

Well last Sunday we started a fall sermon series

on the Sermon on the Mount called Lessons from the Master, and we're revisiting this most famous sermon of Jesus as he addresses what true right living looks like.

Now, we started last week with the Beatitudes, the Beatitudes.

So I wonder if anybody during last week checked a bad attitude that you had.

Did you think through the B attitudes that we talked about?

And the lessons that we're looking at this fall are all practical.

And so we're going to be looking at this big idea, of course, that true righteousness springs from the heart and it's required for entry into the kingdom of heaven.

So Jesus is serious about this stuff.

and He wants us to take note.

So as I mentioned last week, we're going to be looking at what it really means to practice kingdom righteousness, how to deal with murder or adultery in our hearts, how to have integrity, how to get back at others with love, how we should pray the cure for anxiety,

how to get out of a rut, real versus fake believers, and then how to build our lives so that we're not building on sand.

So it's that and it's much more.

Today the big question is this, are you living as salt and light or are you just blending in with everyone else?

That's the easy thing to do, just to blend in.

And so we're going to unpack this as we look at Matthew 5.

If you have your copy of Scripture, open it up, turn it on to Matthew 5, just a few verses.

We're going to talk about salt and then we're really going to talk much more about light and apply that to our lives.

Let me read Matthew 5 beginning in verse 13.

You are the salt of the earth.

I got to stop right there.

I underlined R in my Bible.

Rob, we were talking about this earlier.

This is a declaration.

Jesus is talking to His followers, His disciples, and He's saying it's not a question, it's not a maybe, it's not what I hope to be one day, or before I die, I will become this.

If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, born again and dwell by the Holy Spirit, you are the salt of the earth.

It's an identity thing and that's going to change everything.

So you're not going to have to try hard to be salt.

You are salt.

You're not going to have to try hard to shine for Christ.

You are the light of the world.

You reflect His light.

So you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is no longer good for anything.

except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Would you agree with me?

There's just something special about salt, especially when it's on things like popcorn, right?

Don't give me popcorn that's sodium free.

I don't want it.

I won't eat it.

But popcorn, right?

I can't imagine it without it.

Or corn on the cob.

I heard an amen.

But isn't it just sickening?

Isn't it terrible to eat a saltless tortilla chip?

A saltless potato chip.

Right?

It's a sin, I think.

I'd have to look it up, but I think it is.

And we make fun of this, but have you ever known a seemingly saltless Christian

They claim to be a Christ follower, but you don't sense the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

There isn't an outflowing of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

They're just kind of bland.

And I wonder sometimes with people like that, if they truly are born again and dwelled by the Spirit of God because He does stuff in your life.

He changes you.

He makes you come alive.

And so there's just something special.

We need to get that image out there.

Move to the next one.

I'm not even, I'm getting hungry.

I didn't eat this morning, so.

The next one, Leviticus, I think.

Oh, never mind, we'll go to that.

But nobody would be attracted to a saltless person.

A person that just blends in, and Jesus gives a warning here about this downward slope of losing one's saltiness, does He not?

He talks about...

It's not worth anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Now I'm not preaching or teaching that one can lose their salvation when you're truly born again.

You are sealed by the Holy Spirit, but I'm talking about this downward spiral of living like the world, like everybody else, and you don't stand out.

There's no difference.

So nobody's attracted to Christ because you live and you speak.

like everybody else.

You have the same parties.

You spend your money the same way as everybody else.

You've lost your saltiness.

And that's a dangerous thing.

It's a dangerous condition.

So let's talk about just briefly this morning salt in the Bible.

Well, you go to Leviticus chapter 2 verse 13.

There's the decree, the command that you shall season all your grain offerings with salt.

You shall not let the salt of the covenant

with your God be missing from your grain offering, with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

Now, does God need salt?

No.

God is Spirit.

He doesn't need salt.

But He gave this command to be a symbol of covenant.

So, first of all, salt is a sign of the covenant.

It's an agreement with God.

6 says, Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

So not only is salt, originally it was part of the covenant keeping, it was a symbol, it's also how we season our speech.

It's how we allow the Holy Spirit to speak through us and for us to use the right kind of words.

So

Being a salty Christian is not cursing like a salty sailor.

It is being a believer who knows how to measure her or his words.

You're controlled by the Holy Spirit.

So it's a symbol of the Spirit giving you the right words to say.

You know, the Bible tells us in the end times there's going to be persecution.

People are going to be pushing back against us, you and me, and will be brought before the courts.

But we don't have to worry.

Why?

Because the Holy Spirit will guide our speech.

Well, not only that, what else does salt do?

We all know these things.

Salt is a healing agent.

I have really dry skin and it's really strange that when we go sailing with our friends and we're out with them on their sailboat for a week out in the ocean, my skin is perfect.

And you wouldn't think that.

No, salt dries.

No, it is a healing thing.

Hebrew babies were rubbed down with salt when they were born.

Yes.

I just got back from Africa.

That's what they do with their babies.

They rub them down with salt.

So it's this healing agent, this preserving agent.

It keeps food from spoiling.

Salt heals.

It stops bacterial growth.

Did you know that salt was used by our first Americans, Native Americans, as a monetary item?

It was a form of currency, salt.

It was so valuable.

Salt affects whatever it comes in contact with.

And as we're talking about these attributes of salt, just think of your personal life.

Okay, am I kind of a preserving agent for others?

Do I ever kind of point to God that there is eternal life?

Do I lead people one step closer to Jesus?

Am I A preserving agent?

Am I providing some healing for them in their soul when they're just lost souls who have strayed away?

Am I pointing them to some truth?

Am I help preserving them?

We can apply all these to our lives.

Salt affects others.

Salt buoys up and lifts us up.

Anybody been to the Holy Land before?

Yep.

Have you swum in the Dead Sea?

Yeah.

And it really does that, right?

You can't sink.

I tried to dive in, which was not smart because it's full of salt and minerals, but I tried to dive down.

I couldn't dive down in the water.

It kept lifting me up.

You could lay on your back and read a newspaper.

It buoys you up.

And we could talk about, do you guys buoy anybody?

Do you lift anybody up in the week or are you just too busy going on your way?

And you blend in and

We need some life preservers out there, right?

We need people who make people better, who speak a word of grace into their lives, who lift them up, who buoy them up.

Salt does that.

Well, I could give others, right?

We could go on and on, but the point is that Christ wants us to be change agents, salt agents.

He wants us to be salty believers, basically.

He wants us to make people around us better.

He does not want us to blend in.

We don't have to be freaks, but we're not supposed to blend in.

How are you making people better in your life?

How are you being salt to them?

Life is short and you pass people all the time that you'll never, ever see again.

And they are eternal souls.

Let me challenge you this week to think of a way that you can be a little bit of salt to someone that you pass.

Or maybe it's a close relative, maybe it's somebody in your family, but you can be a little grain of salt to them and make a difference in their lives.

Well,

You are the salt of the earth.

But not only that, Jesus says as the scripture continues in verse 14, you are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand.

And it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way,

Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

That's a great memory verse, by the way.

I'll point that out at the end.

And by the way, I'm going to ask you in just a few minutes, how are you allowing Jesus to shine His light on you?

How are you trying in your week

to connect with the light.

You see, you're not the source of the light.

He is.

I'd just like to hear some popcorn testimonies.

How are you trying to stay close to Jesus as your light during the week?

Jesus says you are the light of the world.

Now we back up the truck.

To understand how we can be light, really reflecting His light, we've got to understand from where and whom

The true light is the source.

We're merely reflectors.

Would you agree with that?

He's the light.

Jesus is the light of the world.

So let's look at some scriptures.

Hebrews 1:3, He, Jesus, is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word

His power.

He is more than a prophet, more than a teacher.

He is the radiance, the light of the glory of God.

When Jesus came to the earth, it was a matter of light, yes?

I mean, that's how the Persian magi knew to go to the east.

They saw the star, the light in the east.

When Jesus was born, the angels came in darkness, no, in light.

The light shone around them, around those shepherds, and the announcement was made.

Jesus is all about light.

He said that He was the light.

Others have proclaimed Him as the light.

In John 8, Jesus says, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

And that's important because in Jesus' day, and certainly before Jesus' day, there was all kinds of light gods and sun gods.

Can I give you just a few?

From 2700 BC on, there was the worship of the Egyptian sun god Re.

That dominated not only Egypt, but much of the Near East.

He was the king of the gods, the giver of light and life.

Back in Persia, it was Mithras.

He was the ancient sun god, the god of light.

And then the Romans,

took that and elevated it to the worship of Mithras during the times of the early church for a cult called Mithraism.

And even the Jews in the Feast of the Tabernacles celebrated light by lighting four huge menorah candles in the temple courts each night, celebrating the presence of light, God who is light.

And then on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, remember what that was in the fall?

And people actually built little booths, little tabernacles to live in, why?

To teach their kids, their grandkids about the Exodus from Egypt and all that God did.

It was a reminder.

In the last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles, the Torah scrolls were removed and replaced with one menorah candle, and then the priest would declare, O Lord of the universe, you commanded us to light the lamps to you, yet you are the light of the world.

And you remember the story in Gospel of John that Jesus is there during that Feast of Tabernacles, and he's witnessing all this.

His disciples are with him,

And then He turns to the disciples and He says, I am the light of the world.

Can you imagine what the others thought about that?

He's making Himself even with God.

How offensive Jesus is claiming to be God.

But in the Old Testament, light was one of the Scriptures

to foretell, to forecast the Messiah, that He would be a Messiah of light.

2, The people walking in darkness have seen a great light on those living in the land of the shadow of death.

A light has dawned.

So Jesus fulfilled that prophecy.

Light, referring to Jesus, is used 21 times in John, 33 times in all of John's writings.

So what kind of light is Jesus Christ?

Well, He's the light that chases away darkness and chaos.

I know I've experienced that in my life, have you?

In creation, God moved upon the dark, the dark formless chaos that was before the world began, and said, let there be light.

In Genesis 1, 3,

We read that.

But Jesus does the same thing with the spiritual and moral darkness.

And in Colossians, we see that Jesus is the agent of all creation.

Jesus did that.

He's the light that chases away darkness and chaos.

Jesus is the genuine light that enlightens.

In John 1.9, we see the true light which enlightens everyone was coming into the world.

And that word in the language of the New Testament means authentic.

It means the real deal.

It means genuine, not just a reflector or not a phony fake life.

It is a genuine one.

See, there's been many prophets, has there not?

Flames that flickered for a while.

But I got to tell you that Muhammad is dead.

Buddha is dead.

Joseph Smith is in his grave.

And yet Jesus is alive.

He's the true light.

He's authentic.

Jesus is the light that exposes also.

You might not like this, but John says that Jesus said this, For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

We don't want our deeds exposed.

John 3, 19-20, this is the judgment that light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

Let me ask you, recently, have you moved away from the light of Jesus just a little bit because it made you uncomfortable because you knew your thoughts weren't in line with Him, your fantasies?

your desires, maybe what you're reading, what you're watching, maybe the people you're hanging out with, maybe the relationship that you're in.

And you've moved just a bit from the light.

Let me encourage you, move back, run to the light.

He's the light.

Yes, that will expose us, but when we're exposed, we can become real and authentic people.

We can confess our sins, claim His righteousness, and get back up and walk with Him and live in victory instead of shame.

Life is too short to live in shame.

Well, that word darkness is a Greek word that's used seven times in John, and

But the good thing about it is John 1.5 says that that darkness cannot overcome the light, rather the light overcomes the darkness.

And overcome in the Greek language can mean three things in relations to darkness.

Darkness cannot understand the light.

You know, the Bible says that the things of God are spiritually appraised, yes?

So when you're praying for someone who's far from God, don't expect them to get everything immediately.

The Holy Spirit has to enliven, regenerate their heart so that they can start to understand the things of God.

Darkness cannot understand the light.

Darkness cannot overcome the light.

Never has, never will.

The devil will not win.

Read the rest of the story.

He will be overcome.

And darkness cannot extinguish the light.

That's what Satan tried to do.

That's why evil people on earth

tried to kill Jesus, thinking they could extinguish the light, and yet His light only became brighter through His death, burial, and resurrection.

Well, these world religions all talked about the light.

A Persian religion called Zoroastrianism, that by the way is coming back in recent times, had a great influence on the people of John's day.

So in that religion, listen to this, there was two opposing gods of the universe, Ahriman, think of Lord of the Rings,

and Ormuzd, the god of darkness.

And so the whole universe was a battlefield between these two supposed gods, the light and the darkness.

And the most important thing in life was which one you chose.

So Jesus shows up as the light of the world and darkness tries to extinguish Him, but He's undefeatable.

And all the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the smallest flame.

And so John in his gospel is saying to you and me, so therefore choose wisely.

Why would you ever?

choose darkness, no matter how enticing it is, it leads to death.

Choose wisely.

That's not just on your day of salvation where you've got to choose.

Am I going to be God or do I want Jesus to be God?

It's every day of your life that you wake up.

It's those choices.

I'm going to choose to live in the light.

As John the Apostle says, I'm going to choose to walk in the light.

I'm going to choose, as scary as it is, to present myself to the Lord, the light, and I'm going to be exposed and He's going to have some things that He pushes back on in my life.

But it's okay because I want to be a child of light.

I don't want to be a child of darkness.

Jesus is that light.

That's why John 12.

Jesus says, walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.

The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he's going.

While you have the light, believe in the light that you may become sons of the light.

One of my favorite places to go is up in the Tetons and then you drive up another hour and a half to Yellowstone and walk around there and drive around there and all that.

Many of you have been there.

It's just great.

When the early days of Yellowstone,

I read this story about one of the explorers, and he was actually just north of Yellowstone, and he's walking along.

I mean, Missouri is a cave state, yes.

He falls into the mouth of a cavern, and he drops many, many, many feet, and he's not killed.

He's injured, but not killed.

And he's down there, and it's totally dark.

And day one goes by, no food or water, day two, day three, day four.

And all the while he's every once in a while yelling and there's nobody around.

But there's another team of men exploring that area and one of those guys happened to walk by and heard this faint sound and walked closer, closer, eventually came and saw this open break in the earth that had caved in.

And he hears a voice from there and he yells down and the guy's still alive.

Anyway, he and the other men got some ropes and rescued this guy.

And they ask him, how did you survive in that pitch dark?

Anybody been to Branson at Marvel Cave down there?

And you go to, and they turn off the lights and it is dark, right?

And so they asked this guy, how do you survive in the dark?

What kept you going?

And he said, look up there.

It was like a little tiny beam of light.

He said, I just, every day, all day long, all night long, I focused on the light.

And it kept him going.

And that's a good lesson for us, right?

Because there are, the Bible says, traps all around us, snares.

We're going to fall into some bad stuff.

There's bad people all around.

And are we going to focus on the light?

Are we going to drift towards the darkness?

That's a big choice.

That choice is going to change your life for the good or it's going to derail your life.

We are to focus on the light who is Christ.

Well, let me ask you.

I said I would do this.

So what is your

popcorn testimony, speaking of popcorn today, what would you say, just a few short words, right where you are.

We're not going to give you a microphone, but how are you trying in your week to let the light of Jesus shine on you, to stay close to the light instead of drifting towards the darkness?

What are your behaviors?

What are your practices?

Share with me.

Just be brave enough.

Call something out.

Daily Scripture.

Me too.

I need it.

Yeah.

Somebody else?

Confession.

And Andy has lots of sins.

So confession is a good thing.

Me too, brother.

Me too.

Christian music.

That's one of my wife's favorite things right there, right?

It just keeps you moving closer to the light.

It's a reminder.

Yeah.

Christian music.

Yeah.

What else?

Prayer and meditation.

Who said that?

Okay.

Prayer and meditation.

Being still in God's presence.

Exactly.

There's a great app, new app, from John Eldridge who wrote Wild at Heart and all of that.

It's called Pause.

Check it out.

It's free.

Pause.

It's like twice a day.

It gives you a little pause.

You click on it and it's just calming.

It's just turning you to Jesus like in 60 seconds.

It's called pause.

It's really cool.

What else?

Anybody else doing?

Just stay close to the light instead of drifting towards the darkness.

Enjoying God's beautiful universe.

Oh, man, do I love that.

Yes.

Heavens declare.

Declare.

I was just down, as you know, in the southern hemisphere and would go out at night from the orphanage, which is out in the middle of nowhere, and look up, and I could see the southern cross by which sailors in the southern hemisphere navigated by the light.

There's an application there, just like in the northern hemisphere, the northern star sailors navigated.

He's our light, and we can see that light through nature and design.

I love that.

Hang around with people who love Jesus.

They're going to pull you towards the light.

It seems so silly and so easy.

And that is such a major thing.

Well, I was at a conference with these two right here.

And did you enjoy that conference?

It was about how to truly make disciples in the church.

And Joanna, I asked you, Joanna, to come and share, do you have your microphone?

She told us a little illustration of a friend of hers that really was an example of being, well, both salt and light.

So tell us about your friend and the impact she made on your life and maybe your dad as well.

some of you may have heard this, but about 15 years ago, the Lord brought a woman into my life that

has set an example.

I'm not sharing this with you to put her on a pedestal, but she inspires me.

I met with her a couple of weeks ago, and the joke about her is if she's late, it's because she's bringing somebody to Jesus.

I met her through Bible study, and at that time, there were about half a dozen of us that would meet real quick afterward for lunch, about 20 minutes, and then we'd disperse and run errands.

And what I'm going to share with you is one example of many in every situation I have been with her.

This is what she does.

So this particular day, I was behind her at a gas station, and she's filling her car.

I'm filling mine.

She's engaging the guy at the other side of the pump.

He's filling up his pickup, immediately starts with the weather, giving God credit for this beautiful day, and moves right into

Do you live in this neighborhood?

Are you from around here?

And I'm thinking, oh, you crazy woman.

What are you doing?

Strange guy.

And she moves right from that into where was he born?

Where was he baptized?

Is he in a church family right now?

And do you know Jesus as your personal savior?

How bold.

I've seen her do this over and over and over again.

Sometimes she'll pray with people very quickly.

And sometimes, you know, it's

Just enough.

But she inspires me.

My dad had this uncanny radar that he could spot need from a distance and never met a stranger.

And he didn't have a, he wasn't disciplined.

He had a simple faith, but he knew Jesus.

And it was sometimes simply just meet the need when you see the need.

Give a good word.

If he thought a little money would help, he'd get from his own pocket.

But he was very generous.

My friend is also very generous in practical ways, in spiritual ways.

And she is also someone that I know will correct me.

I saw her a couple of weeks ago in a parking lot.

She called me and there was a need.

I knew I could help.

So I said, sure, I'll meet you at.

We've picked a time and I knew she was going to be late.

And she was.

She was praying with somebody in that store over there.

And so that's her example.

I aspire to that and I trust her to correct me when I need to be corrected.

And that's what I just wanted to share with you to encourage you that we can be doing that together every day.

She lives surrendered all in.

to be set apart for the gospel.

And she does keep her lamp filled.

That's part of her testimony, to keep it filled by staying in the Word, praying, studying, being with Christians, and encouraging.

Because she was the one who gave me the phrase, we don't keep this good stuff to ourself.

We keep giving it out.

Amen.

Thank you.

And Church, let me say this, as we're talking about being salt and now about light, some of you are thinking, yeah, that's great, but she's like these big, huge spotlights.

Like when I was a kid and they were opening up a car dealership, you know those things that they would, it was like calling Batman, you know?

And some of you are thinking, I can't be like that person.

But if you've ever been in a completely dark room and you pulled out a little keychain flashlight, you push the button, what does that do?

I mean, everybody can see it in the room.

You just need to make an attempt to shine for Jesus, change your life.

Thank you for that word, because it's the little things and the daily things that allow us to be salt and light for those around us.

But I've got some stuff I need to do with my own life, right?

That's no excuse.

You're never going to have it all together.

Just start shining.

Who you are, where you are, you got your stuff.

We know it.

You can't hide it.

Shine anyway.

Because it's Jesus that's doing the shining.

I don't know enough, or I've got a past.

Well, that'll make you even a better witness.

Find some way to shine for Jesus.

So, three application questions for you this morning.

Who is the source of light, you or Jesus?

This is easy.

Jesus.

Have you received Jesus?

Do you have the light of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit in you?

If not, today is the day to call out to Jesus to become your light and your Savior.

Second question, what is your job?

Is it to produce light or to reflect it?

To reflect the light of Jesus.

Quit trying to work yourself up to produce light on your own.

You're never going to influence the lives of others around you if you try to do it yourself.

Allow Jesus

Again, we were talking this morning, live from the overflow, right?

Live from the overflow of Jesus in your life.

And then the third question, in what specific ways are you trying to shine the light of Jesus?

So here's your homework.

Do one thing, challenge yourself in the next seven days to somehow

be that grain of salt to somebody, somehow be that little ray of light that you're reflecting from Jesus, find some practical way that you can meet a need, that you can be nice to someone, that you engage someone in conversation, you help someone out, you pray for someone, you text someone, whatever it is, find one way to reflect the light of Jesus.

And here's the memory verse.

Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Anybody have that memorized?

It's a great verse, isn't it?

Memorize it.

Well, here's my last illustration.

I was reading the history of the children's song, This Little Light of Mine.

Rob, come up and sing that for us.

No, just kidding.

This Little Light of Mine.

And interestingly, I thought it came from a man named Henry Dixon, I think that's his name, Harry

Dixon Lowe's, who studied music at Moody Bible Institute and then taught.

And this guy wrote lyrics for 1,500 songs and wrote 3,000 tunes.

And this became his most famous one, this little light of mine.

But in reality, he just arranged it and made it popular.

It goes way back before him in 1939.

It goes back to the days of the slave trade.

So can you imagine?

You're an African American and you're on a plantation

and your hands are raw from picking the thorny cotton, and you're not treated nicely, maybe you've been beaten, you don't have any money, you're not going to live very long, and you're out in the fields and you're singing this little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.

That's faith.

So no matter what you're going through this week, that's the challenge.

That's the homework.

Let His light shine.