

Different On Purpose: Seasoning The Culture Matthew 5:13-16

Passage

Matthew 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth, but if 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. “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.

Identity Before Activity

Assertion

- Jesus declares that His followers are salt and light, not that they should try to become it.

Possible Objection

- Wait, if I’m already salt and light, why emphasize it? Doesn’t that make the command unnecessary?

Application

- Pray specifically: *“Lord, let my life reflect You in every interaction today.”*

- Biblical Grounding:

- Colossians 3:17 “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

- Why it matters: You won’t live distinctly if you don’t think distinctly first.

The Danger of Losing Distinctiveness

Assertion

- Jesus warns: “If salt has lost its taste... it is no longer good for anything.”

Possible Objection

- But salt doesn’t actually lose its saltiness, so what is Jesus talking about?

Application

- Ask: *Where do my values mirror the world more than Scripture?*

- Biblical Grounding:

- 1 Peter 1:15-16 “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

- Why it matters: Small compromises quietly erode spiritual influence.

Influence Without Withdrawal

Assertion

- Salt is only effective when it is in contact with what it's meant to influence. Jesus warns: "If salt has lost its taste... it is no longer good for anything."

Possible Objection

- So are Christians supposed to withdraw from culture to stay pure, or engage culture and risk compromise?

Application

- Intentionally invest in one relationship with someone outside your immediate Christian circle.

- Biblical Grounding:

- 1 Corinthians 5:9-10 "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world."

- Why it matters: You cannot influence people you avoid.

The Visibility of Light

Assertion

- Jesus says, "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden... Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket."

Possible Objection

- Isn't faith supposed to be personal? Why does it need to be visible?

Application

- Make one aspect of your faith visible this week in a natural, authentic way.

- Biblical Grounding:

- Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

- Why it matters: Invisible faith cannot illuminate anything.

Fear of Standing Out

Assertion

- Jesus assumes His followers will be noticeable, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

Possible Objection

- But standing out can be uncomfortable... even costly. What if I don't want that kind of attention?

Application

- Choose obedience over comfort in one situation where you would normally stay silent or conform.

- Biblical Grounding:
 - Galatians 1:10 “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”
- Why it matters: Spiritual influence often begins where comfort ends.

The Content of Our Witness

Assertion

- Jesus says, “Let your light shine... so that they may see your good works...”

Possible Objection

- Doesn't that contradict the idea of not doing things to be seen by others?

Application

- Perform one intentional act of visible, selfless good this week that points beyond yourself.
- Biblical Grounding:
 - Titus 2:7-8 “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.”
- Why it matters: People are often drawn to God through what they see before what they hear.

The Purpose Of It All – Glorifying God

Assertion

- The ultimate aim is clear: “...that they may give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Possible Objection

- Does living this way actually make a difference? Can one person really impact the culture?

Application

- At the end of each day, reflect: “Did my life today point people toward God or toward myself?”
- Biblical Grounding:
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31 “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
- Why it matters: The goal is not influence for its own sake, but glory directed to God.

Conclusion

- So here are the closing questions:
 - Where have I lost distinctiveness?
 - Where have I hidden my faith?
 - Where is God calling me to be more visibly faithful?