

Lessons From the Sermon of Jesus on the Mountain Part 42

“13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” (Matthew 5:13 KJV)

We will continue in this message to study more examples how to be the salt of the earth:

“21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” (Matthew 16:21 KJV) What Christ described here, the things that will really take place in His life and these are the very things that He came for from Heaven. Christ came from Heaven for a certain purpose that He needed to do. Christ came to save man from sin by His death on the cross for the forgiveness of humankind sins. *In the same way every one of us was born for a certain plan and purpose of God in our lives. Now ask God what is the plan of God for you and what He wants you to do. You might be in your mind lot of ambitious things that seems good to you, like study, immigrating, getting to live in a nice place, etc., but these are not the very thing that God created you for.* Christ told His disciples that He will suffer in Jerusalem many things of the elders, chief priests and the scribes, and will finally to be killed and be raised from the dead on the third day. The elders, the chief priests, and the scribes were the body of the Jewish church that Jesus came for and He was rejected by them. *Now speaking about the suffering of Christ here, the lesson we learn from it, that when we go on doing the work of God and serving the Lord, the same people that we may serve, that Christ had sent us to we may suffer by them and got hurt and persecuted by them. With all that we need to persevere and accept such to take place because the same had happened to our Lord.* ***“22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” (Matthew 16:22 KJV)*** Now here the mind of man is contradicting the mind of Christ. Why Peter said that to Christ? It could be his emotions, pride, or just because he should say something being the leader of the twelve, or his rejection for suffering, and having a different mind. The emotion of man, pride, and the rejection for suffering is not in the mind of Christ. And Christ would not accept such a mind, and such attitude and behavior. That is why this is what Jesus did? ***“23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” (Matthew 16:23 KJV)*** Jesus here saw Peter as Satan, opposing Him and His progress toward the ultimate goal of God for Him to die in Jerusalem. Now such mind that Peter carry, if Christ will not rebuke, the next stage Peter may tell, *‘Let us go back to Galilee, we are going to Jerusalem to do shopping and get some function and go back home, but not for suffering. What is this, you enjoy your life!’* Many now a day they travel to Jerusalem, trip to the holy land, having tourism in Christ and Israel is happy about it because it is business and the crowd that are traveling to Jerusalem will spend money there. That is why Christ stopped Peter immediately and put him at the back of Him so he will not be a stumbling block to others. Peter was not the salt of the earth with what He did, but he was the chocolate of the earth. ***For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*** The word savourest means what you think or the way you think. Peter was not thinking the things of God, but the things of men. *Many times we are unaware, we start to think the things of men. To correct such, this is what Jesus said about the disciples and their ministry and the way they ought to serve: “24 Then said*

Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 KJV) Jesus described three things that need to be applied today if we decided to come after Jesus: ***1. Let him deny himself:*** You need to deny ourselves. For example, you suppose to eat, then God calls you to fast. You suppose to sleep, then God calls you to wake up. You suppose to relax and rest, then God calls you to run, etc. ***2. And take up his cross:*** We must be carrying a burden and ministry weight all our lives till death or the coming of the Lord. With such we may have constant suffering, but full of achievements and a good example to others. ***3. And follow me:*** To follow Christ wherever He go. Not only we will come to Jesus when we want to come or when we need something, but we need constantly to follow Him. There are many times we see many and big crowds in churches, in crusade, in celebrations, but how many of those are following Christ and walk after His steps? You need to be with the Lord and in the direction that He wants you to move. ***“25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matthew 16:25 KJV)*** This is now the paradox. You want to save your life and pampering yourself, but you will get lost. *The more you move away from serving and doing His will, the more you are lost. You need to deny yourself; surrender everything to Christ and be willing to follow His steps, do His will and suffer for His sake, and with such you shall find your life.* ***“26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26 KJV)*** The way we think should be correct, when we continue to think with earthly things and running after material things, worldly things, making money and pleasures of life we will be losing the heavenly treasures of God. ***“27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27 KJV)*** Christ when He will come with the glory of God the Father, with His angels in the day of judgment, He will command His angels to first to gather the wicked and through them in the fire, and then He will gather us and reward us according to everyone work and conduct.

“34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Luke 14:34-35 KJV) Again here the Lord spoke to His disciples and to those who wanted to follow Him how they need to be salt that has good effect in preserving the message and the people of God by the savory message, the strictness, the precision and how magnifying and exalting Christ. He warned them that losing such criteria will make them irrecoverable and later on to be useless and fit for nothing, even the dunghill will be of some benefit but they are not when they will lose their saltiness and their life’s savory for Christ. Let us read and meditate on the passage before that in ***Luke 14:25-35*** to understand how disciples will lose its saltiness.

“25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,” (Luke 14:25 KJV) Here around Christ many kinds of people they went out after Him, they were multitudes of different categories, but He was not impressed with their numbers or with the size of the crowd. *Many they are elated with big crowd of people and with the high numbers. But high numbers are of no convincing value if they are not carrying the characters that Jesus is looking for in their lives.* In the past people would tell me you are so sweet, but now I regret that because Christ wants me to be the salt of the earth. Christ addressed that point and spoke to the crowd who were after Him with precise salty Word that required from them to keep certain commitment to prove that they are true followers of Christ. ***“26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and***

mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26 KJV) Here Christ made it clear to them that anyone coming after Him should choose to follow Christ. To hate others it means that he should not love them more than Christ, or that his love to them should not hinder him from following Christ. To hate others it means that Christ and His Word would be the first and the utmost priority. Christ has no rival and no one to take His place or replace Him. Our God is a jealous God and does not like that you love other things. No one of whatever influence should take the place of Christ. Here Christ first mentioned that those who follow Him should hate their father and mother, what He means they should hate the teaching and tradition and the religious background that they came from that contradict Christ, His Word and His ways. God had said it to the children of the Israelites in the Old Testament that they should leave the idols of their fathers and follow God’s Word and His commands, “18 But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: 19 I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; 20 And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.” (Ezekiel 20:18-20 KJV) God called us not to follow the religious practices of our father, their ways, their judgments and decisions that contradict the Word of God. Children should honor their parents because they had given them the care, nurture them, and had given them the Word of God. But when parents give worldly teaching and transmit those sinful practices to their children, then the children if they want to follow Christ and come after Christ they need to give up all these things and to be loyal to Christ and to His Word. To hate wife and children, that mean that man his love to Christ and to his Word should not be abased because of his love to his wife and children. As well as, not for the wife and the children, to dictate on man of how he would avoid his commitment to Christ and to His Word. There is a time that God would put us at the cross point and we need to choose Him and to hate our children or spouses because of what they are saying to us to take us away from Christ. Even a man love to his sibling and his love to himself shall not decrease or minimize his love to Christ and to His Word. Christ made it clear that those who do not take and carry such character of the salt of the earth and the savory of salt they cannot be His disciples. The meaning of disciple mean a student, and learner, and a follower. “27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:27 KJV) To be the salt of the earth is to bear with Christ the burden of Christ, and to carry with Him your cross, even daily and to follow after His steps. Our responsibilities is toward Christ and to share with Him the rejection, the suffering, the persecution, the isolation, the commitment to achieve certain things, the ministry that He need us to do, the style of life that we need to live, the plan that we need to follow, and the burdens that we need to carry and the load that is assigned unto us; we need to do them and not to throw them upon the backs and shoulders of others, as Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus, “And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. (Matthew 27:32 KJV) “And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.” (Mark 15:21 KJV) Here they force Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross for Jesus, to help Jesus because He cannot carry. Simon was traveling a journey from place to other place but he was taken to carry the cross. He was having family and children and has work, but he was forced and was taken to carry the cross of Jesus. We are called to help in whenever it is needed. Everyone should recognized what Christ wants from us to do and what the task that we need to

achieve for Him. We need to work it out and help Christ as we found here from the example of Simon the Cyrenian how he helped Christ.

“28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.” (Luke 14:28-29 KJV) To be the salt of the earth we need to be a good planner, using the principles of stewardship in order to achieve big things. To be the salt of the earth we are called to build big things as big as towers for Christ. Jesus’ disciples are not ordinary persons, for they are the people who are delegated with great task. They are highly disciplined and organized people, focus to the task and achiever of goals. Here Jesus spoke about someone who build a tower, it mean and it need not an ordinary engineer but a person who is well trained and prepared to do such task. To build a tower does not need an ordinary engineer but someone who is prepared and trained for this task. In the previous passages the Lord challenged His disciples, to those who wanted to follow Him, to hate, to deny themselves, to loss their lives, to carry their cross, and to follow Him. This is to prepare them to do certain bigger projects for the Lord. Therefore to follow Christ, as disciples, we need to progress from stage to stage.

The disciples need to have a vision from the Lord. There is a vision to each and every individual and there is a vision to the church, but the vision of the individuals should be integrated with the vision of the church. What is in our minds should be in the mind of Christ. As a salt of the earth we need to use our minds to calculate before we jump and fall into troubles. Many, in a hurry way, they decide to do something only out of emotion and they vent to do it without calculating if they are having the enough resources to do that. What we need to do to be salt of the earth, we need to sit down first to plan and put goals to achieve over a period of time, and find out if we have the enough resources to do that. We need to count the costs and see if we have the means to pay for what we had planned to build and to finish. Jesus’ disciple uses wisdom and brain: A disciple is to sit down and estimate. Jesus is looking for a mindful follower. The Lord does not want emotional people who are controlled by a weak heart, easily won and easily lost. He is not happy with people who quickly follow and smoothly miss the way. Do you know how much time, effort, and finances you need? That is why He asks you to sit down and estimate the cost. He is looking for a wise follower who knows what is meant by the word plan and how to plan. We need to calculate, we need to use math to find out, and we need to deal with numbers to be sure of what we are doing and that we are on the right path. Mathematic figures are facts and we need to be sure they are available so we can know that we will be able to finish. There is nothing here speak about borrowing money and getting loans to start a project. You must be ready with the resources before you start to build. Resources are time, finances, people and talents. If you don’t have enough then you need to defer your project till you have the enough amount of money and the other resources to cover the whole expenses. If you don’t have you need to work out to collect till you are ready. King David, prepared everything to build the temple, the place, the land, the materials that will be used for the building, the finances, and his son Solomon to be the king, that God said to David, that your son will be the one to build the temple. So you need to prepare everything before you start. Noah built the ark, he and his family, eight workers, did great things for the Lord. What Noah built was great, it took him 100 years or more to do that.

Yes we need to have faith, but we cannot start the work and we had not prepared the material needed depending that something will come on the middle. It may come, but how about if it will not come, what you will do then? Also avoid counting chicks in the eggs because they may not hatch. You cannot sell chicks which are still in the eggs and receive the money and spend it but the eggs are not yet hatched. How about if the eggs will not hatch, then what you will do?

From the country that I came from they say, 'If you don't put it in your mouth and taste don't say sesame.' Being the salt of the earth, you are under focus and the eyes of people upon you, looking how you will conduct your affairs and they will continue to follow you up to see if you are finishing. Yes, you need to lay down the foundation and you need to finish what you started. Such will be a bad example of being the salt of the earth, and people will start to mock you and laugh on you, "29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:29-30 KJV) Whatever Christ had put in our mind to do, we need to start and we need to finish. Our progress and our continuity is a sign of our authenticity. Many they will began hot and steady, in the middle of the way because it is a long journey or resistance or lack of resources, they will be cold, they want to back out and go with the rest of the world to enjoy their lives leaving their responsibilities for others. So here the character of perseverance is essential for the disciples of Jesus to be the salt of the earth. The flight of idea, easy distraction, and constant change of thoughts and non-consistency of actions are the features of a manic person. These should not be the character of Jesus' disciple to be the salt of the earth. Jesus Christ has called the attention of his disciples about how they should live. The question is how the world will feel the presence of Jesus if the disciples forget and do not apply His teachings. The same for the salt if it loses its saltiness, what is the use of it! And what is the use of a disciple who does not know how to start and how to end up his role. Many they don't have vision from God and they are confused therefore they need to come to God in repentance and ask Him what He need them to do for Him.

"31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace." (Luke 14:31-32 KJV) Here the disciples of Jesus they need to be warriors and under that tactics of war. Why? It is not enough to build? No, because we need to build and we need to fight the good fight. Some people they say, we just want to build but we don't want to get involve in troubles or fight but that is not in the Bible; as Jesus' disciple should discern our enemy, the devil and those who are deceived by him and used by him. Jesus is the King and the Messiah and by being with Him we are declaring a war against the power of darkness. So we need to have wisdom of how to deal with the enemies. Every battle it has a specific strategy not similar to other battles, and we need to be aware of what we are doing. The Bible speaks about lot of tactics for war and we can learn how to advance, to win and to conquer as we are led by the Holy Spirit and instructed with God's Word. There is a strategy for the battle of Jericho, a strategy for the battle of Ai, a strategy to take Jerusalem, the strategy that Jehoshaphat fought against the three armies, and a strategy for the church, the disciples and the apostles to advance with God's Word reaching the lost.

We need to be courageous, faithful to the end, trusting God that He will neither leave us nor forsake us in the time of troubles. Faithfulness needed to complete the task and to

stand to the end even if we are left alone. But what we learn here also that we should have humility especially if we found ourselves not ready for the battle, then we may need to send delegation and ask condition of peace. This need humility for when we come to know that we are not able and if our decision is wrong then we need to be ready to change our decision in order to avoid putting ourselves in troubles.

How we found out that whether we are in the position or not in the position to fight? We read, ***"sitteth not down first, and consulteth"***, so again you need to sit down, stop moving with your feet, but think with your mind, and ask consultation, ask advices and ask details so you can reach the right decision. Consultations need to be asked from those who are expert in the subject to give their opinions and from those who are spiritual, the brethren who are burden with the Lord's work and who live their lives for Him. In this parable of war against an army of a king, there are many hidden things, therefore you need to ask consultation from God and from those who fear God and the followers of God. When you need to ask God an advice, then you need to come to the church and ask advice from the church.

"33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33 KJV) What He means here to forsake everything is to forsake pride, selfish ambition, hurries, worldliness, friendships, idols, and whatever will hinder us to follow Him and be the salt of the earth to others. The salt of the earth should be willing to accept his mistakes and be fast to change his decision when he know that he is at wrong, and he should be humble enough to accept to apologize and to declare that he changed his decision when he discovered he is at fault.

"33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33 KJV) We have to transform our thinking from personal life level, and set our mind according to what is present in the Savior's mind. Certainly, we will not understand fully what is in the mind of God. But, in regard to the personal vision that Jesus is giving to everyone of His disciples, we will understand it if we give up everything, think by His mind and see by His eyes what He had planned for everyone of us. Jesus said, ***"34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 14:25-35 KJV)***

My dear and beloved: Meditate on the message of God in your life and be willing to do the following:

1. To suffer for Christ, to deny cultural and religious traditional practices, to love God more than your spouse, children, siblings or relatives.
2. To plan, to calculate the cost, to be willing to achieve big projects, to complete the work, to avoid borrowing or be in debt, to prepare everything before starting the work.
3. To get advice from Godly church, to be humble down and ask forgiveness if you sin, and to be willing to change your plan if you discover that you are at wrong.

My prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord, thank you for your Word that made me see clearly my sins and my wrong doings, and the way that I need to live and serve you to be a salt for the earth.

Confess to God your sins and renounce them. Ask God forgiveness for your pride, your worldliness, your non willingness to suffer, your non willingness to offend your family members and chose to love them and pamper them on the account of your love and obedient to Christ. Ask God forgiveness for your lack of stewardship and bad handling of resources and money. Ask God forgiveness for your lack of humility and non willingness to humble down and mend your ways even when you are at wrong or when you have taken a wrong decision.

Confess your sins to God. Lord forgives me the following sins
_____.

Surrender your life and your will fully to the Lord abiding with the Word of God to be the salt of the earth and true disciple of Jesus the way He wants you to be.

Lord I commit myself to abide with this Word of yours that I receive in this message and to abide with. Lord I commit myself to love you more than anyone in my family. Lord I am willing to be disciplined and to be willing to achieve the projects that you want me to do. Lord I am willing to humble down and accept to change my wrong ways and wrong plans and to wait upon you to lead me into the right direction. Lord I will work with you to develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit; love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, patient, long suffering, self-control, faith, faithfulness, gentleness, kindness, and generosity. Lord give me strength and patience to bear the pain and suffering while I am serving you and reaching others. Lord fill me with the Holy Spirit and have me fully to you. I surrender my life and my plans in full to you, Lord give me the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that I can go and serve you and evangelize and reach others and spread your Word and teach those who are willing and to disciple them.

Lord, I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who humbled down, accepted your Word and are willing to live their lives and serve you in the way that you ordained for them, Lord protect them and provide all their needs. Lord work miracles for them and enable them to achieve the projects that you ordain for them to do.

Lord bless us and sustain us as a church. Lord help us, protect us, and provide for us to go on in serving you and do your work and your will. Lord give to us more of the Holy Spirit gifts to be ready to evangelize and to reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the message of the Word of God. Lord, we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus' name, Amen.

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