



July 12, 2020

“Being Salt and Light in the World”

Matthew 5:13-16

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In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus used two metaphors to describe his followers: “*salt of the earth*” and “*light of the world*.” The Lord expects his followers to impact and influence the world for his glory. Christians are to invade the culture in the way that salt invades food and light invades darkness. Christians must get off the sidelines and get into the game! Christians cannot be silent, passive, or irrelevant. Christians must engage the culture, promote Biblical values, speak the truth, live for Jesus, and tell people about Jesus, wherever and whenever they can. This is what it means to be salt and light.

### Historical Background

1. This portion of Jesus’ message is the only time he used metaphors to describe his followers.
2. Jesus intended his message to make it clear to his followers that they are to have an impact and influence on a global level.
  - a. Pastor Gary said, “This doesn’t mean that Jesus intends for [you or me] to take it globally. What he [meant] was that, collectively, Christians living in the world will influence their world right where they live. [We] are called to live out our faith within the culture where God has planted [us]. ... This is a bar that Jesus is raising for those who really want to be devoted followers of his.”
  - b. Christians are to have a global impact and influence for Jesus, and it starts right where each person lives and works and goes to school.
  - c. Christians need to see this as a God-given mandate to move out into our culture.
  - d. Pastor Gary said, “Too many times Christians have been content to sit on the sidelines and not get into the game. [Jesus’ message] is about living out our faith in such a real and tangible way that it is infectious to the world around [us]. There are, sadly, too many Christians who think that their faith is

something to hold on to until they get to heaven, rather than hold out to others while they are here on earth. ... When I hear Christians say, 'I am a Christian, but my faith is private,' what they are really saying is, 'I am a Christian, but I don't want anybody to know or notice.' ... Do you think [Jesus] wants you to go unnoticed? No, of course not. It's impossible for salt to go unnoticed when it flavors food. Can light go unnoticed when it dispels darkness? ... Jesus is calling Believers... to not be silent, to not be passive, to not be embarrassed, or irrelevant in our faith. ... [Jesus] calls us to be engaged in our culture, [promote biblical values, speak the truth, live for Jesus, and share Jesus wherever and whenever we can]. That's being salt and light. ... Again, as I said last week, the Sermon on the Mount is not for the faint of heart. There are some people who will listen to all of this and say, 'Not for me!' If you are willing to accept the challenge to be like Jesus in this world, to flavor and impact your world for the glory of God, then you will be fulfilling the mandate that Jesus calls us to."

### 3. Salt

- a. In Jesus' day salt was a rare and precious commodity; and one example of this is that Roman soldiers were paid in salt.
- b. In Jesus' day spilling salt was a shameful or disgraceful thing.
- c. There are more than 14,000 uses for salt!
- d. Salt was a necessary ingredient in grain offerings and in the incense for the temple.
  - i. **Leviticus 2:13** - *"And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt."*
  - ii. **Exodus 30:34-35** - *"And the LORD said to Moses: 'Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure and holy.' "*

### 4. Light

- a. Some light is visible to the human eye but most light is not.
- b. Some animals and insects can see part of the light spectrum that humans cannot see.
- c. Light is an energy beam that moves in wavelengths.
- d. Along the electro-magnetic spectrum, radio waves and microwaves are part of the infrared light spectrum.
- e. X-rays and gamma rays are part of the ultraviolet light spectrum.
- f. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second, and it would only take 1.255

- seconds for light to travel from earth to the moon.
- g. Light is mentioned more than 250 times in the Bible.
- Genesis 1:3* - “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.”
  - Revelation 22:5* - “There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign for ever and ever.”
  - 1 John 1:5* - “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”
  - John 8:12* - “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’”
- h. Biblically speaking, having light is a metaphor for having truth, and having or being in darkness is the complete opposite.
- John 3:19-21* - “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

### Salt And Light Are Needed To Sustain Life

5. *Matthew 5:13-14* - “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”
- Human beings can die if the salt level is too low in their body.
  - Without light, vegetation dies, and human beings can suffer from being in light-deprived environments.<sup>1</sup>
6. The message for Christians is that we should be giving life and light to a lost and dying world.
- Philippians 2:15-16* - “... that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life...”
  - John 10:10b* - “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”
  - The Greek word for life in this verse is zoe, which means spiritual life.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sad – Seasonal Affective Disorder

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2222&t=NKJV>

## Salt And Light Have Purifying, Healing Qualities

7. Salt is a good antiseptic.
  - a. **Ezekiel 16:4** - *"As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths."*
8. Salt is also an effective antiviral for the common cold.
9. Light is a good disinfectant, which is used to kill bacteria, germs, and viruses.
10. Light therapy is used to treat eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis, and other skin conditions, and there is also laser therapy and laser surgery.
11. Pastor Gary said, “[The] world system is infected. ... We live in a corrupt culture, so when we stand for righteousness, it has a purifying effect in our world. When we promote biblical values, it has a purifying effect in our world. When we humble ourselves, as Christians, and pray and seek God’s face as agents of salt and light, it has a healing effect in our nation. ... In addition, humanity has been infected with a common contagion and it’s called sin. We are all dying of this common contagion. So, what we have to offer the world as salt and light is a remedy to that disease. And that remedy is, of course, Jesus, and we bring healing wherever we ‘sprinkle’ Jesus.”
  - a. **2 Chronicles 7:14** - *"[If] My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

## Salt And Light Have Penetrating Properties

12. Salt penetrates food and gives it flavor.
13. Light penetrates darkness and makes it bright.
14. Both penetrate whatever space in which they are introduced.
15. Pastor Gary said, “There is nothing passive [and] nothing neutral about salt or light. Their natural properties go to work and result in change. ... [This] is what we are called to be about. [We are, in an infectious way [to penetrate into the culture]. ... [We must not] become apathetic about our faith... and don’t become disengaged from the culture.”
  - a. **Matthew 5:16** - *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

16. "You know what your own country is like. I'm a visitor, and I wouldn't presume to speak about America. But I know what Great Britain is like. I know something about the growing dishonesty, corruption, immorality, violence, pornography, the diminishing respect for human life, and the increase in abortion. Whose fault is it? Let me put it like this: if the house is dark at night, there is no sense in blaming the house. That's what happens when the sun goes down. The question to ask is, 'Where is the light?' If meat goes bad, there is no sense in blaming the meat. That is what happens when the bacteria are allowed to breed unchecked. The question to ask is, 'Where is the salt?' If society becomes corrupt like a dark night or a stinking fish, there's no sense in blaming society. That's what happens when fallen human society is left to itself and human evil is unrestrained and unchecked. The question to ask is, 'Where is the church?' " <sup>3</sup>

#### Discussion Questions

1. Read **Matthew 5:13–16** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning being salt and light in the world. (See #2 above)
3. Provide an overview of Pastor Gary's outline about salt and light. (See #3 and #4 above)
4. Read and discuss **Matthew 5:13–14**, **Philippians 2:15–16**, and **John 10:10b**. (See #5 and #6 above)
5. Spend time talking about the healing and purifying qualities of salt and light and what that means for Believers. (See #7 through #10 above)
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about the corrupt culture and world system that need the ministry of Believers. (See #11 above)
7. Read and discuss pastor Gary's remarks concerning the penetrating properties of salt and light. (See #12 through #15 above)
8. Spend time talking about the quote Pastor Gary shared. (See #16 above)
9. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)

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<sup>3</sup> <https://daybreaksdevotions.wordpress.com/tag/john-stott/>