

Life Changing Community Group Discussion Questions
week of 7/5/26

Summary

In this sermon, Pastor Mark referred to the Beatitudes and the Great Commission to remind believers that they are called to be salt and light in the world, not just as a suggestion but as a core identity and responsibility. Beginning with Jesus' words in Matthew 5 and ending with the commission in Matthew 28 and Acts 1:8, the message traced how the early church fulfilled this calling through proclamation, devotion, and transformation, even in the face of persecution.

Pastor Mark then walked through the remarkable spread of the Gospel in the first and second centuries, drawing on early Christian writings such as Justin Martyr's description of Sunday worship and Aristides' defense of Christian behavior to Emperor Hadrian. The anonymous Epistle to Diognetus was highlighted as a beautiful picture of how Christians lived as citizens of heaven while dwelling on earth. The sermon closed with an urgent call: if there has ever been a time when Christians need to be the kind of witnesses those early believers were, it is now.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today as a group of people who want to hear from You. As we open Your Word and reflect on what it means to be salt and light in this world, we ask that You would quiet our hearts and open our minds. Remove any distractions or preconceptions that might keep us from

receiving what You have for us today. Holy Spirit, guide our conversation, stir our hearts, and help each of us leave this time changed and ready to be witnesses for Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

If you could describe yourself using one type of food, what would it be and why?

Key Verses

- Matthew 5:14
- Matthew 28:19
- Acts 1:8
- Acts 2:42
- Acts 28:30-31
- 1 Peter 3:15-16

Questions

1. Jesus described His followers as 'the light of the world' and 'the salt of the earth.' What do you think it practically looks like to live out those identities in your everyday life?
2. The early church in Acts devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Which of these four practices feels most natural to you, and which one do you find most challenging?

3. The sermon noted that the Gospel spread in large part because of persecution. How do you think difficulty or hardship has shaped your own faith or the faith of your community?
4. The second-century apologist Aristides described Christians by their behavior toward widows, orphans, strangers, and enemies. How does that description challenge or encourage you personally?
5. The Epistle to Diognetus says Christians 'dwell in their own countries but simply as sojourners' and are 'citizens of heaven.' What does it mean to you to live as a citizen of heaven while still being fully engaged in the world around you?
6. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:15-16 that we should always be ready to give a reason for the hope we have, but to do so with gentleness and respect. When have you had an opportunity to share your faith, and how did you handle it?
7. The sermon closed with a strong call to be witnesses in this particular moment in history. What is one specific area of your life or community where you feel God is calling you to shine more brightly as a witness for Him?

Life Application

This week, look for one intentional opportunity to be salt and light to someone outside your usual circle. It could be a kind word to a stranger, a meal shared

with a neighbor, a conversation where you gently share your hope in Christ, or a practical act of service to someone in need. Come back next week ready to share what happened and what you learned about being a witness.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus commissioned His followers both at the beginning and the end of His earthly ministry to be salt, light, and witnesses to the ends of the earth. This is not optional for followers of Christ.
- The early church grew through proclamation, devoted community life, and the visible transformation of believers, even under intense persecution.
- Second-century Christian writers like Aristides and the anonymous author of the Epistle to Diognetus show that the behavior of Christians was itself a powerful witness to the truth of the Gospel.
- The Book of Acts ends without a formal conclusion because the story of disciples making disciples is never finished. Every generation of believers is called to continue that story.
- The urgent call of this sermon is that now, more than ever, Christians must be the kind of witnesses the New Testament describes, living as citizens of heaven while serving and loving the world around them.

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for calling us Your light and Your salt. Thank You for the example of those early believers who gave everything to proclaim Your kingdom and live out Your love. As we leave this time together, we ask that Your Holy Spirit would empower each of us to be faithful witnesses in our homes, our workplaces, and our communities. Where we have been hidden lights or unsavory salt, forgive us and renew us. Make us bold, gentle, and full of Your grace. May the Gospel continue to spread and Your church continue to grow because of the way we live and love in Your name. We pray this together in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.