

Week Beginning: 5th February 2017

Worship Series: #2 in series



living sharing growing



Theme Verse

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?... You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden..." Matthew 5:13a, 14a

Remember This Week

In a world that is full of decay, you have the Spirit's power to stop the rot. In a world of darkness and fear, the light of Christ in you pushes back the darkness and reveals the beauty of a grace-filled life. "One word of truth outweighs the whole world." One word of Christ can bring life & light, hope & salvation, restoration and healing. Be who you are in Jesus. Be that word that makes a radical impact.



You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. With your help, I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall. As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God.

Psalms 18:28-31

Lord God, praise be to you for bringing your light into our lives. You brought your flawless word into the world in Jesus Christ and his light continues to radiate in our lives. Help us dwell in his light as we study so that we may continue to hold onto the hope it brings for our lives. Radiate in us now that may breathe in your grace and pour out your light in this world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

1. *Highs and lows for the week.*
2. *Accountability time. How did you go with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *What is your favourite flavour to add to potato chips? What is your preference when it comes to hot chips?*
4. *Were you scared of the dark as a child? What scared you and how has it changed now?*
5. *How flavoured is your life with the life of Christ at the present time? How bright do you feel you are shining with Christ's light in the world at this present time?*

Have you heard the expression, 'shovel-ready jobs'? It refers to those work projects that were ready to go and have an immediate impact, if funding is available. We are also told that the 'first 100 days' of a new Prime Minister or President are supposed to reveal the direction of the government and the impact it will have. They are supposed to be filled with decisive impact-full action. As people of God who are eternally loved and incredibly blessed, today Jesus reminds us we are to have a radical impact in this world under the Spirit's power, transforming lives and communities locally in ways that have a ripple effect globally and echo into eternity.

Read Matthew 5:13-20

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 begins with Jesus offering a series of blessings in the Beatitudes which we looked at last week, followed by these verses today. It is easy to hear these words as something that we have to do or become. But this is pure grace again. It's a promise and declaration. "You are the salt of the earth. . . . You are the light of the world."

6. *Which image - salt or light - resonates with you more and why?*
7. *You are salt...you are light. Why do you think Jesus was so direct in his statement and what confidence does that give you in your life?*

When we think of being salt today, we tend to think in terms of adding flavour to food. But in Jesus' day they would not have thought in those terms but rather as salt being a preservative





which would stop the decay and rotting of food. Salt was a valuable commodity because of this quality. Pure salt does not lose its taste over time. Salt remains salt. It is also a needed element for a human body to live. By telling his disciples that they are salt, Jesus is telling them that there is decay in the world and the answer to stopping the rot in the world, is through Christians who live out their identity in Jesus.

8. *What specific things have you noticed bring decay or disease to the life of our community?*
9. *In what ways is God using you to impact lives around you and stop the rot of decay in people's lives.*
10. *Remember that Jesus here is talking to his disciples (plural), that is the Church. How do you see your Church being salt in its community? If it is not, why do you think the Church is reluctant to do so?*

It's a fantastic thing to be a Christian in the world; to live with a peace, security and blessedness that is just not available elsewhere. You are salt and Jesus tells us that salt cannot lose its saltiness. The only way that Christians can lose their power, given by the Spirit, is to dilute who they are in Jesus so that they no longer have the power to affect or effect lives. It's called syncretism. This simply means being in the world and of the world. When Christians add to Jesus or add to grace, saying that we love Jesus but our life shows that we are still oriented over what the culture is orienting after, we lose our distinctiveness and power to make a difference in the world.

11. *What are you tempted to add to Jesus which is making you lose your distinctiveness as a child of God? What things do you need to repent of at this time?*

God so loved the world that Christ was sent to live with impure humanity, to walk with those unworthy, to eat with sinners, and to bring life. Jesus calls you to have a radical impact in this world. You are salt to be present in a confused and dying world and to extend to it the life of Christ. Jesus also says that you are light in the world. Your very presence in the world, pushes back the darkness as the grace of God in you flows out of your life. **"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 5:16)

12. *You can't make yourself shine, but you can cover up the light so it no longer illuminates the darkness. In what ways does the Church cover up the light of Christ in the world?*
13. *Do disciples seem to have a choice in being salt and light? Why or why not?*

The second warning Jesus gives in this section is the Church separating itself from the world. We distance ourselves from getting involved in the world. We don't engage with non-Christians for fear that somehow they might "pollute us". Jesus placed his disciples in the world to have an impact, to reveal the darkness that exists and to reveal the beauty of a life that is saturated in the grace of Jesus Christ.

14. *What are the consequences of being light in the world, both positively and negatively?*
15. *Which danger do you tend towards - being syncretistic or separatist? Why do you think that is?*

Jesus expects his disciples to have a radical impact in the world - for the world to see our "good works". There are two words that are used for 'good' in verse 16. One refers to a quality of goodness or rightness, but the second word means something that is beautiful or pleasing. Read Micah 6:8 to see what God thinks is beautiful for his people. That's a life that shines!

17. *In what ways are you living a life of beauty, where the grace and love of God have so worked you over that his light in you lights up the darkness of the world?*
18. *In what situations do you find it difficult to be salt or to let the light of Christ shine through you?*
19. *Who in your life would be blessed from you being the salt of the earth and the light of the world at this time? What practical things can you do to remind yourself each day of who you are in Christ?*
20. *As a result of this study, what do you feel God is asking you to think more about, to do, or to discuss further with others?*



- * Pray for all Christians that they would be daily saturated in God's grace, living out their identity as salt and light in the world.
- * Pray for those who are stuck in the rot, decay or darkness of this world that Christ may reveal the beauty of who he is in their life, through you.
- * Pray that God would continue to work in power through his Church to impact the world.



- Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:
Name, may the beauty of Christ in you, impact his world. Amen.

