

WEEK 11 (October 25-31) Sermon on the Mount— “Making a Difference for Good”
(Matthew 5:13-20)

Starting the Conversation

“Salt of the earth” has become a common phrase to describe a person that is good to others and benefits other people. Some may not realize that this phrase was first used by Jesus to describe His followers. When we follow Jesus in faith and are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, we become salt for the world around us. We preserve the goodness of God in the world, we bring good “flavor” through blessings that we give to others, and bring cleansing to a dark and hurting world through the righteousness that Christ gives to us by faith and surrender. Jesus also says that His followers are a light in a dark world. We shine the light of God’s love and truth for others to see, and it is a major difference from what is normal according to the world. But if we don’t stay in step with Jesus and if we lose faith, we will slowly but surely start to look like everyone else. We would lose our ability to point to something different and better. May we continue to trust God and may our lives be unusually loving, gracious, truthful, and giving in love of God and love of those around us.

Let's Read Matthew 5:13–16

Leader: *Jesus uses two simple but powerful illustrations that everyone in His audience would have understood. Salt was valuable because it preserved, seasoned, and purified. Light made it possible to see and safely navigate through darkness. Jesus says His followers are to have the same kind of influence in the world.*

- What qualities of salt and light stand out to you in this passage?
 - Why do you think Jesus chose these two images to describe His followers?
 - What does it mean to be "salt" in your home, workplace, school, or neighborhood?
 - What does it look like to let your light shine without drawing attention to yourself?
 - How have you seen another believer positively influence the people around them?
-

Let's Read Matthew 5:13 — Remaining Distinct

Leader: *Jesus also gives a warning: salt that loses its usefulness no longer fulfills its purpose. Followers of Christ are called to remain faithful to Him rather than blending into the values and priorities of the world.*

- What are some ways Christians can gradually begin to look more like the world than like Christ?
 - Why is it often tempting to compromise our convictions in order to fit in?
 - How does spending time with Jesus help us remain spiritually "salty"?
 - What practices help keep your faith vibrant and growing?
-

Let's Read Matthew 5:17–20 — Living Out God's Righteousness

Leader: *Jesus explains that He did not come to abolish God's law but to fulfill it. The righteousness He calls His followers to is not merely outward rule-keeping but a transformed heart that produces a transformed life.*

- What do you think Jesus means when He says He came to fulfill the Law?
 - How is kingdom righteousness different from simply trying to be a "good person"?
 - Why is inner transformation more important than outward appearances?
 - How does God's grace empower us to live differently?
-

Closing

Leader: *Making a difference for good doesn't require extraordinary opportunities but begins with ordinary faithfulness. Every conversation, act of kindness, decision, and relationship becomes an opportunity to reflect the character of Jesus.*

- Where has God placed you to be salt and light right now?
 - Where do you feel God calling you to shine His light more intentionally?
 - Which quality of Jesus—love, grace, truth, generosity, compassion, or humility—do you most want others to see in your life?
 - What is one practical way you can bless someone this week?
 - How can our small group encourage one another to faithfully represent Jesus in our everyday lives?
-

PRAYER

Father, thank You for calling us to be salt and light in the world. Thank You for giving us the privilege of reflecting Your goodness and pointing others to Jesus. Help us to remain faithful to You so that our lives never lose their distinctiveness. Fill us with Your Spirit and shape our hearts to become more like Christ each day. May our words, actions, attitudes, and relationships reflect Your love, grace, truth, and generosity. Use us to bring hope where there is discouragement, truth where there is confusion, and light where there is darkness. May everything we do cause others to see You and give glory to our Father in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.