

The Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5—7*) stands as a masterpiece. Today's study grows out of the blessings of *Matthew 5:3-12*. As we explore the call to be *salt* and *light*, we are wise to note that both metaphors expect the followers of Jesus to be distinctively different from people who are not followers. Likewise, neither is helpful in isolation. Jesus is emphatically telling his followers to let the Christ-difference be observed in their lives as they engage the people in their lives.

1. Turn Over Your Saltshaker

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 by men. v.13

Jesus tells us what we are to be before he tells us what we are to do.

You are the salt.

- 1) Salt is used for seasoning to bring out the flavors.

Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with each other.

Mark 9:50

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt.

Colossians 4:6

- 2) Salt is used as a preservative.

Pay attention to your character.

Bad company corrupts good character.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Salt works by penetrating food. Christians are to bring God's presence into the world. What are we doing to prevent decay?

We lose our saltiness when we compromise our witness.

Historically, when the people of God blend with the morals and attitudes of the world, the church loses its voice. George Truett said, "You are either being corrupted by the world or you are salting it."

Salt sitting in a saltshaker will never accomplish its purpose in a decaying world. To make the Christ-difference, God's people need to let the Spirit of Christ flow through them in word and deed. The positive witness for our Savior creates thirst in the lives of people who are looking for hope.

2. Turn on Your Light

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on it a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. vv.14-16

The Jews in Jesus' day spoke of Jerusalem as "the light to the Gentiles." They honored eminent rabbis with the title "lamps of the universe" or "lights of the world." Imagine the shock the scribes and Pharisees felt when Jesus told his followers they "are the light of the world." Jesus was seeking to tell followers in every generation, "You are the light of your world."

What does it mean to be *the light of the world*? Certainly, light illuminates, exposes, guides, directs, and gives life. The light Jesus speaks of reflects a greater light. None of us should underestimate our value in the eyes of our Heavenly Father. Our role is to reflect him faithfully with the best of who we are in Christ. We can only reflect our Lord properly when we are close to him. We are to seek to act intentionally in a way that communicates the presence of Christ in our lives. Paul wrote the Christians in Philippi saying, *do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.* (Philippians 2:14-15)

This is a noble challenge. Almost 50 years ago, Dr. E. Stanley Jones was asked, "What is the number one problem in the church?" His response was a single word, "Irrelevance." When asked why he felt the way he did, he pointed to "disappointment." He said, "We promise to make men different, but the promise goes largely unfulfilled."

When Christians accept the responsibility to be *salt* and *light* in their secret places, their homes, their relationships, and everywhere they go, the world will be drawn to the reality of Jesus Christ. How can we actively become the *salt* and *light* God wants us to be?

