

The Messiah Has Come
Week 16
Matthew 5:14-16
“Salt and Light”
(Part 2)

Introduction

This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. If we say, “We have fellowship with Him,” and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. **1 John 1:5-7**

In His *Sermon on The Mount*, Jesus commanded that the subjects of His kingdom must become the *salt of the earth*, and the *light of the world*. In our last session, we discussed what it means to be the salt of the earth, or as we discovered, God’s kingdom ambassadors on the ground, as it were. We are to have an influence upon this wicked world around us simply by the way that we live. We discussed that The Savior used two different words to describe our situation. The one He used for “*earth*” (*Ghay* in the Greek) literally means the ground upon which we stand. And the one that He used for “*world*” (*kosmos*), means something much larger. It carries with it the notion of the entire created universe.

So why did Christ use these different terms? I believe that it was to convey two separate things. First, we are, as previously discussed, the salt of this earth. We were left here to live in such a way among the lost and dying that we are to have an influence simply by our way of living. We are to be different from all the rest. Where the wisdom of this world leads only to corruption, our purpose is to act as a preservative, to go against the grain and demonstrate a better way of living. By doing so, we are to become as salt, by creating a thirst in those who see our good works and are drawn to the source of those works.

Think about it this way, being salt is a matter of good *morals*, but being light is more about the good *message*. For you see, when people see the way we are (or at least the way we should be), then they will want to know why it is that we are different. We are on the ground to live a certain way, and when people see that way, then we are to point them to *The Way*.

Jesus told him, “I Am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to The Father, except through Me.” **John 14:6**

So you see, if we are the salt of the earth, our place is to live according to His plan in order that we can point people to Christ. For we are the salt of the earth, but in us the world must see The Light of The *Universe*! As His chosen people, we are not the source of The Light, we are merely to be a reflection of it. So, when people witness Believers living as *salt*, they are drawn to the *light*! Again, the first is about our morals, and the latter is about our message. We are who we are because **Jesus saves!** He is the light of the world, and we are to reflect His glory for all to see and be drawn to *His Light*.

Jesus spoke to them again: “I Am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.” **John 8:12**

Today, we will see what it takes to become “The Light of The Word” according to Jesus, which is really another way of saying that we must become like Him (sanctified), so that we can point others to Him. So, in this passage, we will examine *The Single Light*, *The Shining City*, and *The Shrouded Light*. Please allow me to explain.

The Single Light (vs. 14a)***“You are the light of the world...”*****Matthew 5:14a**

Did you know that on a clear dark night, the light of a single candle can be seen by the human eye up to two miles away? That’s what light does; it dispels the darkness. Jesus has chosen each of us to be “*His lights*”. As we mentioned earlier, it is Christ Who is the true light of the world. Therefore, as the subjects of His kingdom, we are merely to be a reflection of the light that only He can give.

I believe that God has given us a clear illustration of how this is supposed to work in the very heavens themselves. We have two great lights that shine for us here on earth. We have the sun, which burns bright hot with its perpetual flame, and then we have the moon. The sun is the source of all our light. The moon has no energy source of its own. It is cold and dark and covered with pale gray sand. So how does it light up so bright in the night sky? Because it serves as a reflector of the sun’s light, that is how! All the light we see in the moon at night is simply the light it reflects from the sun. As Believers, the only real light that we have, the very “light of the *kosmos*”, is Christ. And when we are like Him, the world will be drawn to His light.

While we are on the subject of the moon, do you realize, because of its gravity and proximity to the earth, it is the moon that controls the tides of the ocean? Its true. And do you know what else? When we behave as the salt of the earth, because of our proximity, we have an effect on the tides of mankind. We are influencers! That is what the church is supposed to be, my friends. We were called to be the moon that reflects the light of The Son! And when we do this, we will have an impact on what goes on down here.

The word that Christ used for “light” in the Greek is “*phos*”, and it can be used either to describe light itself or a lamp. Now follow me on this. Every Believer is called to be a “lamp” in this world, singular, a light, if you will, to help lost souls find their way. We do this by directing them to Jesus, the true light of the world. So here is how the salt and the light work together: We live in such a way, in holiness and purity, so that the world will long for, thirst for, what we have found in Christ. That is our salt (our *morals*), and as they are drawn to us, we hold up The Light of The World (our *message*) for them to see. So you see, first come the morals (the behaviors) and then comes the message!

And remember this, a lamp must have oil in order to burn. In the Scriptures, oil is symbolic of The Holy Spirit. The only way that anyone will ever see the light of Christ in you is that you become a Spirit-filled Believer. Otherwise you’ll simply be a darkened lamp without any fuel! It was being in God’s presence that caused Moses’ face to shine (**Exodus 34:29-35**), not because he was such a great guy!

I love the gospel narratives, when they speak of Christ’s disciples first getting to know Him. The one story that impresses me in particular is the story of Nathaniel. Now Philip was Nathaniel’s friend. And He came to tell him that he had found the Messiah. And then he told him that Jesus was from Nazareth. Now Nazareth, in those days, was known to be on the “wrong side of the tracks”, as it were. So the conversation went as follows:

“We have found the one Moses wrote about in The Law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.”**“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Nathaniel asked him.****“Come and see.” Philip answered.****John 1:45b-46**

I just LOVE that! You see the point I’m making? Ol’ Philip didn’t twist Nathaniel’s arm or even preach him a sermon. He simply said, I’ve seen the Light, now come and see it for yourself. And that, my friends, is how each of us are to be “the light” or a “lamp” in the world. Each of us as individual Believers have seen the light, and therefore, we share the light with others! Blessed are the peacemakers (**Matthew 5:9**). We are the lamps who cry out to those wondering in darkness, “Come and see!”

Still need convincing? Then listen to what the gospels say about John The Baptist.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was NOT the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. The true Light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.**John 1:6-9** (emphasis added)

And that, is how we can become, individual lights in this world. By living to testify about the one true light source. And His Name... is Jesus! So let your light shine.

The Shining City (vs. 14b)

"A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden."

Matthew 5:14b

So, the first question that could arise here is; "How do I go from being a single lamp to a shining city on a hill?" The simple answer is, you don't. Not by yourself anyway. A city is made up of many houses, with many shining lamps illuminating each of them. There is a place in Guatemala where a mountain comes down into the sprawling metropolis of Guatemala City, the nation's capital. I always look forward to that part of the drive, because you come around a corner, and in the darkness, you can see all the lights of the city. Guatemala City is massive, with over a million people living there. The display of light that seems to go on forever is a sight to behold. And every time I see it, I think of this verse.

You have been called by Christ to follow Him, to be a light (lamp), a single light in the darkness of the universe. Your light is the very light of Christ Himself, but you are not alone in this mission. You are part of a city. And that city my friends is The Church, and while one light can be seen from a great distance, imagine the impact of millions of shining lamps glowing in unison, glorifying the true Light, The Savior of The World. What an honor we have to be able to come together as the body of Christ in order to bring His light to a lost and dying world!

When Jesus spoke of His Church, He said that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Think about that statement for a moment. Gates are stationary. They do not move. So the imagery here is **not** that the Church is standing still, and hell is attacking *it*. No, but rather, it is God's church that is on the move, we are on the offensive, storming the very gates of hell as a mighty army, and Christ has assured us that those gates will not be able to withstand the pressure! We are the Church of The Living God; a city on a hill with all the powerful illumination of Christ. When we come together with one purpose, we are the light of the world.

So this brings me to an important point. Do you know how the enemy is able to overcome Believer's? *The Bible* warns us that he prowls about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (**1 Peter 5:8**). And do you know how lions operate? They look for the weakest among the herd, the stragglers, and they try to get between them and their counterparts. In other words, Satan's strategy has always been, *divide and conquer*. When you are all by yourself, you're just a single candle, but within the church, you are a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. So do not tell me that you can do this whole "Christianity thing" on your own, for you cannot. We have been chosen, called, and combined for the purpose of bringing glory to God. And when we function as a shining city, no one, and I mean no one, will ever be able to withstand the light that we give.

In *The Old Testament* times, people would gather in cities surrounded by walls for protection. They would do this because of the many enemies that would come and pick them off one by one, if they were to scatter. But living within a walled city gave them the protection they needed. This is exactly the kind of support and protection the church is meant to offer. Sadly, sometimes it seems that the church is the only organization that shoots its wounded! We are intended to be a place of healing and protection for the weakest among us. Yes, there are commands that we must obey and never compromise, and in order to live within these city walls one is required to obey the law, as it were. But when someone is at their lowest point, that is when they need the church the most. If we are truly to serve as His light in this world then we must become like Him. And my favorite verse about Jesus in all of Scripture is actually from Isaiah, and it is repeated in Matthew's gospel:

He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not put out a smoldering wick: He will faithfully bring justice.

Isaiah 42:3-4

Did you catch what that verse is saying? It means that Jesus will not kick you when you're down! He will do right by you. And if we are to be His light, His shining city on a hill, then we must do likewise.

Never forget that when you belong to Christ, then you are a part of something much greater than yourself. Do not let the devil drag you away from the shining city on a hill.

And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

The Shrouded Light (vs.15-16)

"No one lights a lamp and puts it under basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are 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 in heaven." **Matthew 5:15-16**

The message here is simple. Do not allow anything shroud the light which you have been given. There are so many things that the devil can throw at us to cause our light to be hidden; worldly pleasure, obsession with career, or any other distractions. In other words, if the devil can get you to fall back in love with the world and take your focus off The Light of The World, then your light will begin to dim, my friends. And it can happen suddenly. I cannot tell you how many people I have known over the years who started out on fire for Christ, and then all at once, they disappeared in pursuit of something else. And just like that, their light was gone, hidden under whatever basket they deemed worthy of shrouding it.

Just as it would be pure foolishness to light a candle and then hide it, it is likewise folly to allow the things of this world to extinguish the fire you have for Christ. That is a flame that needs to be stirred and rekindled and not snuffed out. We are meant to be a bold witness for Christ's glory, and not a flickering flame easily put out by the smallest wind.

Therefore, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgement. **2 Timothy 1:6-7**

And let us be ever mindful of why we are to "shine" in the first place. It is not so that others will glorify us, but rather as The Savior has commanded, it is so that others will see our good works and glorify God, for He is the reason that we are to become salt and light in the first place. The glory must always be His and His alone. So let us never become conceited about what we have been given, for all that we are is simply by His grace. Therefore, we have nothing in which to boast save Him.

So there it is, how in a nutshell to become salt and light. Salt is about what we do, and light is about what we say. As we follow Christ, our good morals and influence will open the door for us to share the message. And the message is simple, there is only one way: He is *The Way, The Truth and The Life*. And His Name is above every name. He is Jesus Christ our risen LORD. And to be a light of the world, we need only to become a reflection of His glory.

Jesus spoke to them again: "I Am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." **John 8:12**

TRUTH!!