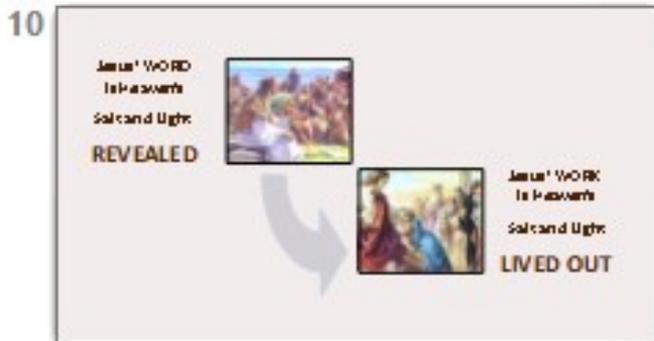

1. Jesus is our Salt & our Light!

“The salt of the earth... the light of the world” (5:13, 14)



a. Jesus is Heaven’s Salt & Light revealed in His WORDS, but also Jesus is Heaven’s Salt and Light in action in His WORKS on earth. Salt and Light are pictures of

(1) the image of God which is depicted in Eden, in the beginning;
(2) then in the tabernacle. Moses was commanded to make the tabernacle on earth exactly as he saw it on the mountain; now
(3) Jesus goes up the mountain and delivers the Sermon on the Mount - Heaven’s citizenship and will revealed from the Father, revealed in Jesus; and then
(4) **His work** in Mat. 8 and 9, show the beautiful life in its perfect form, working on earth as it is willed in Heaven.



Jesus is the perfect image on Earth of His Father in Heaven. His the Salt of the Earth and The Light of the World in WORD & DEED.

b. Then Jesus drops the bomshell:

You are Heaven’s Salt and Light. You are Heaven’s Salt and Light when you receive the Life and Love of the Jesus. When you obey His call to follow Him to receive His WORD wholeheartedly, THEN you have Heaven’s Salt & Light in



you. Then Heaven's beautiful attitudes become a blessing to you – and through you into the world. THEN you share in Jesus's work as His Salt and Light through you. When we receive Jesus' WORD we receive HIM. He becomes our Salt and Light. And it is His Salt and Light that He generates in us, and sends us out into the world to live, love, permeate and shine.

You have Jesus' WORD to receive. When you do, ...
You are Heaven's Salt & Light in the power of Jesus.

> **We are salt & light inasmuch as Jesus is our Salt & our Light!**

2. The beautiful life is under threat

"Saltless salt" and "A light under a bowl" (5:13-15).

a. Threat1: Salt losing its saltiness.

"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 by men" (5:13).



Salt flavours, cleanses, preserves, etc. Dead Sea salt was common and mixed with impurities – If it was considered not fit for the table it would be thrown out. Jesus teaches us that there are hindrances or threats to being salt. Here are a few.

(i) "Lost is savour" - The impure life – is without the power of Heaven. A life dirtied by the corruptions of the world fails in its preserving and purifying purpose. We know that when we are a

part of the problem of our time we become objects of concern, instead of being relied on to be an influence in our community for God's good.

Time and again, those who are used by God say that the power of your life is tied to the purity of your heart. The opposite is the fraudulent life. An outward form

without the inward reality. This is a constant challenge to us, isn't it? Can we hear Jesus' call to keep a constant check on the quality of our lives and character?

13



What stand are taking at work, with our tax returns, with our affairs with others?

If our Salt loses its power the result is serious. Jesus warns that the impure or compromised life is useless to the Father's kingdom. "It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by others" (5:13). Here's the shocking reality. If our life has lost its power, it is despised by the world! The world is hungry for authentic Life.

Salt for the road is the lowest form of material. This was described to me by an oil specialist. He said that highly refined oil goes into jets and rockets. But the lowest form of oil, is worse than sludge, and literally gets thrown to the roads, as tar. That is the end of the line for oil. Here Jesus says that a life that loses Heaven's character will be despised by the world, and crushed on the roads of the world.

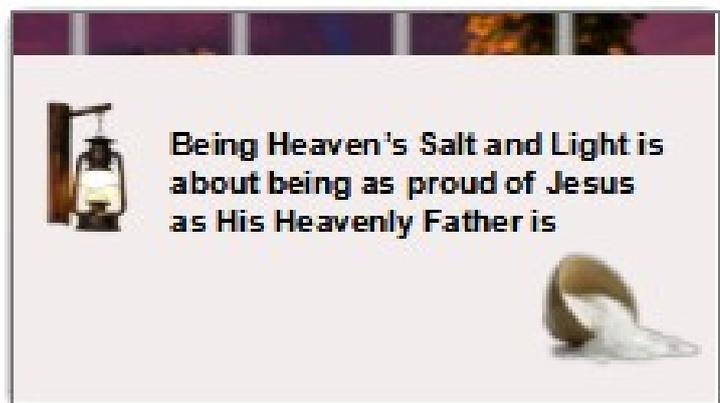
b. A 2nd type of threat: A light that is hidden.

“A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl” – The picture is obvious, so let’s explore the point of it.

Jesus is The Light of the world revealing the Father, who is Heaven’s Light. Jesus shines or images the Father perfectly: He reveals Him. The Father’s light is the subject here. Matthew puts it like this. The Father was proud of Jesus, so proud that He publicly shines out His pride of His Son at Jesus’ baptism. There He openly affirmed Him, and on the mountain of transfiguration: “This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased – listen to Him” (Matthew 3:16, 17; 17:5). **Can you see yourself being as proud of Jesus as Your Heavenly Father is of Him? This is good pride, and it shines out.**

It is a pride of Heaven’s citizenship that is so treasured, you will sell everything to gain it (Mat. 13:44-46).

14



Fear covers over the light. The threat to this good pride is fear. People today are persecuted for being proud of Jesus. To own the Beautiful Name could get you thrown out, locked up, sidelined, or killed. Matthew’s audience was facing enormous pressures against the Jesus movement. They were being encouraged to find Heaven’s strength for Heaven’s citizenship.

The opposite of being proud of Jesus is a life ashamed of Jesus. Light that is darkness is not light at all.

Being as proud of Jesus as the Father is proud of Him makes you

the light of the world, a city on a hill worth being seen. It is authentic light in a dark place. For as many who hate it there are those who, deep down, wish for the strength to have it. May the Lord encourage any who are facing any threats against their light.

3. The Power of being Salt and Light

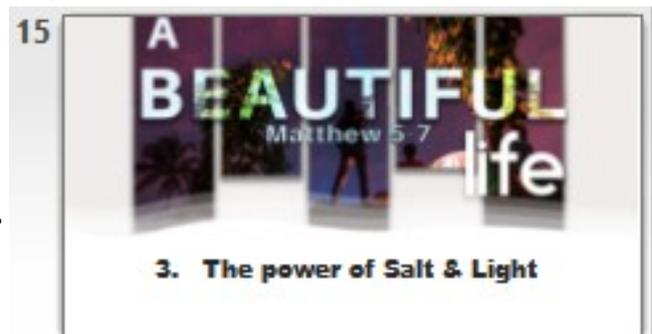
“Let your light so shine before people that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in Heaven” (5:16).

You have heard it said,

“Don’t be so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good”;

But here it may be asserted,

“Because you are heavenly minded you can be earthly good”



Jesus is pressing that when Heaven’s light shines through the good that we do, our Father will receive the credit and praise.

a. But there is a problem here: Jesus says in Matthew 6, “Be careful **not** to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them” (6:1). Jesus insists in Matthew 6 that when you pray, do it in secret; when you fast, do not let it be seen that you fasting; and when you give to the needy, “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing”. Why the inconsistency? Perhaps it can be illustrated by the following ditty:

She was a sunbeam all merry and bright
Doing her bit to the left and the right
Working her heart out with zeal unabated
She was a sunbeam – and, boy, was she hated

The lesson is this. It's not about "What can I do for Jesus?" where we busy ourselves with our good, but "Jesus, what are you doing that I may may be a part of?" In that humble attitude, the WORD remains HIS Work, not ours.

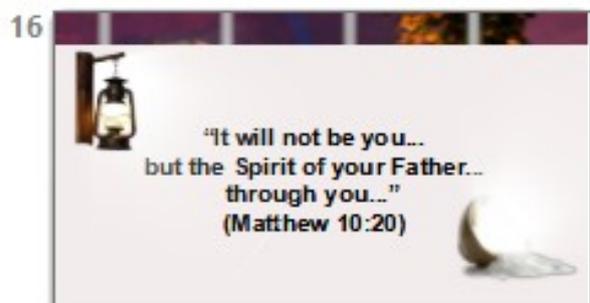
Jesus encourages that where you serve the Father for His sake, He will reward you.

b. How can "your light" glorify the Father? Our light will bring glory to our Heavenly Father when it is the Light of Jesus in us.

This truth became clear to me one day when a counsellor reminded me that the Scripture refers to God as the "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). The Holy Spirit is the light shiner – Well, it was easy then to apply it everywhere I could think: If He is the counsellor, what would Heaven's work through us be if we acknowledged Him to be the youth director, the pastor, the soup-kitchen server, the carer, the Small Group leader, the children's worker, the social worker? And if He is the POWER of these roles, how would such a truth affect the way we lead, teach, counsel, and serve?

c. Unstoppable Salt and Light. When Jesus is your Salt and Light you won't be able to stop the light shining from you, or Heaven's preserving impact through you. Jesus assured His disciples as He sent them out to be Salt and Light, "It will not be you... but the Spirit of your Father... through you..." (Matthew 10:20).

The power of a beautiful life is when the salt and light of Heaven is doing its Kingdom work.



#An example is worth mentioning for your encouragement.

One of our missionaries asked for prayer a few years ago about the uncertainty they faced about the farm they were on. There was a hold-up in them gaining the right of the farm, even though they were correctly there by good arrangement. It seemed that the hold-up in the formalities, to give right of use, was unnecessary. After years of anxiety about being told at any time to clear off the property, many of you had prayed with them for God to bring a right and good conclusion to the matter. This last week we received a letter from the couple. It is one of the clearest examples of being salt and light:

“God Always Answers Our Prayers

God Answers every prayer. Sometimes we just don't like the answer, or have to wait a long time for the answer, but He always answers every one. This week, one of our long term prayers was answered, and it was a YES! WE GOT THE FARM!!! The farm “Story” is a long one, and basically it would take a miracle for us to get it! So this is not just an answer to prayer, it's a miracle answer!

Many, many people here in central Africa, including other missionaries, said we would never get this farm as we refused to be involved in any bribery or corruption!! My husband wanted to keep his integrity completely in tact, and if that meant we lost the farm, so be it! The problem was that the other parties involved were using a lot of bribery and corruption and witchcraft!! And the community knew it! And we felt that God's name was at stake if they actually won using those methods!! And our ministry would actually be

compromised if the other parties got what they wanted, using those methods!

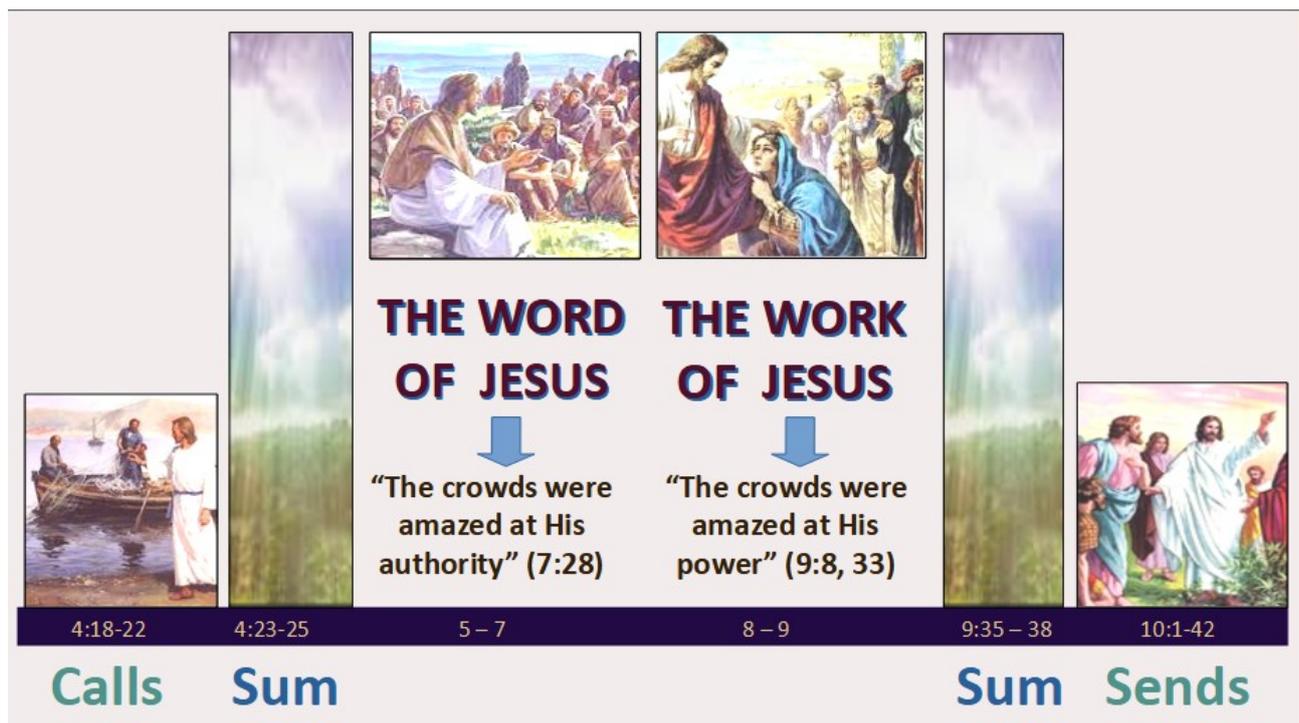
But, we should not be surprised that God always wins, and His Name will always be upheld, so we are so thankful for the outcome! God is good! Praise God – we've got the farm!"

Being salt and light is not necessarily an instant thing. Most of us have to grow in saltiness and in being brighter and clearer for our Father in Heaven. Inasmuch as Jesus is our Salt and Light, we will be Salt and Light.

Being salt and light might only gradually improve in intensity – a little flavour or flicker in the beginning, but gathering strength and power over time. Do not be discouraged. Let failure become a part of the growth. Even a tree is not a full-grown fruit-bearer at the beginning. So, do not be discouraged at small beginnings. Let the Holy Spirit continue His work, making us truly salty and bright, and forgiving us our failings as we forgive others theirs.

Questions for Small Groups, based on Sunday morning's message on Matthew 5:13-16 – The Power of Salt and Light

1. Briefly review the structure of Matthew 4:12-10:42 for the text of 5:13-16



2. Matthew 4:16 says of Jesus that "the people living in darkness have seen a great light". How is Jesus Heaven's Salt and Light for us, in the Gospels?

3. What connections are there between the Beatitudes of 5:1-12 and this "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world" passage?

4. Jesus spoke about threats against being salt and light. What are we facing today that threatens or hinders us from being salt and light, individually and as a church? How can we prevent or

withstand those threats?

5. Jesus gave hope that people might praise your Father in Heaven when they see Heaven's Salt and Light in action. Any current examples or stories to share?