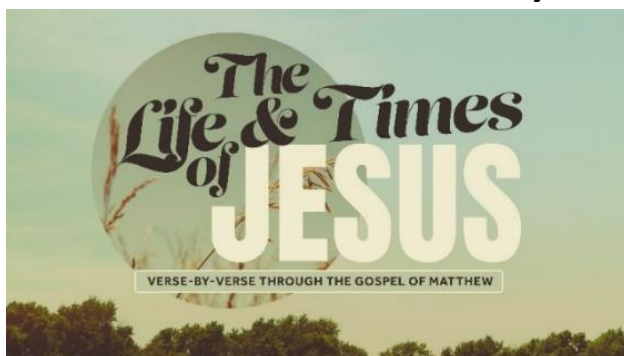


## FELLOWSHIP NOTES ~ SUNDAY, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025



### Part 2: “Be Salty and Light Up Your World”

Matthew 5:13-16

Last Sunday we kicked-off our Spring/Summer Series we’re calling “The World’s Greatest Sermon”, based on Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount found in the gospel of Matthew chapters 5 – 7.

And in the first 12 verses Jesus lays the foundation for His theme for the sermon which is Kingdom Citizenship as you can see on your notes.

Then He lays out what the attitudes, or more accurately, the Christ-like character qualities, that He wants those who are part of His kingdom to embrace and live by as you can see outlined on your notes.

Now I want you to note that while the content that we just read in verses 13-16 completes Jesus’ introduction to His sermon, these are not more Beatitudes. Rather they’re outcomes of living out these attitudes.

In other words, Jesus is emphasizing here that you can't be poor in spirit, and mournful over sin, and meek, and spiritually hungry/thirsty, and merciful, and pure in heart, and a peacemaker and be willing to accept persecution and even be happy about it...

All in the privacy of your own home. These spiritual traits and qualities modeled by Jesus and in-turn by us, are going to catch the attention of people around us. Not that we should try to be some kind of show-offs.

But when we live this way, it's a stark contrast from the way people without Christ live in our world – therefore we're going to stand out – in a good way, and in a way the Lord has designed us to stand out.

These beatitudes are meant by Jesus to be the Normal Way we live our lives as followers of His, not the exception.

And when we do, we leave our stamp on the world – better yet – we leave HIS stamp on the world around us which Jesus says is revealed in two ways as we just read in our text: we become the salt of the earth, and light in the world.

Now before we move forward on these two points Jesus makes in our text, let me also point out again to you that this first part of Jesus' sermon is foundational in nature. The rest of the sermon stands on these first 16 verses.

As He move further along, He's going to get to some pretty heavy topics in the main body of his sermon – things like if you kill someone in your heart and mind, then to God, you're guilty of murder.

And if in lust, you commit adultery with another woman who's not your wife, in your heart and mind, then to God, you're guilty of adultery.

Topics also like God wants you to always tell the truth, and to love people who are your enemies, and to give with integrity, and to pray the right way, and not to judge others, and to serve others by going above and beyond the call of duty...

And other real-life topics that hit us where we live day-in and day-out. And we're going to cover all these topics that Jesus covers this summer.

But the only way we are able to embody and live out the kind of kingdom living God expects of each of us who know and follow Him as citizens in his kingdom, the only way any of us are going to be able to obey what Jesus says to do...

Is first, first, we have to embrace the Beatitudes as our normal way of living. The more we can engrain in our hearts and minds the character qualities of Jesus that are represented in the beatitudes, the better we'll be able with God's help to positively respond and embrace the rest of the topics Jesus is going to cover in his sermon.

That's why these 8 beatitudes are on your notes again this morning. And it's why we have to keep them in front of us as we continue down this road studying Jesus' sermon.

In fact, I feel so strongly about this, that here's I think about it. I believe we need a dose of the beatitudes in our spiritual diet every day. I look at this way: I believe being reminded of a beatitude a day will help keep sin away in our life.

A beatitude a day will help keep the devil and temptation away. A beatitude a day will help us get to the point where we know what each of the beatitudes are, what they mean, and how to make them part of our daily walk with Christ.

And the best way to spiritually ingest the beatitudes daily is through prayer. Praying the beatitudes as part of our regular spiritual diet of time in the Word of God and time devoted to fellowshiping with the Lord in prayer, will help us to grow in the spiritual character qualities represented by the beatitudes.

So included with your notes is a 5 Day Schedule that will assist you in praying 1 or 2 beatitudes a day along with the teaching we're looking at in our text this morning in verses 13-16.

I want to encourage you to begin tomorrow to make a daily dose of the beatitudes part of your spiritual daily walk with Christ. In a few weeks, we'll freshen this up and give you another version to continue using throughout this summer study.

And that's what I'm asking all of you to do, will you join me and make a commitment today, to as much as you are able, to prayerfully infuse your walk with Christ with a daily dose of the beatitudes, asking God to help you make these Christlike spiritual character qualities part of who you are as a citizen of Christ's kingdom.

I believe if we all do this, these next few months are going to be a time of real spiritual growth in our lives and only God knows the impact that could have right here in our own community and area as we become the salt and light God wants us to be to those all around us who need Jesus and salvation in him.

Now, here in His sermon Jesus points us to two very ordinary objects found in life to illustrate His teaching on influence: salt and light. Salt and light illustrate the influential nature God calls us to live out as followers of Jesus in our world.

Let's consider first what Jesus tells us about salt... READ 5:13a.  
NOW look at your notes...

**Citizens in Christ's Kingdom Are...**

**(Slide) 1. The Influence of Salt on the Earth – Matt. 5:13a**

When Jesus said, “You”, who was he referring to? Who’s “you”? The “You” are the disciples of Jesus. Jesus was preaching this message to a mixed crowd that had gone up the hillside to listen to Jesus that day.

Not everyone listening to Jesus had become followers yet. So, Jesus was trying to make clear to them what He expected of them if they decided to become His followers. Jesus wasn’t into “bait and switch” sales techniques.

He was up front with everyone about the cost of being His disciple and if they decided to follow him, He would hold them to those expectations and that includes being an influence of salt on the earth by living out the Beatitudes.

By the way, Jesus’ expectations for the people listening that day, are the same for us here today listening to His message. They haven’t changed. He wants us to live out the spiritual character qualities of Jesus found in the Beatitudes and thereby being the influence of salt to the people around us.

And to make sure that none of us misses this, we need to ask and answer the question, why? Why is it necessary for us as disciples of Jesus to be salt? Let’s consider the importance of and purpose of salt.

**(Slide) The Importance and Purpose of Salt: A Preservative = Influence**

In the first century when Jesus preached this sermon, salt was even more important than it is in our day. It was so important that the Romans said that nothing was more important than 2 necessities in life: the sun and salt.

Why? Because since they didn't have refrigeration the only way they could preserve meat was to salt it – a practice which continued all over the world until the invention of refrigeration – and in some cases it's still used today.

So while salt in Jesus' day and in our day has a number of different positive qualities, its most important quality was as a preservative, which made it very important.

In fact it was so important that Roman soldiers in Jesus' day were often paid for their services, in salt. Their wages were salt, and they used that salt for preservation purposes for their food.

But if you were a lousy soldier, it was said of you, that you "weren't worth your salt". Ever heard of that? That's where that phrase comes from. If a person isn't worth their salt, they usually lack motivation, character or some other personality flaw.

But what about "spiritual salt"? Have you ever wondered if you're worth your spiritual salt? Are you, by the way you live your life, a preservative in your family, in the culture of your sphere of influence at work? In the neighborhood? Among your friends at school? Around others In your community?

As a spiritual preservative in our communities and in the world, God wants us to stand for righteousness, to hold back unrighteousness and crime, to confront sin...

To take a stand against false teaching, to defend the weak, the helpless, the needy, to be there when goodness is needed, to bring influence to the world around us in a positive, godly way.

Now let's talk about the reason. Why does the world need to be seasoned or influenced? Why do Christians need to be salty?

**(Slide) The Reason We are Salt: Because the earth is suffering in spiritual decay and its only hope is Jesus**

Jesus is the hope of the world, and He has created a system by which the world will only realize that hope through His disciples – US (If you've placed your faith in Christ as your Savior).

WE are the hands and feet and the voice of Jesus in the world. WE are the love of Jesus to people around us in this world. Like it or not, we're it, Fellowship!

The world is suffering the spiritual decay of sin and its consequences in their lives. The stench of spiritual death and decay permeates our world completely – in the heart and life of every man, woman, boy and girl who right now stand separated from God by their sin.



We have inside us the power of God to season the lives of others around us so they can come to know Christ and have His permanent life and not death and eternal separation from God. Have you ever noticed that anything that's dead stinks???

e.g. I was putting something in the trash can outside the other day, and when I lifted the lid of that can there was a distinct odor – you've smelled it before – it's the odor of something that was very much dead.

It wreaked bad!!! There must have been a dead mouse or other kind of rodent in that can, but because of that smell, I wasn't going to rummage around trying to find it!!! 😊

In the same way, the lives of unbelievers are spiritually dead, and they have a spiritual stench to them. But let's not get uppity, we all had that same spiritual stench before we came to faith in Jesus Christ as well.

But when we trust in Jesus and are saved and forgiven of our sins, Jesus comes in and gives us life and we have the fresh fragrance of new life instead of that old stench of sin.

And as citizens of Christ's kingdom, WE are the agents of saltiness to influence those who don't know Christ to turn to Him and be saved. WE are the salt of the earth!

WE and all other followers of Christ are the ONLY salt this world has, we are the ONLY spiritual seasoning that can pass on to every person without Christ the sure hope of eternal life.

It's our collective seasoning in this world that dispels the decay of the morality and evil around us and brings fresh life into our society through our influence and through our collective goodness and witness for Christ.

Jesus also includes here a word of warning about the challenge we all face in being salt to the world around us... READ Matt. 5:13b

**(Slide) The Challenge: Losing our Saltiness (influence) – Matt. 5:13b**

We all face the challenge every day of becoming non-influential, of becoming irrelevant in relation to influencing and seasoning the people around us.

Salt is only good if its salty – right? If you sprinkle salt on something you're getting ready to eat, and you take a bite, and the taste hasn't changed one bit...

You're not going to like that. You're going to keep searching for a saltshaker that has salt in it that seasons your food and then throw the other one away, because what good is salt if it doesn't taste salty?!

In Jesus' day all lot of the salt was naturally mixed with other elements like gypsum and sand which made the salt lose its saltiness. So they would take that useless salt and throw it on the paths where people walked to keep the weeds and vegetation from growing. That's all it was good for – to be trampled on by people on the paths.

And that is what Jesus is referring to here. He's warning His disciples – and us – that if we're not careful to monitor our Christian life and stay close to the Lord and refuse to become lukewarm in our walk with Christ, and reject sinful living, that our influence on others could be lost.

When we let sin go unrepented of, we can lose our influence. If we fail to prioritize our walk with the Lord and spend concentrated time with Him every day, sin can easily spring up and cause our witness to be weakened...

It can cause our resistance to temptation to be weakened, cause our faithfulness to the Lord and His Word to be weakened, and then before we know it, we're no longer acting as preservatives in our family, at our job, at school or in our community.

The seasoning effect of our lives on those around us is weakened when we grow weak in godly living, in holy living, in pure living – those beatitudes that we've already studied.

People will no longer see us as someone who is different, we'll simply blend in with the world, and when that happens, there goes our influence. There goes our witness, there goes our primary purpose for being in the world.

Fellowship, notice here that Jesus didn't say, "BE the salt of the earth", He said, "You ARE the salt of the earth". Look, whether you like or not, you and I, ARE the salt of the earth.

We just need to ask ourselves, am I worth my salt this morning? Are we as a church, worth our salt this morning? Are we making a difference in our area by living salty lives both individually and together?

Now here's the second common, ordinary object Jesus chose to use to illustrate His desire for us to influence the world around us by living out the spiritual character qualities of the beatitudes...

Look at verse 14 and let's read the first part... READ 5:14a

**Citizens in Christ's Kingdom Are...**

**(Slide) 2. The Influence of Light in the World – Matt. 5:14a**

**Two sources of light: A City on a Hill (lots of lights)**

**A Light on a Stand (a single light)**

What did Jesus mean when He said, "You are the light of the world?" Why didn't He just quit with the command to be salt? Isn't it enough for us to influence the world around us and to be a preservative among the people around us by our presence as we live out the beatitudes?

It seems here that Jesus went further in explaining our role in His kingdom and in this world to include being light because the light represents the truth and the life of God Himself.

As citizens of God's kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ, we who once lived in the spiritual of darkness of sin have the light of Jesus living inside us.

That light is represented by the truth of the gospel, and the truth of God inside us. We have his spiritual life because Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

So being the light of the world compliments being the salt of the earth. Our saltiness of godly living diminishes the spiritual decay, preserves the decay of spiritual death, and when we live as His light, we bring the truth into a world that's living in spiritual darkness and falsehood.

We serve as light in the world through our testimony of goodness and by our verbal witness of the gospel and to who Jesus is, to others to point them out of spiritual darkness and into the light of salvation.

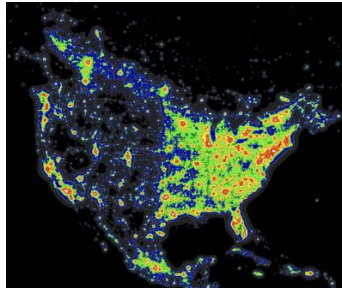
Jesus gives an illustration here to hit home His point. READ Matt. 5:14-16.

Here Jesus is pointing to two sources of physical light: the light from a city on a hill – that's LOTS of lights together, and the light from a lamp set on a lampstand – a single light, a single individual – both are necessary and important.

First, Jesus says you can't hide a city on a hill. After the sun goes down and the lights in a city come on, the glow of the lights of that city light up the sky.

And the more lights that there are, shining the light into the darkness around it, the greater the influence of that light. Take a look at this map. Technically this is a Light Pollution Map, but it serves our purposes perfectly.

(Slide)



This map reflects the population centers of the nation. The greater the cities and the metropolitan areas, the greater the light that area generates and as you can see the further West you go the less glow of light there is and you can even see a distinct line on this map where that changes.

Then Jesus uses the single light – a candle set on a stand. A single candle can light up an entire room – unless you put something over it that blocks out the light and leaves the room dark. (Illustrate)

And just like salt can lose its saltiness, so light can lose its brightness and be diminished and be held back from pushing back the darkness if we allow the spiritual light and life of our lives to become shaded by sin and living in rebellion against God and His plans for our lives.

Let's bring this home: As followers of Christ, together, we are that city on a hill that Jesus is talking about that lights up an entire area, AND each of us are the individual candles lighting up those within our life, within our sphere of influence.

One life, one light, put together with another life, another light, doing good, loving others, living for Jesus, sharing the hope of the gospel... Fellowship, together we are the city on the hill!

Each of us are the individual lights where we live and work and go to school and play and frequent businesses, interacting with people, and together we light up our city and our area for Christ. At least that's Christ's vision for us, His plan for us and His command TO us.

(Slide)



For our church, we've embraced our "Hill", the people we feel most responsible for to influence with the salt of our lives and the light of the gospel, and those are the people who live within the boundaries of the Norwalk School District – which is most of NW Warren Country.

Do we love and care for those outside these boundaries? Absolutely. In fact, many of you live outside these boundaries and we hope and pray God is using you in the areas where you live. And we support ministries that help us reach out to people outside these boundaries.

But this area is our first area of responsibility, our hill to shine on, to be salty in and to influence others for Christ. And that's why we work hard to establish a variety of outreaches that we can all do together right here on our hill in this part of Warren Country.

The whole point of us being lights for others is worthless if we're not lighting up any darkness. The world doesn't need secret Christians with lights that are being hidden.

The people of the Norwalk area and central Iowa don't need disciples of Jesus who hold in the light of the gospel and refuse to let anyone know they're Christians, refuse to reach out to people around them with good works and refuse to tell anyone about Jesus.

When you trust Christ to be your Savior, He gives you salvation, He puts His spiritual light inside you. You didn't generate that light inside you by yourself. You didn't turn the light on in your soul. God did.

So if you're truly saved, you can't put that light out. No one can extinguish God's light in you – not Satan, not other people, not even yourself. But you can, as Jesus pointed it, cover it up. Our witness to others is covered up when we let sin go undealt with in our lives.



It can be covered up when we mimic the world in the way we live. It can be covered up through neglect in our daily walk with Christ. It can be covered up when we relegate Christ to a corner of our lives, instead of giving Him complete control and letting Him lead us.

And as we read in verse 16, Jesus tells us HOW we let His light in us shine and WHY we let it shine.

**(Slide) How We Let our Light Shine: By our good works**

We let His light shine through us through our good works toward others. A lot of people today aren't going to listen to our witness for Christ until they see something winsome in us first...

Until they see something different about us that is good and caring and kind and loving toward them. Until they see the qualities of Christ being lived out in us first.

The meaning of the phrase "good works" here in the original language carries the idea of "actions that are beautiful".

Jesus is talking about being winsome, being attractive in our way of life, doing good to others out of love for Jesus and love for them because Jesus loves them.

We've been given something beautiful from the Lord in our salvation and the life transformation the gospel brings to our lives, so Jesus is simply telling us to go out and let His beauty in us shine to others, share the beauty of the gospel with others by loving them like Christ loved us. That's how we let our light shine.

Then Jesus closes by telling us WHY He wants us to be lights in the world - at the end of the verse... "to give glory to your Father in heaven."

### **(Slide) Why We Let our Light Shine: For the glory of God**

The singular purpose for each of our lives, is to bring glory to God. That's why we exist, that's why we're here, and that's why He made us in the first place.

I'm here to bring glory to God, you're alive to bring glory to God. And one of the ways we bring glory – to not ourselves, but to God – is by being the salt of the earth and the light to the world. By the way, there's a difference between the two.

Jesus used "the earth" here in verse 13 to remind us of the big picture of what it means for us to be influencers – to the ends of the earth – wherever there are people on the earth, God wants us to influence them for Him.

That's God's macro - Big Vision - for all of us. But then He gives us His micro vision – He brings it down to a personal level for us. In telling us in verse 14 to be lights to “the world” He reminds us of the personal influence each of us has with other people around us.

For the entire world to be influenced, it has to start with each of us looking next door, across the street, into the cubicle near us, the locker beside us, the apartment across the hall...

And loving them with the love of Jesus and serving them with acts of goodness, praying for them and telling them about Jesus. And doing this all to the glory of our great and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let me close with this: Years ago there was a story in a magazine that reported a sad real-life event that took place long ago in Kansas and that story was shown in a series of pictures.

**(Slide)**



The first picture showed a vast wheat field on a farm in western Kansas. From one side of the picture to the other all you could see was the wheat waving in the wind.

The second picture showed a mother in her farmhouse in the middle of that wheat field, and she was distressed and distraught. Her small son had wandered away from the house into the wheatfield and she couldn't find him. He wasn't tall enough to see over the wheat or to be seen by anyone.

She had called for her husband, and the two of them had searched all day long for their son and hadn't found him. So they had called the neighbors and still hadn't found him.

The third picture showed a large crowd of people who had gathered to join in the search. They joined hand-in-hand and in a big line they linked together across the breadth of that wheat field, and they walked across the entire field.

The fourth and last picture was a picture of the father standing over the body of his little son. They had finally found him, but he was dead. His son hadn't been able to withstand the cold during the night.

Underneath this last picture were the words of the weeping father, "O God, if only we had joined hands sooner."

Fellowship, there's a world of people around us who are lost – spiritually lost. They live in spiritual darkness, and they don't know it, but Jesus is their only way out of the darkness, and He has chosen us to be ones to show them the path out of their darkness as we let Him shine through us.

They can't see above the wheat of their sin, and if they remain where they are the coldness of the night is coming when their life will end, and it will be too late.

Fellowship, this message and the one last Sunday is a clarion call to this body of believers from Jesus and from myself your shepherd.

I'm reaching out to you to join the line of the people of this church family, to hold hands, and together let's sweep across our area and shine the light of Christ through our good works and let's find those who are lost before it's too late.

That's why we're doing a variety of outreaches this summer – to together, be the salt and light Christ has called us to be.

### **(Slide) Summer Outreaches (INSERT)**

We have a Kiosk Station and Lisa will be there after the service to answer any questions you may and help you sign up for any of these outreaches.

Here's a summary of what we've learned so far over these last two Sundays in our study of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and it's what we want to remember and act on as we leave this morning...

**(Slide)**

**Message at a Glance: If we will live out the attitudes of Christlikeness taught by Jesus as our normal way of life, God will use us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world to influence the world around us for His glory, which is His purpose for us.**

So Fellowship, let's go out and be salty and light up our world!!!