



Sermon-based Guide for Reflection and Discussion

Week of
October 3

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16

Sermon Title: *Pass the Salt, Shine the Light*

Summary:

We have noticed that at least since the Ninth Beatitude (5:11-12) it is *disciples* (specifically, *persecuted* disciples) who are being particularly blessed. **Jesus now explicitly gives his disciples the second best blessing of all: the knowledge that they are of use to the world — “salt of the earth”** (in a way comparable to Jesus’ earlier promise to make the disciples “fishers of people!” 4:19). The deepest desire of Christians, after loyalty to God in Jesus, is to be used by Jesus to help people. Jesus now assures them again that they *are being*, and *are going to be*, used by God to help people and, in fact, on the widest scale, to be “the very salt of the *earth*” (and not just, say, “of Galilee” or “of Palestine”). Jesus’ promise came true historically: Jesus’ message, first handed on *by these disciples*, has been both more widely disseminated and probably more fruitful than any other single message. Nevertheless, at that time it had to be considered remarkable that Jesus would give this motley group a *global* ministry. Even by the time Matthew wrote these words the church was not yet sizeable or quantitatively significant in the Roman Empire. It could seem near presumption, then, not only for Jesus to say these words but for Matthew to record them. Yet their fulfillment proceeds apace. The witness of these earliest disciples—we now call this witness the NT—has been planted on all seven continents.

- Dale Bruner

Questions:

1. Read Matthew 5:1-16. To whom is Jesus speaking? What does it mean that Jesus gives his blessings before he tells the disciples what they are to be?
2. Salt and light are pretty basic; pretty common. How does that translate to the way you believe Jesus wants us to live out our witness?
3. Describe times when you have been salt and/or light.
4. Describe times when you have lost your “saltiness” or have put your “light under a bushel”.