



## **Growth Group Questions September 24, 2023 “Salt and Light”**

### **Context**

The first two sermons of this series focused on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) and what the character of those who follow Jesus is to look like. Now Jesus moves onto speaking about the influence we will have in the world if we live out what is described in the Beatitudes. It is interesting to note the wide-ranging influence that Jesus followers were to have: they were to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

The effectiveness of salt in this metaphor is conditional. It has to retain its saltiness. Even though salt is a stable compound it can be contaminated and actually become useless and ultimately unfit for the compost heap. Jesus is warning that if his followers become assimilated into the world they will become contaminated and lose their influence and no longer retain their distinctiveness.

Jesus second metaphor has to do with light, and it reminds his followers that they are the light of the world. Jesus would later say he is the light of the world, but he implies here that his followers also shine his light into the world.

Jesus then goes on to say this light is actually our good deeds. Our good works. The Greek word used here for “good” is the word “kalos” which describes a good that is attractive or beautiful. Our works and words, done in the name of Jesus, reflect a goodness that is beautiful and winsome. They point beyond us and ultimately point to the beauty of God.



If salt can lose its saltiness, there is also warning that the light in us can become darkness. We don't hide the light that has been given to us. Rather, we are to allow the light of Christ to shine through us so that people can see it and thus see Jesus. As we live into becoming the people God has called us to be, and as we share our faith and live out the lifestyle described in the Beatitudes, people will see us and ultimately give glory to God.

## **Scriptures:**

### **Matthew 5:13-16**

<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

### **Acts 17:28**

<sup>28</sup> ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

### **1 Corinthians 15:33**

<sup>33</sup> Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

### **Titus 1:12**

<sup>12</sup> One of Crete's own prophets has said it: “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.”



## Questions:

### Salt and Light

1. Why is salt such a valuable commodity back in the times of Jesus?
2. Abraham stated that salt is useful for preserving food, and purification. What significance do preservation and purity have in our lives?
3. The other illustration that Jesus uses is to be “light.” What are the characteristics of light and how do those characteristics translate to what Jesus is teaching us?
4. Abraham stated that Jesus was saying that if we are light, we are able to give sight to the blind. How does that inform how Jesus wants us to act regarding faith in Jesus and why would our light fade if we hide it under a bushel?
5. Why is too much salt and too much light a problem?
6. How does salt and light connect to life and vitality?
7. “There is a poison and an antidote” when we work with people. Your gifting and your skills are both your strength but also your weakness. How do your gifts both act as a strength and a weakness?
8. Abraham taught that we are not supposed to be so caught up in heaven that we aren’t able to do any good. Does this make sense to you in your life?
9. What does it look like to live like Jesus when you are called and told that you are already salt and light?
10. Applying this to your life means to live in a way that makes God proud. Abraham said three ways to do this; meeting the disenfranchised, defending the outsider, and washing the feet of someone who is wrong. What are ways that you can apply this to your life?

