

DIGGING DEEPER



Salt and Light: Living as Agents of God's Kingdom in the World

26 Jul 2026

What does it mean to truly make a difference in the world around us? In this message drawn from Matthew 5:13-16, we explore two of the most vivid and practical images Jesus ever used to describe his followers: salt and light. Salt, in the ancient world, was not just a seasoning but a preservative, a currency, and a sign of worth. When Jesus calls us the salt of the earth, he is saying that our presence in the world should slow decay, add flavor, and bring genuine benefit to those around us. The challenge He raises is just as relevant today as it was then: what happens when salt loses its saltiness? If we simply blend in with the culture around us, adopting the same values and reactions as everyone else, we lose the very quality that makes us useful. A small act of kindness, a word of grace in a tense moment, a choice to forgive when bitterness would be easier, these are the ways we function as salt in our families, workplaces, and communities. We do not need to be perfect to make a difference. Even a small pinch of salt changes the entire dish.

1. Jesus says His followers are the salt of the earth, implying they should have a distinct and beneficial effect on the world around them -- in what specific ways might a Christian 'lose their saltiness' by blending into the surrounding culture?

2. The sermon draws a distinction between managing outward behavior and experiencing a deep heart transformation through Jesus -- how does that difference show up practically in the way a person responds to disappointment, betrayal, or anger?

3. Just as salt was used as a preservative in the ancient world to slow decay, how might the presence of faithful Christians in a community, workplace, or family serve a similar preserving function against moral and relational deterioration?

4. The image of a city on a hill that cannot be hidden suggests that a Christian's life is visible both at its best and at its worst -- how should an awareness of that visibility shape the way we handle our failures and shortcomings publicly?

5. Pastor Heather notes that Jesus never instructed His followers to withdraw from the world and wait for His return, but instead called them to engage it -- where do you think the tension lies between maintaining personal holiness and genuinely entering into the lives of people who don't know Jesus?

6. Paul's words in Philippians 2:14-15 call believers to live without complaining or arguing so that their lives shine like lights -- how countercultural does that standard feel in your daily environment, and what would it cost you to consistently live that way?

7. The sermon compares a single candle in a completely dark room to the impact a believer can have in a spiritually dark setting -- can you think of a time when one person's quiet faithfulness or small act of kindness had an outsized impact on

8. Baptism is described as an outward declaration of an inward transformation -- why do you think a public declaration of faith matters, and what does it communicate to a watching community about the reality of what Jesus has done in someone's life?

those around them?

9.

Pastor Heather's personal goal is not to be perfect but to imperfectly reflect what Jesus is like -- how does embracing imperfection while still pursuing Christlikeness change the way you think about your witness to those around you?

10.

Colossians 4:6 encourages believers to ensure their conversations are full of grace -- if the people closest to you were asked whether your words consistently reflect grace, what do you think they would honestly say, and what might need to change?

Remember...

"When the darkness is darkest around you, that's when your light and your life shines the brightest."