



## The Blessing of Influence and Purpose

January Theme: Blessed are the Different

Matthew 5:13-16

**Central Idea:** As the salt of the earth and the light of the world, Christians possess a unique, God-given influence intended to preserve truth and illuminate the path to Christ.

### INTRODUCTION

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes the character of those in His kingdom through the Beatitudes. He then immediately transitions to the *function* of the believer: to be salt and light. This outline explores how our influence is a blessing from God that carries a profound responsibility to a world in decay and darkness.

### Matthew 5:13–16 ESV

“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. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 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.

### 1. PASS THE SALT, PLEASE

- Background and Character of Salt
  - Ancient world it was labor-intensive to produce in almost every ancient culture around the world, ranging from the Chinese, Indians, and Egyptians to Jewish people.
  - Roman soldier sometimes paid in salt (Salary comes from the word salt)
  - Salt's ability to preserve food was a founding contributor to the development of civilization
- Christians are called to be a moral preservative in a world prone to spiritual decay.

## **Romans 12:1–2 ESV**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- Salt is only useful if it is different from the meat it preserves.
- **The Danger of Losing Savor:** If we become just like the world, we lose our "saltiness" and our ability to influence others for the Gospel.

## **Colossians 4:6 ESV**

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

## **2. LIGHT SHINING IN DARKNESS**

- A Derived Light: We are not the source of light; we reflect the light of Christ.

## **John 8:12 ESV**

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

- A Visible Faith: A "city set on a hill cannot be hidden." True Christianity is not a private, secret faith, but one that is visible in everyday life.
- The Purpose of Placement: God puts us in specific "lampstands"—our jobs, families, and communities—to provide light to "all who are in the house."

## **Ephesians 5:8 ESV**

for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

- Christianity changed some of the most horrific behaviors in history
  - Gladiator Fights
  - Slavery

## **3. THE ULTIMATE GOAL**

## **Matthew 5:16 ESV**

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.

- The Nature of Good Works: Our "good works" are the evidence of our faith in action.

**James 2:18 ESV**

But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

- Avoid Self-Exaltation: The goal of our influence is never personal praise, but the exaltation of God. We are pointers to the Cross.

**1 Peter 2:12 ESV**

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

- By living out our purpose, we reveal the character of God to a world that does not know Him.

**CONCLUSION**

- Our influence as salt and light is a blessing that comes with a high calling.
- We must be careful not to lose our distinctiveness or hide our light through compromise.
- When we embrace our purpose, we become the instruments through which God reaches a lost world.

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**"The churches of Christ greet you"**  
Rom. 16:16

Hebrews 4:12

THE HOLY BIBLE

2 Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17

**HEAR**  
Rom. 10:17

**BELIEVE**  
Jn. 3:16

**REPENT**  
Lk. 13:3

**CONFESS**  
Rom. 10:9

**IMMERSED/ADDED**  
Acts 2:36-47, 22:16  
FORGIVEN/SAVED

**FAITHFUL**  
Rev. 2:10  
Remain Saved  
Till the end  
Phil. 2:12

**"See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be immersed?"**  
Acts 8:36  
"water immersion now saves us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Pt. 3:21

**How Jesus commands us to be forgiven of sins and added to His kingdom.**