

Text: Matthew 5:13-16

Meaning: Jesus calls the disciples to live for the mission of God.

Big Idea: We are to live set apart for the mission of God.

Objective: I want the hearers to live for the mission of God.

Theme: What does it look like to be salt and light?

READ MATTHEW 5:13-16

In light of the countercultural perspectives Christ taught in the Beatitudes, it would be easy to assume that He was calling his followers to a separatist or even a monastic life-style, but Jesus tells them the direct opposite of that. Christians must permeate society as agents of hope and reconciliation.

What does it look like to be salt and light, an agent of hope in this world?

1. FIND YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

YOU ARE the salt of the earth

YOU ARE the light of the world

Jesus didn't tell the disciples this is what YOU OUGHT TO BE. He said this is WHO YOU ARE! Keep in mind the disciples were voted least likely to become clergy by the religious leaders and teachers in their towns, that's why most of them took on the family business of fishing. Matthew flat out turned his back on Hebrew religion. So, THESE ARE NOT THE POSTER CHILDREN FOR MINISTRY.

If you feel unqualified for ministry – YOU ARE GOD'S NUMBER ONE CANDIDATE!

GOD LOVES TAKING BROKEN PEOPLE AND PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER EXPECT TO BE WITNESSES FOR HIM AND USING THEM TO SPREAD HIS GLORIOUS GOSPEL!

Child of God THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE! STOP LISTENING TO THE JUDGMENTAL CONDEMNING LIES OF THE DEVIL THAT TELL YOU YOU DON'T MEASURE UP OR THAT YOU CAN'T MAKE AN IMPACT!

I'm too sinful. I don't know enough about the Bible. I don't have much to offer. I'm not rich so what difference will my money make. I'm not smart, so how am I going to impact someone else. LIES!

HUDSON TAYLOR ILLUSTRATION

Hudson Taylor was the most widely used missionaries in China's history. He established the China Inland Mission where he served for 51 years. During that time he established 20 mission stations, brought 849 missionaries to the field, trained some 700 Chinese workers, raised millions of dollars, and developed a witnessing Chinese church of 125,000. It has been said at least 35,000 were his own converts and that he baptized some 50,000. Hudson Taylor once was interviewing missionaries to come serve and asked, "And why do you wish to go as a foreign missionary?" he asked one. "I want to go because Christ has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," was the reply. Another said, "I want to go because millions are perishing without Christ." Then Hudson Taylor said, "These motives, however good, will fail you in times of testing, trial, tribulation, and possible death. There is only one motive that will sustain you in difficulty; namely, the love of Christ".

Walk in your identity

Jesus says – DON'T LOSE YOUR FLAVOR FOR CHRIST

He says – LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Walk in your new identity in Christ!

Colossians 3:12,14 – put on the new self

Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.... Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

2. IMMERSE YOURSELF INTO THE MISSION

Paul gives us 3 illustrations here to describe our identity in Christ and our kingdom mission in this world.

SALT – LIGHT – CITY ON A HILL

SALT – Preservative, Flavor main uses

Preservative - In the centuries before modern refrigeration, salt was the method of choice for preventing bacteria from poisoning food. Salt was so vital for this purpose that wars were fought over salt, and entire economies were based on it. Salt could literally make the difference between life and death in a time when fresh food was unavailable.¹

Flavor – Our lives should cause others around us to be interested in the things of God. There should be flavor in us – joy, hope, peace, passion, and purpose for life! The Christian life is anything but BORING!

LIGHT – dispels darkness, enlightens, illumines, guides, keeps others from stumbling. When we are walking in the light we make TRUTH VISIBLE.

¹ Stuart K. Weber, [Matthew](#), vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 61.

SALT AND LIGHT HAVE A MUCH GREATER PURPOSE OUTSIDE THEIR INNATE CHARACTERISTICS!

Salt and light are not meant to merely **EXIST!** They are meant to be **USED!** Salt and Light are only helpful when begin **USED!**

THERE ARE A LOT OF CHRISTIANS THAT SIMPLY EXIST!

A Christian without a mission is miserable.

A Christian without a mission is also a PARADOX TO THE WORLD.

Only good for throwing out – is speaking more about the response of the world than anything else.

A COMPROMISED FAITH WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME A REJECTED WITNESS. When you compromise with the world you lose both your credibility in the church and in the world.

THE CHURCH BUILDING IS THE BASKET – IF YOUR LIGHT ONLY SHINES IN HERE IT ACTUALLY DOESN'T SHINE AT ALL!

CT Studd

Some wish to live within the sound of the church bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.

FLASHLIGHT ILLUSTRATION

Holy Spirit – power source

Glory of God – Bulb

Lens – The Word of God

Switch – Faith

3. INVEST IN YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

CITY ON A HILL – They are referred to as Tel's in Hebrew. A tel is a city built on top of a city. In ancient days they would just rebuild a city on top of the original city. This is because cities were built near vital natural resources – water, fertile soil, trees or greenery. It also made the city safer and more secure being on a hill.

So – THE CITY ON THE HILL WAS THE PLACE WHERE YOU GOT FOOD, SUPPLIES, POSSIBLY HEALTHCARE OF SOME KIND, SUPPORT, SECURITY.

So, DON'T MISS THE PICTURE – THE CHURCH IS THE HOPE OF THE WORLD! The Church is to be the place where people can find help and support and hope! We as the people of the Church should be known for this as well – INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE'S LIVES – AGENTS OF HOPE IN THIS WORLD!

HOLINESS IS **NOT A CALL TO ISOLATION OR SEPARATION**, IT IS A CALL TO **INCARNATION**. HOLINESS IS A CALL TO INCARNATE THE GOSPEL IN THE WORLD!

2 Corinthians 5:19-20

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ

When Scripture says we must not love the world, it is not referring to the PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD! It is talking about how the world thinks, acts, and speaks.

SALT IS MEANT TO BE IN THE MEAL. LIGHT IS MEANT TO BE USED IN THE DARK. WHEN A TRAVELER SAW A CITY ON A HILL

IN THE DISTANCE HE BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF! THAT'S WHAT THE CHURCH SHOULD BE ABOUT!

CONCENTRIC CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE GRAPHIC

FAMILY – FRIENDS – FAMILIAR – FAR

Family – If anyone should see our love for Jesus it should be our families, and our first focus of discipleship should be our families

Friends – This includes your church friends and your outside the church friends. Again, if we love Jesus those closest to us will know that.

Familiar – This is your co-workers, neighbors, families you meet through your kids school and activities. This is where you work and play. We are called and saved to be agents of hope where we work and play

Far – Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes we will be witnesses even to the ends of the earth. How am I being salt and light to those who are far from God? How am I being salt and light to those that are far from the community in which I live or from the ?