

:: summary

Followers of Jesus have been entrusted with a new way of life that is blessed by God (Matthew 5:1-12). From this place of blessing, disciples are to be influencers in the lives of the people around them.

Matt. 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

Matt. 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

:: discussion

Theologian N.T. Wright says, "The beatitudes are a summons to live in the present in the way that will make sense in God's promised future; because that future has arrived in the present in Jesus of Nazareth."

Unpack this mind-bender of a statement and discuss what it means not just in the context of the beatitudes but also in how a Christian should approach every arena of life.

Read Matthew 5:13.

In what ways do the last two sentences reflect Jesus' heart for how his followers are to live?

Read Matthew 5:14-16.

In addition to good deeds, how else can believers be *intentional* about shining God's light on others?

Philip Yancey, in his book "Vanishing Grace" uses the term "Grace Dispenser" to describe people who "give out of their own bounty, in gratitude for what we have received from God. We serve others not with some hidden scheme of making converts, but rather to contribute to the common good, to help humans flourish as God intended."

What are the key words in this definition (hint: there are at least 10)?

How does each key word contribute to an understanding of how disciples are to live as salt and light?

:: make it personal

Read Col 4:6, 1Pet. 3:8, and Micah 6:8.

How does your understanding of the Gospel and the actions of Jesus in your life fuel your ability to be a dispenser of grace in your words, relationships, and social action?

In the message, Pastor Mike indicated that being a godly influence, a grace dispenser, is a choice. If you choose to live intentionally as a grace dispenser, what are some additional choices that will make you most effective?

How does choosing to withhold grace from others corrupt your soul?

:: pray it

What do you need from God to grow as a grace dispenser?

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