

Intro.

- A. Our text suggest the influence that you & I have on other people, as well as the effect they have on us.
 - 1. "Because of him" (Lazarus) ... many believed on Christ.
 - 2. Someone is being influenced by you (c. **Rom. 14:7**)
- B. What kind of image does the Lord's church have here? Are the perceptions accurate? Make any diff.???

 - 1. Whatever the image, the members are responsible! (Sometimes even if it's not really accurate!)
 - 2. Poem: *We are the only Bible...*

Discuss.**I. YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH. Mt. 5:13**

- A. Means you need to do what you can to the world around us free f/ corruption. (c. **Prov. 14:34**)
 - 1. In Noah's day, there was certainly a *salt shortage*, **Gen. 6:5-7**
 - 2. The same is descriptive of the city of Sodom, (c. **Gen. 18:20-33**)
 - 3. I'd love to tell you that our present world is a lot better than that, but I cannot tell a lie.
- B. We preserve society by living lives dedicated to God & what is right.
 - 1. Level of conversation & action is usually raised higher by the presence of Christians.
 - 2. Epitaph of little girl: *It was easier to be good when she was with us.*

II. BECAUSE OF YOU, FAITH CAN BE STRONG OR OVERTHROWN.

- A. Because of his parents, Timothy was faithful, **2 Tm. 1:5**
 - 1. Children learn by imitating our actions & our ways.
 - 2. Look at what Peter wrote about the influence of marriage partners, **1 Pet. 3:1fff**
- B. Because of Hymenaeus, the faith of some had been overthrown. **2 Tm. 2;18; Ecc. 9:18**

III. BECAUSE OF YOU SOME CAN BE ENCOURAGED OR DISCOURAGED.

- A. (Understand the diff. in disappointment & discouragement.)
 - 1. Disappointment = when things do not work out the way we hoped or wanted.
 - 2. Discouragement = when we *lose courage*, & feeling defeated, we are deflated: *no more fight!*
- B. Two contrasting examples:
 - 1. His brethren *encouraged* Paul.
 - a. **Ac. 28:15**
 - b. **2 Tm. 1:16-18** **14:1**
 - 2. Opposite situation found in **Deut. 20:8**, when 10 of 12 spies *discouraged* their brethren. **Num. 13:3-33;**

IV. BECAUSE OF YOU, COME GLORIFY GOD & SOME MAY BE CAUSED TO BLASPHEME HIM

- A. Bible ex. = read in **Gal. 1:22ff** about churches in Judea who were caused to glorify God because of the influence of the apostle Paul.
- B. Be careful to guard VS giving the world opportunity to blaspheme God in part because of our hypocrisy.
 - 1. Paul told Titus to warn against this possibility (c. **Tit. 2:5**) because he had seen this happen in **Rom 2:21f**
 - 2. In **2 Sam. 12:14**, remember how Nathan told David that his sin gave occasion for blasphemy.
 - 3. Poem: *You are writing a gospel...*

V. YOU MAY BE HAVING A GREATER INFLUENCE ON OTHER'S STEWARDSHIP.

- A. Our liberal giving encourages others to give more.
 - 1. Think about how the enthusiastic commitment of the Corinthians was contagious **2 Cor. 9:2.**
 - 2. Apparently, the same was true of Barnabas (c. **Ac. 4**), & other wished for a like reputation (c. **Ac. 5**)
 - 3. Don't forget ▶ example of the widow who *gave all she had* **Mk. 12:43** (c. **Mk. 14:8f** – alabaster box)
- B. Similarly, when young Christians observe older Christians giving God their leftovers rather than giving lavishly & sacrificially, **Mal. 3:1-10, esp. 8**

Concl.

- A. How we influence others depends on our spiritual relationship.
- B. We become like that with which we associate (c. **Ac. 4:13**)
- C. You have both a tremendous responsibility & opportunity.

*You never can tell when you do an act,
Just what the result will be.
But with every deed you are sowing a seed,
Though the harvest you cannot see.*

- D. That is even true about what you will choose to do as we sing the invitation song.
 - 1. If you're a faithful Christian, then that is pretty well obvious, & others are being influenced by your good ex.
 - 2. If you have set a poor example as a Christian, & are allowing sin to be a regular part of your life with no immediate plans to repent, then *because of you* some will be lost who are under your influence. ---- *That is a real good reason you may want to ...***Js. 5:16**
 - 3. Suppose you have never obeyed the gospel...never made that good confession & been baptized to have your sins washed away.
 - a. Have you thought about your influence on your son or daughter, or grandchild?
 - b. Have you considered other's here today who are just like you, who might follow you in obedience to the Lord if you would lead them by your good example???
 - 4. **I dare you to think about those you care most about as we sing the invitation song, as ask yourself the question, are they going to miss heaven ...because of me???**