



Week 11 – Salt and Light

This week we are examining how the kingdom people Jesus described in Matthew 5:1-12 are meant to engage with the world and culture around them. Jesus describes our relationship with the world in two powerful metaphors in verses 13-16. Let's dig a little deeper into the stance we should have as Christians with the world around us.

Review Matthew 5:1-12 as a description of the kind of people kingdom people are to have. Take a few minutes as a group and compose a summary statement in your own words that would describe a disciple as Jesus describes them here.

In verse 12 Jesus tells his disciples that they will be persecuted just like God's closest followers were before them. You will be different, get ready to be noticed for being different!

Now let's explore the two metaphors Jesus uses to teach those who follow him how they are meant to interact with the world.

1. Salt

Jesus is contrasting the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of the world. The world is the earth, the land. People of his kingdom are like gypsum or rock salt that is carefully sprinkled over the earth to fertilize it and to kill weeds.

In this metaphor, what is the nature of the earth? What is it prone to if left without any "salty" influence? Now consider what is the nature of salt? What function is it performing in contrast to the earth? How is it different? What is the purpose of the salt?

Jesus uses the interesting phrase "if the salt should become foolish". In very practical terms, what does that tell us about how Jesus intends us to act like salt in our daily lives? In our present culture? What are some ways the church or Christians could "become foolish" and thus cease to be salty? By contrast, what are specific ways that we, as a church, or you individually bring the



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wisdom of God to bear on day to day realities of our world and culture? At your work? In your family?

How does this teaching about being salt in the world build on the teaching Jesus just finished about the nature and character of kingdom people in verse 1-12?

If the salt of this metaphor is clearly meant to be a benefit to the world that hates it. How should that change our stance and attitude towards our world? In your own words, how would you articulate God's hope for us as we live out our daily lives? What does Jesus intend his people to be doing?

Jesus says that it is possible a bunch of salt might not be doing it's job properly. What does he say that salt is good for if it isn't accomplishing it's task? How might that apply to the church? To our own lives?

2. Light

This metaphor is a little easier for us to grasp as it translates perfectly into even modern culture. But it does illuminate (pun intended) a different aspect of our distinctiveness in the world.

Again Jesus is contrasting two kingdoms. In this metaphor what is the nature of darkness? What condition are people in darkness in? What are the dangers of darkness? What is the nature of light? What is the stance of people who have light towards people in need of light?

Read John 3:19-21. We all know people who want nothing to do with the "light". They don't want to hear it. According to these verse, why do some people reject the light of God's teaching? We can also think of particular nooks and crannies in our own lives and hearts where we are not keen for the light to shine too brightly. According to these verse sin John, what is the danger to ourselves of trying to keep any area in the dark?

Read Colossians 1:13-14. Paul is speaking about these two kingdoms again. According to these verses, what transpires if we move from darkness to light?

Back in Matthew 5 again, Jesus says that his people are not just in the light, but *we are* the light. Imagine yourself *as light* in a dark world (not even just carrying a light, Jesus says we are light.) how does that change our stance about the darkness? What is our role in a world that is mostly dark?

Jesus says everything we do will eb on display for others. What is the goal of our activity? What do we want them to ultimately do? How does Lakeside do this now? How can you help Lakeside do this with your light, as a group or an individual?

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