

Christ & Culture — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 5:13–16 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, March 29, 2026 • Kingdom Culture

⚠ AUTO-GENERATED TRANSCRIPT — verify against the audio before quoting publicly. Produced from a Descript transcription of the Broadview Church sermon recording and lightly cleaned (filler words removed, obvious mis-hears of names and Scripture references corrected). No timestamps. This is not a publication-ready manuscript and it is not Wes's exact words for print. Check any line against the recording before it goes on a graphic, in an email, or in a book.

Amen. Well if you have your Bible, we're going to be in Matthew chapter 5 this morning. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in the seat in front of you. Thanks to our team for leading us in worship. Good to have Adam and Cheryl back. So it's nice to have you guys playing with us this morning as well. Matthew chapter five is right in the middle of a sermon Jesus preached, one of the most famous sermons that he ever preached. If you're new to Bible study or to Christianity, you picked a great Sunday because we're studying the life of Jesus this year at Broadview by going through the Gospel of Matthew.

And this sermon is one of the best ways to understand what Jesus was all about what his ministry represented, his view on God's design and how humans should live, and really and a long line of other philosophers, what true flourishing requires. Every human that's ever lived wants a life of flourishing and Jesus knows that and paints a picture for flourishing that looked very different than the comp competitors you might say for that same dynamic in that same period of time. One of the favorite quotes of mine comes from a Catholic philosopher named G.

K. Chesterton. His quote was on quibbling with people who quibble with original sin, and he said, I never understood why people would reject original sin because it's the actual, it's the only actual doctrine that can actually be proved. And he says the reason it can be proved is because there's fresh evidence every day in the newspaper. And I've always loved that quote because if you watch the news and read the news if you like doing that, it's pretty easy to see that the world's pretty messed up and increasingly so and you may you know, before the good guys and against the bad guys, but it seems like in these days even the good guys we end up doing some some bad things in the process of trying to do the good things.

And it's easy as a Christian to look at it and just become very discouraged and begin to wonder you know what is what can I do? What if I could do anything, it's not going to make much of a difference. And You may be even be tempted to raise the question, what would Christ even have to do with this kind of a culture? And it has led Christians in the past to just

wash their hands of the culture and say, you know, I'm done with this and me and my family are going to go isolate and build a cabin in the woods and make our holy huddle and I'm being fascious of so some actually do go build a cabin in the woods, but I'm metaphorically saying just kind of build a bubble around themselves and kind of do their own thing.

And that's one way to deal with the brokenness in our culture. The question, however, is not a new question. The question of how should Christ relate to a broken culture is a question that Christians have asked in every generation. One of my favorite books that I read in college was a book by Richard Niebuhr. In 1951, he wrote a book called Christ and culture, and in that book he talks about the ways that Christians historically have answered the question, how should Christ relate to a secular culture? And there are those who say Christ is against the culture.

And that there's nothing in our culture that our culture values that Christ values, and therefore he's hostile in his disposition towards secular culture. Therefore, so should we. We should be hostile towards the culture. And that's certainly one way to think about it. There are others who go the complete opposite end of the spectrum and they say, no, Christ is culture. They call it Christ of culture. That everything good in our culture is good because it's Jesus. That Jesus represents our pursuit of justice. Jesus represents our religious freedoms. Christ and therefore as Americans we should be proud, we should assimilate, we should celebrate the culture.

And there's Christians who kind of take that tact. And then there are Christians in between those two poles. Some see Christ in culture in an in a what would you say? They would call it Christ adorning culture is the actual term he uses, where Christ is not affirming everything in our culture. And even the good things in our culture are not Christ, but they can kind of get dressed up by Christ. Christ can make them better. He adorns it like a star on a Christmas tree. Christ will make it better.

And then there are those who say, no, Christ and culture are two separate worlds, they're two separate kingdoms. The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, but it's within this physical world and we just kind of need to live in the spiritual kingdom until Jesus comes back and makes it all good. But for now the kingdom of the world is the kingdom of the world and there shouldn't be any intermixing of the two. Then there's a third view fifth view, and that's the view I think most of us would hold, certainly the view I think is correct, and that is called Christ transforming culture.

In other words, there is no culture in which any of us reside that is not also a culture Christ desires to change that Christ wants to transform any culture so that it more fully reflects his kingdom culture. And so every culture that we find ourselves in is a culture Jesus wants to change. And the American founding, I think, is a beautiful illustration of how that kind of transformation takes place. And that's what I want us to look at this morning in Matthew

chapter 5. If you're new to this question of culture, the series that we've been in is called Kingdom Culture.

We're trying to illustrate through the beatitudes, the ways of thinking and assumptions and dispositions that kingdom people have in the world. The way that Christ transforms a culture through those kingdom people is what I'm going to call subversive. And what I mean by that is that it's not from the outside coming down with coercion and force, kind of like a political weapon that gets implemented and it's you're going to repent whether you like it or not, that kind of deal. Think of the Christian crusades. You'll get really in a real good mood to repent when someone has a sword to your throat.

Be glad to repent, sir. You'll have no more problems out of me. That is not what the New Testament presents as a vision for cultural transformation. It is subversive. And what I mean by subversive is that the power of the gospel works beneath the surface. And the way that that happens, I think, can be illustrated in the American Founding because the Puritans in early America were very convinced of their convictions. They lived out their Christianity in the public square. They got elected to public office. They held positions in public institutions.

And as a result of being Christians in those types of places of high authority, the culture of the kingdom began to gradually seep in. And I would not say the Puritans were perfect. Certainly I disagree theologically on a number of fronts. But I think they're a good illustration of how Christ transforms a culture. One of the reasons that American education was so good back then is because the Puritans, from their biblical worldview knew that education matters to God. And so they passed a law that every town had to have a public school, or not a public school, but a school to educate every child.

The great colleges like Princeton and Harvard, I should say formerly great colleges like Princeton and Harvard were founded to become seminaries, to train people in the Bible and how to do ministry in the world. A deep Christian heritage, all of that from early Christians influencing the culture in that way. Economics, morality, all of that had been transformed by the influence of Christians in high places living out their faith. And it's not just me saying that because you know I want it to be true. There's a book written by a French skeptic, the Tocqueville, who surveyed the culture at that time.

He was no friend to Christianity, even though culturally he identified as a Christian. He didn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God. He was not a Christian in the strict sense. But even he conceded that religion was America's first political institution. Because it was our religion that grounded our morality, and it was our morality that governed our freedom. Americans were unique in the freedoms that we enjoy: freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of trade, and so on. But free people, if they're not careful, can use their freedom to destroy their lives.

We all can point to examples in which free people freely ruined everything. But when free people are governed by a Christian morality, and then that morality is grounded in a very theological Christian faith. It produced the American greatness, the early American wins that we see in the founding, and De Tocqueville pointed to that. As the reason for that great mess. He says that in America religion doesn't work like in other places, like Rome that used the sword to force people to repent. Rather in America religion works indirectly not directly on the government, but indirectly upon society.

It works through the family and through the customs. And it is in regulating the family and customs that it maintains the republic. And so when we look at our culture and we wonder what would Christ have to do with this, Jesus' first response is not we need to put someone else in office. I certainly think he has a view on that, and I certainly have my preferences one over the other. But the way to transform a culture is not fundamentally from without Jesus transforms the culture from subversive means. He takes Christians and transforms their character, and then they transform the culture.

One commentator, I think his name was Andrew Breitbart, said that politics is downstream of culture. That's true, but culture is downstream from the cult. Any culture is what it is because of what it worships. Every culture has a hierarchy of values in the way that they think. And our culture has a hierarchy of values, and there's something at the very top. That is what our culture worships, and that's why we do what we do. And when God's people enter a culture and reorder that hierarchy of values, and put Christ at the top of the value hierarchy, it's in that way that the culture will change.

And when the culture change, then the politics will change. And when the politics will change, that's when the nation is healed. And so I want to show you that dynamic in the Sermon on the Mount because I think that's exactly what Jesus presents after he gives the Beatitudes. He if you're just joining us in the Beatitudes, is shaking the apple cart because he's presenting a vision of human flourishing that they were not expecting him to say for the Romans in that time, certainly Jewish people living in Rome, they were eager to see the kingdom of God made manifest.

And they were hoping that the Messiah would liberate them from the Roman oppression. Jesus comes on the scene declaring the kingdom of God is now. But he says the way that this kingdom is received is not through force, coercion or political legislation. He says things like, blessed are the poor in spirit. They're the ones with the flourishing life. Blessed are those who mourn because they see the brokenness in the world because of sin and recognize sin is the problem. He says, blessed are the humiliated, those who can't not assert themselves.

In their humiliation, they've got nowhere else to trust but God alone. And in this way, these people receive the kingdom. They can receive the kingdom because they have an open hand with which to grab it. Their hands are not full of money and success and prosperity and the

values of this world. Rather, they're looking for the world to come, the kingdom of God, and that's how they receive it. We said the second section of the Beatitudes is what the kingdom reflects, how the kingdom of God transforms us from the inside out.

It reflects a person who has a spiritual hunger for righteousness. Jesus says, blessed are those people and blessed are the merciful. That kingdom people reflect a mercy giving in their relationships. That they do not allow failure or unmet expectations to dictate whether or not we are committed to one another. Blessed are the pure in heart and that their allegiance is to Christ alone. They're not hypocrites in saying, I'll follow Jesus, but I'm also not going to do what he says. No kingdom people are righteous in this way. They have a spiritual hunger.

They have a mercy-giving attitude. And a an allegiance to Christ alone. This is how the kingdom is received, this is what the kingdom reflects. And finally we looked at what the results of kingdom culture is, namely peace making and persecution. God's people become peacemakers in that we go out of the world and see situations in which God's peace is not present. And we try to bring God's peace to bear. Sometimes that creates conflict. Sometimes that requires great courage. Sometimes that will result in persecution on God's people. And Jesus says, that's okay.

Blessed are you. You're flourishing even in the persecution, because that's how they treated the prophets. He ends the Beatitudes with this statement, you are blessed when they insult you are blessed when they speak evil against you and persecute you in many ways, and that forms the transition to where we are today. He's saying these are what kingdom people look like. Now here is how they relate to culture. Kingdom people have the culture of heaven. They are characterized by these attitudes and actions. And when those people are put into a culture, this is what I want them to do.

In your notes, I believe the catalyst for cultural change is always Kingdom people. It isn't a political deliverance from the outside, but rather a gospel presence from beneath the surface. There's a sitcom called happy Shiny people. I don't know if you've any of you have ever seen it on the streaming services. They mock Christians in that sitcom, specifically the Duggar family. And I'm not saying there's nothing there to mock, but that's not what I mean by happy shiny people. What I mean by happy shiny people is that Christians live out the Beatitudes And when they model that kind of character, people see their lives and go, whoa, I wish I was as psychologically put together.

I wish I was as calm and patient as that person was. How come their marriage is so resilient? What is it that enables them to forgive and move on? That is kingdom culture at work, and when a secular sis when a secular culture sees it, they're drawn to the source. And that's what Jesus is going to describe in our passage that we're about to read. So let's read it together. Matthew chapter 5, starting in verse 13. Matthew chapter 5, starting in verse 13,

Jesus gives two analogies. That of salt and light, you were the salt of the earth, but if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty again?

It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You're the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are 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 in heaven. How many of you have heard this passage before? It's a very common, well-known text.

Jesus uses two metaphors that are immediately accessible to every one of us. But when you're reading a Bible text, it's important to read it in its context. And if you look at the context of these statements, there's a couple things that you're going to see. The reason that I had everything up on one screen is because I want you to see a certain sequence. Jesus is not fundamentally concerned with what Christians do in their culture. Rather, Jesus' primary concern is on who his people are in a culture. If you read this text again, you'll notice there's a sequence to his attention.

First, he focuses on their identity, and then he focuses on their purpose. Their purpose is derived from their identity, and then their actions are derived from their purpose. You are salt. You are right. That is your identity as God's covenant kingdom people. Salt is used for salting. Light is good, is used for showing. Therefore your purpose is to do that and not to not do that. And then finally, it's not until verse 16 that Jesus says, now do this. And so for Jesus, the emphasis is never, first and foremost, on what we do.

Especially in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' focus is on who we are. Because for Jesus, righteousness that pleases God is righteousness rooted in your personal character. How else can I say this? There's different ways to think about ethics. Ethicists have different theories. Some people say the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by what the action causes. This is a view called the consequentialist view of ethics. The rightness or wrongness of anything, morality is measured by the results. That's not what Jesus is presenting in the Sermon on the Mount.

There's another view, and some Christians hold this view, it's a rules-based righteousness. In other words, the rightness or wrongness of any action is measured by some eternal standard. This ethereal, timeless, eternal, objective standard of right and wrong, like the Ten Commandments. And if an action is in agreement with that, then it is right. And if an action is not, then it is wrong. And I'm not saying that's certainly a better view than the results-based view, but that's not the view of Jesus. For Jesus, right and wrong are fundamentally measured by the person who commits the action.

In other words, for Jesus, you can do the right thing for the wrong reason. And if you do the right thing for the wrong reason, then what you did wasn't really right. That's why he says a little later, you've heard it said, do not murder. But I say to you, anyone who hates a brother has committed murder in his heart He's going to say next week and his thesis of the Sermon on the Mount. Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So for Jesus, kingdom righteousness is not rules-based or results-based. For Jesus' kingdom righteousness is virtue-based. It's based on the character of the person who does the action. And so you may do an action. Some say, well, I don't know if that's right or wrong, but when it comes from a healed, righteous heart that's been transformed by grace, then that then that influences the moral calculus. And so when Jesus here emphasizes their identity over their behavior, the reason that he's doing that is because that's what he's up to in the Sermon on the Mount.

I only mentioned that so that you can see that to rightly understand what Jesus is saying, we cannot hear salt and light and wonder, okay, what do I do? The focus is not fundamentally on what do you do as salt and light, but rather on the question of who you are as salt and light. Okay, is everybody with me on that? It's very important. Kind of set the stage for where we're going. Okay, so what does Jesus mean by salt and light? He uses metaphors that we all understand. Salt is used for lots of things and symbolically conveys you know any number of things as well.

When you're reading the Bible and you're trying to understand what a Bible word means, you don't want to just use your dictionary definition. You don't want to use your personal experience. You want to use the context of the first century. So, what did the first century context think of when they thought of salt and light? I read one commentary that listed like 11 different usages. I'll spare you the torture of those eleven things. But some of them you might imagine, you know, salt is used for seasoning. Salt takes nasty raw potatoes and makes them taste wonderful.

Salt is also a preservative. If you enjoy beef jerky, the way that you cure beef jerky is with salt. Salt kind of cooks the meat salt is used as a preservative, it's used as an agent of purification. That's why salt was used in temple sacrifices and religious worship in the ancient world. Salt was a commodity in that salt was kind of like oil or other commodities. They would use salt as a form of payment. Which is why the word salary has salt at the root. S-A-L. Salaries comes from salt. They would pay Roman soldiers in salt, believe it or not.

That's where the phrase worth your salt came from. And so for the ancient world salt was a whole host of things in terms of what it was its utility. And then salt also symbolically represented things like wisdom and peace and loyalty. You would take an oath of salt. Or you swear salt of the king, it was a way of conveying my word is good, I'll keep it forever. And so

when you ask the question, what does Jesus mean by salt? I go, well, I have no idea. I mean, it could be any number of those things.

It could be a combination, maybe none of those at all. And that doesn't even include the more modern snarky uses of like salt and the most interesting man in the world. Mean stay salty, my friends. Or salt is kind of like being sassy. Certainly he probably doesn't mean that but I think that's the wrong question. I think for Jesus the emphasis is not on what salt is used to do, but rather the purpose of salt. Remember, that's what he is focused on. It's not what we do, it's not behavior, it's our purpose, which comes from our identity.

Which is why Jesus' next statement is: salt is good for salting, so it needs to retain its saltiness. You are salt. Salt is good for salting. So whatever else you do, don't stop being salty. Okay, that's the that's the point. Salt is good for salting, therefore it must stay salty. Nobody takes salt that doesn't taste salty and use it to do a salt A salting thing. Now, I don't know if you know this salt cannot technically lose its saltiness it's a mineral. And the chemical compound elementally cannot be broken down.

However, salt can lose its salty flavor through a couple of means. One is through dilution, because salt is water soluble. In fact, that's if you've got a sore throat, you can stir it in your water and it'll dissolve and heal your throat. So in the ancient world, especially in Palestine, which is where Jesus is teaching the sermon, they would get their salt from a place called the Red Sea Dead Sea, not the Red Sea, the Dead Sea. It was actually one of my favorite places when we visited Israel because in the Dead Sea it's there's so much salt you literally cannot but float.

And when people try to push you down, you just boop come right back up. It's really fun. And then you get all the mud all over your body, and then your body feels like amazing. I don't have the words to say. It's not appropriate from the stage, but you're just so soft and exfoliated. But all that salt came from dirt and mud and what do they call soil sediment, is that a word? It's kind of intertwined in the sediment. And so they would get tons of that dirt and they would build these huge mounds.

And then they would make salt out of the dirt mounds, but if you were not careful and big rains came, then it would wash away the salt. The salt would dissolve with the water, kind of wash away from the dirt, and so all that would be left is a mound of dirt, which Jesus says isn't good for anything. Other than to throw it out on the dirt because there's nothing different between that and a dirt road. And so Jesus is saying to his followers, you are salt. So stay salty. Don't let dilution or contamination undermine your purpose.

Your purpose is salting. But you must stay salty to achieve it. Okay, are we tracking? That's what Jesus means. Well, I don't know what Jesus means by salt, but that's the point he's trying to make. I know it sounds basic, but whatever else he's saying, it's not less than this.

The second metaphor is the word light. Jesus says you're the light of the world. It's another biblical metaphor that has all kinds of different meanings. Sometimes light is used to talk about God, all that God is and does. Sometimes light is used to talk about Jesus.

Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus says his followers are lights. Jesus says his followers should walk in the light. The Psalms are full of analogies about God wrapping himself in light, being light. His word is sometimes referred to as. A light in the world, it's a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path. So whatever else salt represents symbolically, it's at least this idea of revelation that light is good for showing things. And therefore it must be seen. And again, that's what Jesus is focused on. It's not what light necessarily does.

It can do a ton of things, but what does its essential purpose? The essential purpose of light is to show things that you cannot see in the dark. And Jesus is saying that's what you are. That's what your purpose is. So in a secular culture, you are light, which means don't take your light and hide it under a basket, because that's not what the purpose is for. Rather, let your light so shine, verse 16, so shine before others that they may what see your good works. And then when they see your good works, they'll give glory to your Father in heaven.

So light is good for showing, therefore it must stay seen, and salt is good for salting, therefore it must stay salty. What does Jesus mean by salt and light? Whatever else he might say, he's not saying less than that, but there's one clue. That sheds more light. Not to be. No pun intended. One clue sheds more light on what Jesus means by salt and light. I really didn't mean to say that. That's cheesy over the top. But there's one passage in the Old Testament that uses these two terms together, salt and light.

And it's a passage in Isaiah 42. But I'm not going to read the passage yet. First, I need to make one biblical connection. And for those of you who didn't like school growing up, I need you to get over it for like 10 minutes. This is going to be a little bit theological, but I promise you it'll be worth it. And once you see this, you'll never unsee it. It's kind of like the arrow in the FedEx logo. You'll be glad someone told you about it. Alright, so the connection, the biblical connection that I want to show you is between SALT and the covenant.

Covenants in the Old Testament and New are a word for God's relationship with his people. So God makes relational commitments to his people. Those commitments are called covenants and they had certain characteristics. Every covenant would have stipulations you do this, I'll do that. Or you do that and I'll do this. And then there were blessings and curses attached. So if you do what I'm asking in the covenant, then there will be covenant blessings. But then if you don't do what the covenant requires, there will be covenant curses. And then finally every covenant had what was called a covenant sign.

So God's covenant to Noah, what was the sign? The rainbow, God's covenant to Abraham, the sign with circumcision, and so on and so on. We could go. So God makes covenants.

They're so foundational, I can't overstate it. In fact Your Bible has Old Testament and New Testament. Did you know the word testament is the same word as covenant? So when we talk about the Old Testament, what we're talking about is the Old Covenant. Primarily the covenant to Moses, the Ten Commandments, and so on. When we talk about the New Testament, we're talking about the New Covenant.

And so you really can't understand the Bible outside these ideas of covenant. But what I think is so fascinating is that in the scriptures there is a direct correlation between salt and covenants. Okay, there's three passages I'm going to show you that make this connection. I think there are many more, but we only have a certain amount of time. The first one is in Leviticus chapter 2, which Leviticus is a book of the law. It's telling Israel how they're to do their sacrifices under the Mosaic covenant. God gave a covenant to Moses.

It's revealed in the Ten Commandments. You do this, I'll do that. There's blessings and curses in the sign. So here's how Israel was to make sacrifices beneath that covenant. They are to salt each of their grain offerings with salt. Season Hebrew word salt, each of your grain offerings with salt. You must not omit from your grain offerings the salt of the covenant with your God. You are to present salt with each of your offerings. Now, repetition is a sign in the Bible. Hey, don't miss this thing. For the Jews, there was a connection between salt and covenant, and salt represented something symbolically.

Namely that God's covenant was lasting, that it was permanent, that when he makes a promise, he keeps it. That same dynamic gets reinforced later in the Old Testament. So in Numbers chapter 18, verse 19, God is talking about a different covenant. He makes a covenant with the Levitical He makes a covenant with the Levites, which was a tribe of Israel, but the Levites did not have their own tribal land. And back then land was money, kind of like today. And so they were financially dependent upon God because they didn't have a tribal land inheritance.

And so God made a promise to the Levites, I'm going to provide for you financially. And the way that He would provide for the Levites is through tithes and offerings. Of the people of Israel. And so the Lord says, I give you and your sons and daughters all the holy contributions. In other words, the tithe money from the Israelites comes to you as a permanent statue from the Lord. It is a permanent covenant of salt before the Lord for you as well as your offspring. Again. There is a tight correlation between salt and covenants.

And what salt conveys about God's covenants is that they are enduring. They are permanent. You can live your light in light of God's promises, even if you fail to keep your end. Finally, there's the covenant to David. This is in 2 Chronicles chapter 13, verses 4 to 5. We're almost done with the lecture, so just hold on with me one more time. Abijah is a king of Israel, way past David and Solomon. Israel is struggling, the nation is in turmoil, and Abijah is trying to

remind them of God's faithfulness. And so Abijah stood in front of Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, and he said, Jeroboam and all of Israel, hear me.

Don't you know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingship over to Israel to David and to his descendants forever by a covenant of Saul? Alright, so Mosaic Covenant, Davidic covenant. Levitical covenant and so on, each of them interwoven with salt to convey a certain truth. And so what I need you to see is that salt is symbolic for God's covenant. Whatever else Jesus means by salt, when the original audience of Jesus up on that mountain heard Jesus give the Beatitudes, and then he says, you're the salt of the earth and the light of the world, they would have immediately connected those dots.

Salt is a Symbol of God's enduring covenant. And when you see that connection, then you're going to have a key to unlock Matthew 5, verses 13 to 16. Jesus is not saying be sassy or taste good to people. Which is weird. Christians tasting good to people. Well, you're trying to eat me or what? That's awkward. It's not again, it's not about behavior. It's about your identity. And for Jesus, you don't really know your identity outside of God's covenant. Okay, you track it with me. Now I said there was one passage in the Old Testament that combines salt and light, and it's in Isaiah, but it's I think dealing with a certain covenant.

There is a covenant in the Bible called the New Covenant. It comes after God's covenant to David. It's the very last covenant mentioned. It's described in Jeremiah 31, verse 31. And the nature of the new covenant is to fix a problem. And the problem that the new covenant solves is that Israel couldn't keep any other covenant. Because Israel had this covenant relationship with God. They would have these certain obligations. But Israel, no matter how hard they tried, they couldn't fulfill the demands of the covenant. And as a result of their disobedience, they found themselves in captivity.

They were the northern kingdom was taken over by the Assyrians, the southern kingdom taken over by the Babylonians. By the time you get to the first century of Jesus, the Persians have taken control, and now the Romans, the Romans took the region from the Persians. And so their history has been marked by bondage, political and national dispersion. They are not if they are not living into God's promise for them and they were longing for the fulfillment of this new covenant that Jeremiah said would come. And they knew that this new covenant would never be obtained by themselves, but that rather there would be a servant of the Lord, God's anointed, God's Christ, and that the Christ would do for Israel what they could not do for themselves.

Now I'm going to read you the new covenant so you can get to the core of what it is and with this the lecture really is over and then we're going to make application. This is the new covenant, quoting Jeremiah in the book of Hebrews, he says, if the current covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second one. But finding fault with his

people, he says, see the days are coming, says the Lord, when I'm going to make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

It's not like the covenant I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, I showed no concern for them, says the Lord, because they did not continue in my covenant. Israel could not fulfill the demands of any of the covenants. And so God says, my new covenant is going to fix that constant problem. Here's what the new covenant is going to look like. This is the covenant I will make with Israel after those days, says the Lord.

I will put my laws into their minds. I will write my laws on their hearts I will be their God and they will be my people. In other words, ethics in this new covenant are not based on the law alone, because the law is powerless to change people's hearts. And so my new covenant is going to be of such a nature that it transforms them from within. It's going to change them into virtuous people, and that's going to be the distinguishing mark. Each person will not teach his fellow citizen and his brother or sister saying, no, the Lord, no, they will all know me from the least to the greatest of them.

Why? For I will forgive their wrongdoings, and I will never again remember their sins. In other words, God is saying, I'm going to make it so that I can have relationship with sinful people. And that these sinful people who are unable to live righteously will become righteous with a new power. This covenant is going to enable them to live lives of righteousness because I'm going to transform their hearts, take a heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh. And that new covenant is what the New Testament describes. And the person who establishes that new covenant is the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's through his death and resurrection that God forgives us of our sins. We don't deserve God's forgiveness, but Jesus did. Jesus did not deserve God's wrath, and he took it on our behalf. He gets our wrath, we get his righteousness, and it enables God to be just and justifier of those who believe. And it is in the experience of God's grace. When that floods into your life and you believe it really by faith, then it will change you fundamentally into a different type of person. That's the dynamics of the new covenant.

Well, Isaiah talks about this the book of Isaiah is the fifth gospel. Some people say Isaiah is the Old Testament fifth gospel because it more than any explains this world. And Jesus, I think, memorized the book of Isaiah because he's always quoting from it. And Matthew constantly quotes from Isaiah. We've already seen him do it like eight or nine times. And so in Isaiah 42, we finally got there. Are you ready? In Isaiah 42, you see salt and light combined. God's covenant is going to be established by the servant of the Lord.

Isaiah 42 opens. With a description of God's servant. I don't have time to develop this, but this is a character in the book of Isaiah. The servant of the Lord fulfills for Israel what they

can't do for themselves. And the Lord is speaking to his servant in Isaiah 42, and this is what he says, I want you to do, servant. I have called you for a righteous purpose. To be a covenant for the people. Now, what does covenant mean symbolically? It means salt. To be salt for the people, to be light for the nations.

In order to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those sitting in darkness in the prison house. I am the Lord, that is my name. I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. Now you cannot read this and not immediately see Matthew 5, 13 through 16. Salt, light, and then in verse 16, let your light so shine so that people may see your good works, opening the blind eyes, and do what give glory to your Father in heaven, which is exactly what Yahweh is saying, my servant will accomplish.

So in one hand, when Jesus says you are salt and light, Jesus also understands I am salt and light. Just like Jesus is the embodiment of the Beatitudes, and we through union with Christ have his spirit transform our souls. So also as salt and light, Jesus is the covenant. He doesn't say you're going to fulfill the covenant He doesn't say you're going to inaugurate the covenant. He says you are the covenant. You will be the covenant. And Jesus, the way the New Testament talks about this is that Jesus is not only the author of salvation, but he is the means through which it happens.

He is the atoning sacrifice. He is the sacrificial lamb. He is the source through which salvation comes. And if you keep reading Isaiah, Terry could talk about this because he taught Isaiah, the servant of the Lord Does that work? In Isaiah 53, the Lord's servant becomes the covenant. He is pierced for our transgressions. He is crushed for our iniquities. The punishment for our peace was on him. In his body, and we are healed by his wounds. We've all gone astray like sheep. We've all turned our own way, but the Lord has punished him.

Who's him? The servant of the Lord. Jesus. He's punished Jesus for the iniquity of us all. In other words, when Jesus dies on the cross, it's not just the good man dying, it's that it's a perfect man, the God man dying for you and me. Jesus in our place, suffering for our sin. We deserved the wrath of God that Jesus absorbed into his own body. And because he became the sacrifice, he is the covenant. He is, what's the covenant? The covenant is I'm going to write my law on your hearts.

The covenant is I'm going to forgive your sins forevermore. And what Jesus uniquely accomplishes, because he is not a goat or a lamb. He is the sinless, spotless Son of God. When he makes atonement, it's once for all. And through a once-in-all act of atonement, he enables God the Father to be just and justifier of those who believe in Jesus. So you and I can be forgiven of sins. Past, present, future, not because we deserve it, but because Jesus died in our place. And when you receive that gospel, hear me.

Something unreal happens in your soul. The law of God is imprinted on your heart. It's no longer a list of Ten Commandments. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all, and so I freely, gladly live in obedience to God the Father. I become a mercy giver because mercy has been received. I become a gracious person because I've been saved by grace. I become fully committed to Christ because Christ gave everything to me. Do you see how the dynamic works? And so the new covenant is written on our hearts because of what Jesus did through his body.

He is the covenant. And he's saying to his people, and you are too You are salt. You are light. You are my new covenant community. Your purpose is to shine. Your purpose is to salt. And so don't let that purpose be undermined through concealment or delusion. No longer but through through kind of friendship with the world or through cowardice and hiding. Do not be who you are. You are salt, you are light, let your light so shine before others. And so fundamentally, Jesus was sent by God to save us from our sins.

We have been sent by Christ to shine the light of God. And in that way, I'm telling you, Jesus can change any culture. Any culture beginning with the culture of your own life. And then after he changes your culture, he'll start changing the culture of your family. And then after he changes the culture of your family, he'll start changing the culture of church And then churches that have their culture changed into kingdom culture, they'll start changing the culture of their cities. That's why Jesus says, you're the city set on the hill.

That's also an Old Testament reference to the heavenly Zion, the New Jerusalem, which people stream to learn knowledge of God. And so what the church represents is this city within the city, this counterculture community formed consisting of people with genuine virtue. People who don't just do the right thing, but they do the right things for the right reason. People whose righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees. That's the vision for Broadview Baptist church. That's the vision for me. That's the vision for you. We are God's new covenant community.

We are salt. We are light. And when Christ gets a hold of people in that way, then our culture will change, subversely, gradually, slowly beneath the surface. But it begins with a decision with every person in this room not to stop putting your hope in a politician or a whatever they call administrations, there it is. But to instead put your hope in the kingdom. And it's not just God deliver me from this madness and let me go to heaven. It's God, would your kingdom come on earth? As it is in heaven.

And the way your kingdom comes today is by coming alive in me. And so would you make me merciful as you've demonstrated mercy to me. And would you make me humble? And poor in spirit and heartbroken over the sin that's destroying my life and destroying the people I love. Would you help me to be singularly focused in my allegiance to Christ alone, would you rid me of the hypocrisy that keeps me from being effective? And would you help

me to be a peacemaker? No matter how much courage it may take, no matter the hostility or the pushback that I may receive as a result, because my purpose in the world is to be salt and to be light.

I am a new covenant, a saved by grace Christian, and this is how the culture is going to change. And so as we respond, if you've never made that decision personally to make Jesus your Lord and Savior The invitation for you this morning is to receive the gift of the new covenant. And the gift of the new covenant is that you can be forgiven of sin You can have the life you desire to live, not through effort and striving, but when you surrender your life to Jesus, He puts His Holy Spirit inside of you.

He removes that heart of stone and he'll give you a heart of flesh. And all you got to do is talk to another Christian and they can explain the way it works. You just don't want the things you used to want. You don't love the things you used to love. You have a new appetite for things of God, and gradually he starts to heal your soul. And if that's something that the Lord would be calling you to this morning, it isn't received because you deserve it. It's received through repentance. And faith, meaning you turn away from what you've been doing and you turn to Jesus Christ in confidence that his way is better, his way is right, and his way will save me from my sin.