

“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 Questions 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