

## **“Salt and Light”**

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Jesus saw the crowd that had been following Him everywhere so He went up the mountain to sit and teach His disciples. He wanted them to understand what this new life He was calling them into was all about.

As His disciples, we need to hear His words in the Sermon on the Mount clearly and also learn what our Christian life is going to be like. Augustine said, *“The sermon before us is perfect in all principles by which the Christian life is molded.”*

Jesus begins with a strong statement that should leave no doubt: “You Are”!! There’s real power here! Jesus says it’s so, and so it is. This takes away maybe or choose to be, you are! Jesus calls His disciples to be fishers of men, and now He tells us more about what He designed us to be. Salt and Light!

You are the Salt of the Earth. Jesus knows we’re going to suffer hatred and persecution, and because of it we might lose heart. But as His salt, we can be a true blessing. What does salt do? It preserves. Before modern refrigeration, many of our foods were kept in salt. To get out here from the Midwest, most of the food on the journey was kept in salt to preserve it.

Salt seasons. Even though doctors today talk about cutting back on sodium, many times I see people shake some salt on their food to season it and give it more taste. What we learn, is that the Gospel is salt. It’s penetrating, quick and powerful. Hebrews 4:12, *“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”* It reaches the heart. Acts 2:37, *“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”*

We as disciples are to be seasoned with the Gospel, and with the salt of grace. What we are to be to others must not only be good but should do good! We can be a great blessing to the world. Jesus sends us out to the people around us to season them with knowledge of God and His grace, so they can see what is acceptable to God.

But what happens when salt has lost its saltiness? Look at verse 13, *“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.”*

How can you possibly season other people’s lives with the Gospel if you don’t have it totally in your life? If you’re unsalted, how can you possibly salt someone else? Words without deeds are like useless salt! It’s so important to be in the Word and prayer each and every day to be built up and made pure so you can be a true witness of Jesus Christ.

You are the Light of the World. Listen to these words from some very famous people. *“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that.”* Martin Luther King, Jr. *“We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.”* Plato. *“How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world.”* William Shakespeare, from *The Merchant of Venice*.

You and I live in a dark world that deals more in darkness than it does in the light! As lights of the world, we’re to shine and give light to others. Think back to Christmas Eve. Remember what happened as we shared our light with the person next to us? Remember how the church was all of a sudden filled with light? That’s what we’re supposed to do as a group of lights in our world!

Light shines. The children’s song many, if not all of you, sang as a child still holds true. *“This little Gospel light of mine, I’m goin let it shine.”* As John 5:35 says, *“You must be burning and shining lights.”*

Light brightens. Light changes the world around us. It changes our perspective. Salt operates internally, it changes us. Light operates externally, it changes our world. Our light must shine by us doing good works that others may see, and instead of focusing on us, see the giver of the light, Jesus Christ!

Look at verse 16, *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”* All we say and do is a witness to God! We need to be in witness and service.

Turn to 1 Peter 2. God loves everyone with a never-ending love. He proved that as He sent His Son, Jesus, to suffer and die in our place for our sins. This is such a special gift and blessing. Be bold to share Him. Be bold to take a stand and announce by what you say and do: “I’m His!” Look at verse 9, *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”*

Listen to these words from Franklin Graham, *“The church today has grown all too accepting of sin. The church is ducking the vital moral issues of our age. Rather than influencing our culture by being Gospel salt and light, the church has itself become influenced by the permissive culture in which we live.”* The church must change! It can’t continue to let this happen!

You’ve been given so much. Jesus calls you His salt and light to a needy world. Season and brighten the world around you as you share the salt and light of Jesus Christ with everyone you see.