



WEIRDLY NORMAL - Weirdly Motivated - Matthew 5:13-16 - February 6-12

Main Idea: Being salt and light means pointing others to Christ

Look Back (Remind yourselves of the challenge from last week)

Your challenge from last week was to memorize Matthew 5:1-12, the Beatitudes, and reflect on how those words challenge your perspective throughout the week. Were you able to memorize that passage? If so, what effect did these words have on your experiences?

Look Up (Wrestle with the passage itself)

Read Matthew 5:13-16 together.

Jesus gives two main metaphors to his audience to describe how their motivations, which lead to actions, should shape the world around them. In other words, Jesus is letting his hearers know that if they want to be a part of his kingdom, one of the measures of their citizenship is how they change their environment for the better.

The first metaphor is salt. Salt, in chemical terms, is sodium chloride, and is primarily used as both a flavoring and a preservative. What is interesting is that in its pure form, it doesn't actually have the ability to lose those qualities. Pure salt can neither stop preserving nor lose its flavor.

Salt only loses its worth when it is either diluted by other compounds or removed from the item it is flavoring and preserving. In the first century, it's likely that pure salt was unattainable, and thus people had experience with salt that had lost its saltiness.

Jesus seems to be addressing both extremes of how Christians fail in their interaction with the world. Some allow the teachings of a fallen culture to dilute them, and get the truth twisted until it's no longer true. Others withdraw and remove themselves from the world in an attempt to maintain their own purity, and then become irrelevant and hidden from the world they are meant to engage.

Discussion Question: Which of those mistakes do you most see in yourself and in the community around you? Why do you think that is true? What can you do to stay steadfast in your saltiness?

The second metaphor is a light. Jesus describes how light penetrates darkness and cannot be hidden even if someone tries. Light, when placed properly, illuminates paths and guides people in the way that they should go. Jesus' charge is that when people live according to the truth, their good actions will point people toward the God who loves them.

The funny thing about light is that it's all about direction. Take a flashlight, for example. The only way for this device to work is to shine it outward toward the darkness. If someone were to take the light and shine it upon themselves, they would look like the creepy image of someone telling a scary story. Light is meant to guide, direct, and illuminate. It is not meant to give ourselves the spotlight.

Discussion Question: Where do you see Christians struggling with this concept? How have we made the "good works" of the gospel about our own glory? What do we need to do to be better about this?

Look Forward (Challenge to do something with it)

Challenge: This week, think about the ways we fail to be salt and light, either by diluting the truth, withdrawing from the world, or shining the light on ourselves. Notice what is the biggest problem for yourself. Then confess that to another person in the group and spend some time praying together that God would heal our hearts and bring us closer to his will.

Prayer challenge: Pray together that God would restore us to a people committed to being the salt and light of the world.