



THE
CHRISTIAN
IN TODAY'S
SOCIETY

SALT AND LIGHT IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

We are Salt and Light to our World

Matthew 5:13-16

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.*


¹⁴*You are the **light of the world**. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither 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. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

"I'm Salt. I'm Light."

Clarity of Identity Amidst Conflict

"I'll Salt. I'll Light."

Courage and Confidence to Act in the Common Good



Next Week

The Uniqueness of the formation of the US
How Christians should be involved in government and politics

Weeks Following

Racism and Immigration

Economics & Social Justice

The Environment

Life, Sexuality & Marriage

Principles for Voting



TODAY'S MESSAGE

The prophetic power of Matthew 5:13-16

How Jesus prepared first-century believers to be salt and light
in Matthew 10:16-34



MAKE AMERICA
GREAT AGAIN

What's changed???


America was largely shaped by the culture and values of upper-middle class, white Protestant males

That's no longer the case

The Supreme Court is increasingly moving to protect individual sexual rights over the rights of religious people to live out their beliefs

This has created an environment that is becoming more challenging for people with traditional religious beliefs

It's getting darker
the need for salt and light are becoming more clear

A city street scene at dusk, featuring a yellow speech bubble overlay. The background shows a multi-story building with a 'FOOD COURT' sign and a 'Coca-Cola' logo. A white car is visible on the left, and a blue car is on the right. The sky is a mix of orange and blue.

“I’m Salt. I’m Light.”

Clarity of Identity Amidst Conflict

“I’ll Salt. I’ll Light.”

Courage and Confidence to Act in the Common Good

Christianity in America is changing

The Church's influence on Americans is beginning to fade

2007 - 2015

"None's": 16% to 23%
"Christians": 80% to 70%

But it's a mixed picture

1940 - 2016

"churchgoers": 37% to 36%

What's going on?

1972 - 2014


mainline: 28% to 12%
evangelical: 17% to 23%
55% every week

Cultural Christianity declining

Congregational Christianity declining


Convictional Christianity is stable

Church attendance among young evangelicals is growing

A city street scene at dusk, featuring a yellow speech bubble overlay. The background shows a multi-story building with a 'FOOD COURT' sign and a 'Coca-Cola' logo. Palm trees and a street with cars are visible. The speech bubble contains the text "I'm Salt. I'm Light." in bold black font.

“I’m Salt. I’m Light.”

Clarity of Identity Amidst Conflict

A city street scene at dusk, featuring a yellow speech bubble overlay. The background shows a multi-story building with a 'FOOD COURT' sign and a 'Coca-Cola' logo. Palm trees and a street with cars are visible. The speech bubble contains the text "I'll Salt. I'll Light." in bold black font.

“I’ll Salt. I’ll Light.”

Courage and Confidence to Act in the Common Good

1st-century Christians lived out Salt & Light

Salt and Light

Clarity of Identity Amidst Conflict

Courage and Confidence to Act in the Common Good

"Confident Pluralism" (Tim Keller)

Salt & Light in 1st Century Society Matthew 10:16-34

¹⁶ "Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. ¹⁷ But beware! For you will be handed over to the courts and will be flogged with whips in the synagogues. ¹⁸ **You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me.** ¹⁹ When you are arrested, don't worry about how to respond or what to say. God will give you the right words at the right time. ²⁰ For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Jesus interprets persecution from the perspective of being salt and light

Jesus, Peter and the Apostles live this out

Salt & Light in 1st Century Society Matthew 10:16-34

22 And all nations will hate you because you are my followers

Persecution is a sign of the irresolvable conflict between the kingdoms of light and darkness

Jesus wants the disciples to have clarity about their identity so they don't misunderstand what conflict means

Salt & Light in 1st Century Society Matthew 10:16-34

²⁸ "Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. ³⁰ And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

God is the one who declares our identity

Salt & Light in 1st Century Society Matthew 10:16-34

³² "Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven

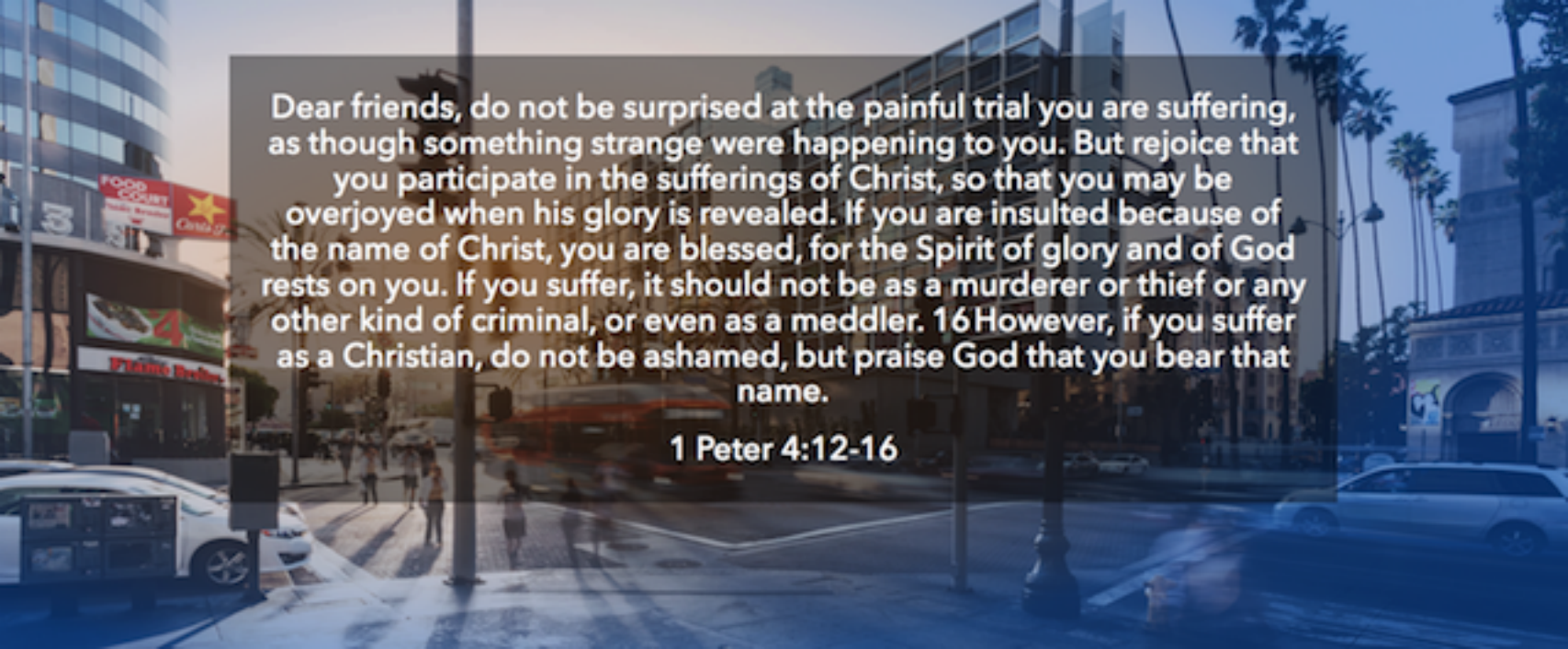
³⁴ "Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword.

God is the one who declares our identity

Public acknowledgement of who we follow is critical


This created a fearlessness and courage in the apostolic community

This is influence from **below** through servanthood and love, rather than from **above**, through power

A city street scene at dusk or dawn, with a semi-transparent text overlay. The background shows a street with cars, pedestrians, and buildings. On the left, there are signs for 'FOOD COURT', 'Crista's', and 'Flame Broiler'. The text is white and centered on a dark blue background.

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

1 Peter 4:12-16

A city street scene at dusk, featuring a yellow speech bubble overlay. The background shows a multi-story building with a 'FOOD COURT' sign and a 'Coca-Cola' logo. A white car is visible on the left, and a blue car is on the right. The sky is a mix of orange and blue.

“I’m Salt. I’m Light.”

Clarity of Identity Amidst Conflict

“I’ll Salt. I’ll Light.”

Courage and Confidence to Act in the Common Good

Response

**I need salt
and light in
my own life**

Pray for me to experience
more salt and light in my
heart, life and family

**“I’m Salt.
I’m Light.”**

I will stand in my identity, even
in the midst of conflict

**“I’ll Salt.
I’ll Light.”**

I will love and serve _____, whom
God has placed me with