

Week 4

May 4, 2008

Mt 5:13-16

Tasting Salt & Bright Lights

The Greatest Sermon Ever

Intro

Mt. 5:3-12 – The Beatitudes
Jesus addresses our most basic spiritual need to feel loved.

Mt. 5:13-16 – Salt & Light
Jesus addresses our spiritual need to know our purpose.

Read Mt 5:13-16

Salt

Preserves, Enhances, Heals

“If salt loses its saltiness . . .”

Earl Palmer says the Greek verb here should be interpreted as “low grade.” At the time Jesus spoke these words, a common danger was salt being contaminated.

Light

Illuminates, Reveals, Guides

“Jesus commands his disciples to let light shine so that the journeyers alongside our lives may find the pathway of God’s will.” – Earl Palmer

Our society is subject to the dangers of overuse of salt because we have come to use salt as a flavor instead of just a preservative or enhancer as Jesus’ listeners used it.

John Sowers described us as moonlight – a reflection of the light from the source of the sun.

Salt doesn’t do any good a centimeter from food. It has to come in contact with it.

“God sent Jesus to get involved in society.” – Nicky Gumbel

“There are people in the world who never open a Bible. Still, they are forming impressions about God every time they meet a Christian.” – John Stott

Pray Together!

Choose one:

- What are some purposes that have motivated you through the different phases of your life?
- Describe a time when your sense of purpose in life felt especially clear or a time when you didn’t feel a sense of purpose.
- How strong is your sense of purpose right now?

How do these characteristics of salt help you to understand and live God’s purpose for your life?

What do you see as evidence that society is rotting? What are you called to preserve?

What causes you to lose saltiness? In other words, what contaminates your purpose so that you become less effective or even poisonous?

How do these characteristics of light help you to understand and live God’s purpose for your life?

When are you tempted to hide the light?

Why do you think Jesus specifically refers to “good works” in verse 16? What is your definition of “good works?”

There is a secondary or supporting-role characteristic inherent in both of these metaphors. (Read sidebar to left) There is a subtle difference between being the flavor and a flavor enhancer or a reflection of light instead of the source of light.

In what ways are you tempted toward being a dominating influence?

What keeps you in a supporting role, allowing God primacy?

In the sermon John challenged us to use the metaphor of salt as a call to **go out** and engage with the people around us and the metaphor of light as a call to illuminate the way to God and **bring in** people to church with us.

What do you see as the difference between these two tasks? Why are they both important?

Who do you know that is lacking the full flavor of who God intended them to be? What is one way you can be salt in this person’s life? How about light?

Where are you involved in society? What thoughts is God giving you about how to translate this concept of being salt and light in the places where you are?