

“Meaning and Mobilization of Salt and Light, Pt. 1 & 2” (Matthew 5:13–16)
GCC, Morning Worship, 7/31/22 & GCC Vesper, 7/31/22

Introduction:

- A. The meaninglessness and immobility of tasteless salt and invisible light
 - B. So also, a Christian who does not live like a disciple of the kingdom is worth about as much as tasteless salt or invisible light
 - C. **Main Idea:** *The church is mobilized into the world as salt and light: Salt is present and appealing and light is illuminating and informing*
- I. What does it mean that the church is “salt?” (5:13)
- A. Many ideas; one common thread
“Something that was different, made a difference and was valuable”
 - B. The Christian’s power in the world is their difference from it
 - 1. Instead of *assimilation* with the world, the church is called to counter-cultural *participation* in the world
 - 2. Practically speaking, *salt* primarily refers to our “works:” our actions in the world that differentiate us from everyone else (see 5:16)
 - a. Chiasm confirms this. Salt = good works as it *begins* and *ends* the chiasm
 - A You are salt of the earth (v. 13)
 - B You are light of the world (v. 14–15)
 - B' Let your light shine *before others* (v. 16a)
 - A' Let your good works be seen *by others* (v. 16b)
- C. Can salt lose its saltiness? (5:13b)
- 1. A contradiction in terms
Kind of like saying “if water loses its wetness”
 - 2. A Stupid Question gets a stupid answer
 - a. Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah [c. A.D. 90])
 - 3. The impossibility is *exactly* the point Jesus is making
 - a. If the church is being what God made them to be, they *won’t* lose their saltiness
 - b. So again, “Be who you are”

II. What does it mean that the church is light? (vv. 14–15)

- A. An actual sermon illustration: Temple and City of Jerusalem
- B. The Light refers to the proclamation of the glad tidings of salvation
 - 1. Israel was supposed to be the “light to the nations.”
 - 2. Jesus, as the true Israel, is the light to the nations (Isa 42:6)
 - 3. Simeon recognized that Mary’s son would fulfill this role (Luke 2:29–32)
 - 4. Paul takes the prophecy about Jesus the messiah being a *light to the nations* and applies it to the work of the apostles (Acts 13:47)
 - 5. By our faith union with Jesus Christ, and in obedience to the Great commission, we are now *light* to the world as we proclaim the gospel to the nations (1 Peter 2:9; 2 Cor 4:4; Phil 2:15)
- C. Instead of **isolation** from the darkness we are called to be **penetrators** of the darkness with the light of the gospel.

III. What does it mean *practically* to be Salt and Light in the World?

- A. Nine Practical Suggestions for Living as Salt and Light in the world
 - 1. Find your motivation *primarily* in the indicative and not the imperative: Be who you are
 - 2. Accept, embrace, and delight in God’s sovereignty in your evangelism
 - 3. Don’t be overly righteous and overly wise (Eccl 7:16)
 - 4. The salt of “works” and the light of “words” are both exceedingly important, but no one was ever saved without the “word of the gospel” (v. 16)
 - 5. Don’t cancel or postpone your habits of grace in order to make unbelievers feel comfortable or to prioritize their desires
 - 6. Don’t filter your language in order to make your unbelieving family members, friends, neighbors feel comfortable
 - 7. Evangelize through liturgy!
 - 8. We support missionaries who are *salt* and *light* to other nations by praying for them and financially supporting them
 - 9. Remember your eschatological commission and don’t confuse it for a bowl of penultimate utopian stew