

The Beatitudes: Being Salt and Light

Persecution is a given for followers of Christ, but our response to it is critical.



The Transformation for Adult LifeGroups

Matthew 5:13-16

August 4, 2019

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: **Matthew 5:13-16**

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

FIRST THOUGHTS

What is salt useful for?

What is light useful for?

Jesus uses these familiar things as a picture of what our lives should be like as Christians. We've heard the phrases "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" so many times, it's easy to forget this is our calling as a follower of Christ.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Jesus' audience at least partly includes "disciples" (5:1-2). Having described the appropriate lifestyle of disciples, Jesus now explains that a professed disciple who does not live this lifestyle of the kingdom is worth about as much as tasteless salt or invisible light-nothing.

Jesus refers here to more than good deeds; he refers to a good character (compare 7:17-20; 12:33-37). The images of salt and light evoke consideration less of what we do than of who we are. If only true disciples count before God (5:13-16) and true discipleship means treating both friends and enemies kindly (5:3-12), the salt-and-light paragraph becomes a resounding warning to heed Jesus' teaching on meekness in the preceding paragraph. A disciple who rejects the beatitudes' values is like tasteless salt: worthless. Salt had a variety of uses; probably the most evident use was as a flavoring agent. In any case the point is, what is to be done with salt that no longer functions as salt should? Just as tasteless salt lacks value to the person who uses it, so does a professed disciple without genuine commitment prove valueless for the work of the kingdom.

A disciple whose life reveals none of the Father's works is like invisible light for vision: useless. A disciple should be as obvious as a city set on a hill (as most cities were), and a light in a home should be no easier to hide than a torchlit city at night. But Christians cannot be content to remain the world's light in a merely theoretical sense; they must "be what they are," letting their light shine for their Father's honor (5:16).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

SALT OF THE EARTH

- Read Matthew 5:13
- What are some ways that Christians are like salt?
- Can Christians lose their saltiness? How?
- Can Christians be too salty? How?
- If we find ourselves losing our saltiness or becoming too salty, how can the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10) we've been studying help us get back into balance?

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- Read Matthew 5:14-15
- What are some ways Christians are like the light of a city on a hill?
- What are some ways Christians are like a lamp in a house?
- How is being light and being salt different? How are they similar?
- Read Matthew 5:16
- How do our good deeds point people to our Father? Has God ever used the good that you do to draw someone else to Him? Who has God used as salt and light in your life to influence you?
- Read Matthew 6:1-6
- How does Jesus' warning about doing our good deeds in front of others fit with his command to let our good deeds be a light to the world?

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- Next week we begin our Group Choice series.
- How can good deeds influence others toward God? Read how Peter and John used doing good as an opportunity to share the gospel in Acts 3:1-16.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

4th – 2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34; John 6 | **5th** – 2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 35; John 7 | **6th** – Habakkuk 1-3; John 8 |
7th – Zephaniah 1-3; John 9 | **8th** – Jeremiah 1-2; Jn. 10 | **9th** – Jeremiah 3-4; John 11 | **10th** – Jeremiah 5-6; John 12