

Salt and Light

- Can we as Christians influence the world?
- Do we have the power to bring transformation or do we look on as helpless bystanders?
- Are we “supposed” to bring transformation into the world – isn’t this world passing away?
- What is our role in society?

Jesus used analogies of commonly used items that could be understood by everyone. In this case he used the analogy of salt and light – items that every person would understand.

Matthew 5: 13 – 16

1) You are the salt of the earth

- Salt is something that was commonly used in Jesus’ day.
- It is used to season food, preserves food and was used in the religious rites by Greeks, Romans, Hebrews and Christians.
- If we are the salt of the earth then we will do the work that God wants us to do without being noticed.
- You can’t see the salt that is sprinkled on the food but it works its way into the food, seasoning it and/or preserving it.
- Biltong – meat is salted and dried out. If it isn’t salted it will go rotten.
- Our work and influence for God in society largely goes unnoticed but our mere presence, as salt, has profound effects.
- Salt brings out the taste in food making us desire more, so it is with us. We give people the taste of Jesus, the taste of life, the taste of hope, the taste of eternity.
- Salt also causes thirst. If someone eats food with salt in it they need to drink water to quench their thirst. So our lives ought to be making the people of our society thirsty to drink from the living waters that Jesus promised.
- Salt preserves food. The righteousness of our lives should act as the standard by which society measures its actions. The Word of God is the standard by which we measure our lives. We are the only Bible that most people will ever read.
- David H. Johnson writes: “Sodium is an extremely active element found naturally only in combined form; it always links itself to another element. Chlorine, on the other hand, is the poisonous gas that gives bleach its offensive odor. When sodium and chlorine are combined, the result is sodium chloride--common table salt--the substance we use to preserve meat and bring out its flavor. Love and truth can be like sodium and chlorine. Love without truth is flighty, sometimes blind, willing to combine with various doctrines. On the other hand, truth by itself can be offensive, sometimes even poisonous. Spoken without love, it can turn people away from the gospel. When truth and love are combined in an individual or a church, however, then we have what Jesus called "the salt of the earth," and we're able to preserve and bring out the beauty of our faith.”.
- Salt only works if it is fresh and different. Worldly Christians will never make a difference in the world.
- If salt loses its saltiness i.e. if salt becomes insipid – tasteless – it is no longer good for anything. Who wants to eat food without salt in it?
- Mark 9: 49 “Everyone will be salted with fire.”
- How salty are our lives?
- How salty is our church?

2) You are the light of the world

- Light is something that can have a dramatic effect on everything it touches. Light makes it possible to see. A lighthouse warns ships of the coastline; emergency lights warn drivers of a high-speed vehicle. Light speaks of security and reassurance. When we are in a dark house and hear an unfamiliar noise, we instinctively turn on a light because we want to be able to see and be seen. Jesus says we are to be like that to a neighborhood that dwells in darkness.
- Light is also understood by all. We cannot live without it. It is necessary for life. Plants photosynthesis takes place because of light. Through it they produce oxygen.
- Light allows us to see where we are going and what we are doing.
- Sight is the reflection of light off an object.
- The moon doesn't have its own light; it merely reflects the light of the sun.
- We don't have our own light; we reflect the light of Christ.
- Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8: 12)
- Light makes our paths clear so that we won't stumble.
- Light illuminates obstacles in our way – in our lives. It shows us up for what we really are.
- Some people change their ways when they see the light, others only when they feel the heat.
- Light gives hope – the saying "a ray of hope"
- Light gives life.
- Light cannot be hidden in the darkness. For it not to be seen it has to be put out.

WE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH AND THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD WHEN WE LIVE BY THE CHARACTER AND ATTITUDES OF CHRIST.

3) All praise goes to our Father in heaven

- The purpose of our lives being salt and light is to bring praise and honour to God.
- This comes primary before societal transformation.