



**Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture**

**SERMON TEXT:** Matthew 5:13-16

**KEY POINT(S):** As Jesus’ people, we are called to be the salt and light of this world.

**FOR LEADERS**

- **Apprenticeship!** *Who are you investing in? Who in your group is clearly gifted in some area that you can help them continue to shine in? If your answer is “Uh, no one...” than how might you change that this week to be a better leader of those whom Gods placed around you. If you already know who that person (or people) is, then where are they at in their development? What does a next step look like for that person in their discipleship and how can you help support them?*
- **Leadership Essentials:** *The second module for Leadership Essentials is now available for all of our leaders who are currently apprenticing someone. If you have any questions, or need help getting set up with your apprentice, shoot us an e-mail at [Communities@emergencenj.org](mailto:Communities@emergencenj.org)*

**GETTING STARTED**

- {1} Icebreaker** – “Name a dish that’s relatively simply to make, but you are an absolute expert of!”
- {2} Communities Video** - Watch this week’s Communities video!
- {3}** What were some things that stood out to you from the sermon this week? Was there anything you found particularly impactful or eye-opening?

**SALTY...IN A GOOD WAY**

In the sermon this week, Ryan pointed out that salt was used in the ancient world for two purposes: First, it was a preservative preventing decay in meat that need to be stored for any significant length of time. Second, it was used to flavor food, just like we use it today. Since Jesus doesn’t specify which of these two uses he has in mind, it is reasonable to assume that he probably expects us to think of both, as each of us ponders our role in the world.

**Ask for a Volunteer to read Matthew 5:13-16**

- {1}** As we think about salt as a preserver of food, in which ways do you think our current world is decaying? How should Jesus’ followers be working to counteract this?
- {2}** How can Christians fulfill their role of “salt as a flavoring agent,” or making the world “taste better?”
- {3}** Where, in your opinion, have Christians both failed and fulfilled this role?
- {4}** Who is someone you’ve seen who has really exemplified what it means to be “salt” in the world?
- {5}** In the sermon, Ryan mentioned that it’s sad to see salt “lose its saltiness” or get watered-down. What does this look like in regard to Jesus Church, and how can we make sure that we maintain our flavor?
- {6}** As you consider your own life, and your effect on the world around you, where do you feel you may have lost some saltiness? What can you do to regain that?

*Leaders: The point of this “salt” analogy from Jesus is pretty simple – The Gospel never loses its flavor. As Paul says in Romans 1, the Gospel is the “Power for Salvation” both to Jew and Gentile. The only way to lose that power is to not speak it’s truth.*





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A LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE

- [1] In the sermon, Ryan described the shock that his old friends from high school expressed, when they found out years later that each other had been Christians all along. Despite their initial impression, that this was “awesome,” he later reflected that it’s actually not awesome. Why is this not awesome, and have you had similar experiences?
[2] In verse 14, Jesus calls his followers “the light of the world,” but Jesus also says this about himself. Read John 8:12, 9:5, and 12:36. In light of these verses, what does it look like for you to be light?
[3] Can you describe a time when you “put a basket” over your light? What should you have done differently?
[4] Where are some places of darkness in your life, and in what practical ways is God calling you to be light there?
[5] In the second part of verse 14 (right in the middle of him calling us light), Jesus briefly introduces a new metaphor—he refers to us as “a city set on a hill.” What does this add to what Jesus is saying?

Leaders: Remember that there wasn't any electricity in Jesus' day (obviously). Coming across a light in a dark place was not just a point of reference, but often a beacon of hope for those that are lost. Moreover, approaching a city would not look like solitary light, but the glow of many lamps shining together. The image here is one of the Church. As Jesus' people, we are to be the hope in the world, those with the "light" of the Gospel, which makes all other things visible.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- [1] Read Matthew 6:1. Here, Jesus tells us not to practice our righteousness before others, in order to be seen by them, but in this week’s passage, particularly in 5:16, he says that he wants us to “let our light shine before others.” What is Jesus calling us to in saying both of these things, and how can we maintain a balance between them?
[2] How much are you a part of the “city on the hill”? Does your light shine in the night along with your brothers and sisters, or are you a solitary light shining off by yourself? What can you do to be more a part of that city?

Leaders: The “balance” that question 1 is referring to actually has to do with the posture of our hearts. Jesus doesn't save us just so that we can take the Gospel and go hide under a basket someplace. No, we're saved BY faith TO good works (Ephesians 2)! What Jesus is telling us here is that our faith should manifest itself with works that are a natural response to the hope that is within us. But there is a big difference between loving others with good works because we are loved by Jesus and want to do the same versus carrying out good works so that people will recognize our “holiness.” These are two VERY different heart postures, and it's important that we make sure that we can discern the difference first in ourselves, and then lead and disciple others to do the same.

PRAYER

- [1] Pray for opportunities where God has called you to be salt and light in the world.
[2] Pray that God would show you areas of your life where you have lost saltiness for Jesus’ Gospel, and pray that God would help make you more effective in loving others and sharing the hope we have in the Gospel.

