

Sermon Guide: The Sermon on the Mount:

“Salt and Light” | Tim MacIntosh | April 21, 2024

Summary

In Tim MacIntosh’s sermon, he explores the concept of the disciples being called the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world," as Jesus describes in the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5. This call is not just a metaphor but a directive for how we, as followers of Christ, are to engage with the world, and thus tied closely to our mission.

Jesus’ declaration that his disciples are the salt of the earth and the light of the world is both empowering and daunting. These elements, salt and light, are mundane yet essential—salt preserves and flavors, light reveals and guides. Delving into the nature of these metaphors in the ancient world, Tim explores especially the preserving influence of the church on the world, and the call to illuminate truth and goodness in the darkest places.

A necessary condition of being salt and light emerges: we are to be actively present in the world rather than to withdraw from it. Tim encouraged the church by drawing on three specific ways that the church has recently been active as salt and light: in the board’s leadership in formulating long term goals, in its regular Community Meals, and in the Sanctuary Course currently being undertaken by one of the home groups in the church.

Tim challenges the congregation to continue to manifest this kind of influential witness in our daily lives, from how we handle relationships in the family, to workplace dynamics, to broader social issues. Tim also reminds the church of the dangers of failing to bear this kind of witness and conforming to the values of the world, losing our saltiness, and hiding our light. Tim ends his message with a time of prayer and contemplation helping the congregation to listen to the Lord’s invitation to bear witness to him in our lives.

Key Takeaways:

1. The Essential Nature of Being Salt and Light - The metaphors of salt and light describe our essential role in the world. Just as salt preserves and enhances flavor, and light dispels darkness and guides, we are called to preserve goodness and illuminate truth in our environments. This calling is not just collective but deeply personal, requiring each of us to assess how we live out our faith in daily interactions and decisions. [\[10:14\]](#)
2. Engagement with the World as Mission - Our mission as Christians includes being actively engaged in the world, not isolated from it. This engagement means we bring the kingdom of God to every sphere of influence we occupy, from our jobs to our communities, and even in our leisure. Each interaction is an opportunity to practice being salt and light, preserving against decay and illuminating God’s truth. [\[30:07\]](#)

Bible Reading:

Matthew 5:13-16

John 17:15-18

Romans 12:2

Discussion Questions

1. In Matthew 5:13-16, what are the consequences mentioned for salt that loses its taste and a light that is hidden?
2. How does the text in Matthew 5:13-16 describe the purpose of letting our light shine before others?
3. According to John 17:15-18, what is Jesus' prayer concerning His followers' relationship with the world?
4. What does Romans 12:2 suggest about the impact of conforming to the world versus being transformed?

Going Deeper

1. Reflect on your daily interactions. Identify a situation where you might be "hiding your light." What is one step you can take this week to more visibly live out your faith in that context?
2. Think about a recent conversation or decision where you felt pressure to conform to worldly standards. What is one Biblical truth you can remind yourself of next time you face a similar situation?
3. Choose one area in your community where you see a need for "salt" – perhaps in promoting integrity, justice, or compassion. What is one specific action you can take this week to address this need?
4. Considering the call to be light, identify a relationship or setting where you can more intentionally demonstrate Christ-like love and kindness. What will you do differently in this setting starting this week?