak a word that may displease. But then consider well, preacher, do you not know from where you come -- upon Whose message you are sent? Even by the great and mighty God, Who is all-present and Who sees all your ways and Who is able to cast your soul into hell! Therefore, take care that you deliver your message faithfully." He then preached the same sermon he had preached the preceding Sunday--and with considerably more energy.

 Therefore, dear brother and sister, your value is in your new identity as a Christian, and you do not have the option of choosing not to be that renewed person. For example, you will not find your value in worldly successes. You will not be able to “be salt” as the Lord wills by simply being successful at your job or in relationships. Even if you are a successful friend, sister, brother, child, or parent, that is not what makes you salt and light. Rather, your value as a Christian comes from your faith, from being devoted to Jesus Christ.

Therefore, no matter how out of place your Christianity may feel to those unbelievers that surround you, you cannot hide, put out, or put aside your Christian identity. Our faith (in Christ) gives value to our whole being because The Giver of Faith is in our life. Your worth, your saltiness and light are found in your consistent life in Christ, which you live out day in and day out.

May our every step be consistent with God’s word and His values, without any shame or hiding our faith from others.

A genuine Christian finds the value of their life and work in belonging to the Lord. We find our value in Christ, which shines out when we spread His light and taste everywhere. The Lord bless you all. Amen.