

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus tells His followers that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Your *identity* as a follower of Jesus comes before your activity for Jesus, because who you are shapes how you live. Like salt, you are called to preserve what is good, bring grace and truth into broken places, make life better, and create a thirst for God. Like light, you are called to reveal truth, guide others toward what is good, and live openly so that others can see Christ in you. Your influence is not ultimately about getting attention for yourself but directing the attention you receive toward the God you love.

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## MAIN POINTS

- 1. You are Salt — Live Close Enough to Make a Difference (Matthew 5:13; Colossians 4:5–6; Romans 12:2)** As salt, you can: *Preserve*, protect what is good, true, and godly; *Purify*, bring the transforming presence of Christ into broken places.; *Flavor*, bring grace, kindness, joy, hope, and truth; *Create thirst*, live in a way that makes others curious about the hope you have. Watch out for: *Isolation*, you cannot influence people you completely avoid and *Imitation*, you cannot influence people you become like.
- 2. You are Light — Live So Others Can See Jesus (Matthew 5:14–16; John 8:12; Ephesians 5:8)** As light, you can: *Reveal*, help others see what is true and what needs to change; *Guide*, help people see the next step toward God; *Shine*, let your faith be visible in your everyday relationships. Watch out for: *Concealment*, fear, comfort, embarrassment, and people-pleasing can cause you to hide your faith; *Competition*, your good works should point people to God, not draw attention to yourself.
- 3. Your Influence Should Point to God (Matthew 5:16; Psalm 34:8; 1 Peter 2:9)** Jesus does not call you to shine so people will simply notice you. He calls you to live visibly different lives so people can see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. You are not the source of the light; you are called to reflect the light of Christ.

**Big Idea:** The way you live should point to the God you love.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Why does Jesus describe your identity as “salt” and “light” before He commands you to “let your light shine”?** *Possible Answer:* Jesus reminds you that your *identity* comes before your activity. You live differently because you belong to Christ, not so that you can earn His acceptance. (Matthew 5:13–16; Ephesians 2:8–10)
- 2. What does Jesus say is the ultimate purpose of your good works?** *Possible Answer:* Your good works should help others see God's character and His salvation and give glory to Him rather than making you the center of attention. (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12)
- 3. Where might you be tempted toward isolation or imitation instead of living as salt?** *Possible Answer:* You may avoid relationships with people who do not share your faith, or you may compromise your convictions to fit in. You can ask God to help you stay close enough to love people while remaining faithful to Christ. (Matthew 5:13; John 17:15–18)
- 4. Where is fear, comfort, embarrassment, or people-pleasing causing you to hide your light?** *Possible Answer:* You may hesitate to talk about Jesus, pray openly, or live according to biblical convictions because you are concerned about how others will respond. You can ask God for courage to faithfully represent Christ. (Matthew 5:14–16; 2 Timothy 1:7–8)
- 5. Who in your life needs to “taste” and “see” the goodness of God through the way you live this week?** *Possible Answer:* Think of one specific person God has already placed in your life. Look for a practical opportunity to show Christ's kindness, speak truth with grace, serve that person, or share the hope you have in Jesus. (Psalm 34:8; Colossians 4:5–6; 1 Peter 3:15)

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## GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus did not save you merely from sin; He saved you for a life that reflects Him. If you have never trusted Christ, you cannot become the salt and light Jesus describes by simply trying harder or becoming a better person. Repent of your sin, turn to Jesus, and believe that He alone saves you through your belief in His death and resurrection. If you already follow Jesus, remember that your good works do not earn your salvation; they flow from the salvation you have already received by grace through faith. Repent where you have become isolated, compromised, hidden, or focused on yourself, and ask God to help you live so that others see Christ and give glory to your Father in heaven.

## DAILY DEVOTIONS

### MONDAY — You Are Salt

**Key Verse:** “You are the salt of the earth.” (Matthew 5:13)

**Reflection:** Jesus begins with *who you are* before He talks about what you should do. If you belong to Christ, you are called to influence the world around you by preserving what is good, bringing grace and truth into broken places, and helping others see the goodness of God. You do not have to be famous or influential by the world's standards to make a difference; you simply need to faithfully live where God has placed you.

**Application Question:** Where has God placed you where you can be “salt” this week? *Possible Answer:* I can look for opportunities at home, work, church, or in my neighborhood to encourage someone, serve someone, speak truth with grace, or protect what is good and godly.

**Prayer Response** Father, help me live as salt wherever You have placed me, preserving what is good and bringing Your grace and truth into the lives of others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

### TUESDAY — Don't Lose Your Saltiness

**Key Verse:** “But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?” (Matthew 5:13)

**Reflection:** Salt only makes a difference when it comes into contact with what needs its influence. In the same way, you cannot make a difference if you completely isolate yourself from people who need to experience the love and truth of Christ. At the same time, you must be careful not to become so much like the world that your life no longer points people toward Jesus.

**Application Question:** Are you more tempted toward isolation or imitation? *Possible Answer:* I tend toward isolation because it feels safer to stay around people who already agree with me. This week, I can intentionally build a relationship with someone outside my normal circle while remaining faithful to Christ.

**Prayer Response:** Lord Jesus, help me stay close enough to people to make a difference without becoming like the world around me. Give me courage to love people well while remaining faithful to Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

### WEDNESDAY — You Are Light

**Key Verse:** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” (Matthew 5:14)

**Reflection:** Jesus says that His followers are the light of the world, but Jesus Himself is the true source of that light. When you follow Him, His light should become visible through the way you live, speak, serve, and love others. You do not need to have all the answers or be in the spotlight; you simply need to faithfully reflect Christ where God has placed you.

**Application Question:** Where can you intentionally let the light of Christ shine through you today? *Possible Answer:* I can show Christ's light by encouraging someone who is discouraged, serving someone who needs help, forgiving someone who has hurt me, or speaking about my faith when God gives me an opportunity.

**Prayer Response:** Jesus, You are the Light of the world. Help me reflect Your light today through my words, actions, attitudes, and relationships so that others can see You through my life. In Your Name, Amen.

### THURSDAY — Don't Hide Your Light

**Key Verse:** “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

**Reflection:** It is easy to hide your faith because of fear, comfort, embarrassment, or concern about what others might think. But Jesus calls you to live openly and faithfully so that people can see the difference He is making in your life. Your goal is not to make people admire you; your goal is to live in such a way that your good works point people toward your Father in heaven.

**Application Question:** What is one way you may be tempted to hide your faith or draw attention to yourself instead of God? *Possible Answer:* I sometimes stay quiet about my faith because I do not want to make things uncomfortable. I can ask God for courage to speak about Jesus naturally and humbly when opportunities arise.

**Prayer Response:** Father, forgive me for the times I have hidden my faith because of fear or focused attention on myself. Give me courage and humility to let my light shine so that others see You and give You glory. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

### FRIDAY — Point People to Jesus

**Key Verse:** “...so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

**Reflection:** The ultimate purpose of your influence is not for people to notice how good you are but for them to see how good God is. Psalm 34:8 says, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good,” and your life can help others experience a glimpse of God's goodness through your love, character, service, and faithfulness. The way you live should point beyond yourself to the God you love.

**Application Question:** Who in your life needs to “taste” and “see” the goodness of God this week? *Possible Answer:* There is someone God has already placed in my life who needs encouragement, kindness, truth, or hope. I will intentionally look for an opportunity to serve that person and, when appropriate, share how Jesus is the source of my hope.

**Prayer Response:** Father, thank You for allowing me to be part of Your work in the lives of others. Help me live in a way that makes Your goodness visible and points people to Jesus. May the way I live bring You glory, not myself. In Jesus' Name, Amen.