

4Ws AGAINST THE TIDE

BE AN INFLUENCER FOR CHRIST: BE SALT & LIGHT

SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

WORSHIP

By Your Love, House of the Lord, Heart of Our Home, In Christ Alone, Solid Ground

WELCOME

What are the “dark places” in the world around you that you would want to shine a light on? Where do you see “decay” in our society that you would want to preserve from getting worse?

WORD

MATTHEW 5:13-16

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. ¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

As Christians, do we go against the tide of worldly values? The sad thing is that the world is influencing the church. The family is caught between these influences, but how can we keep them living a culture based on Christ’s values? We must not allow the world to shape our moral values. What is the solution?

Start with yourself and your family. We are “**the salt of the earth**” and “**the light of the world**” (**Matthew 5:13-14**). In Greek, the emphasis is on the pronoun YOU. This was part of the greatest sermon ever given – the Sermon on the Mount-- where Jesus addressed His disciples and followers.

BE AN INFLUENCER FOR CHRIST: BE SALT AND LIGHT! What does it mean to be SALT and LIGHT?

1) SALT

Salt is a preservative, an antiseptic, flavoring, and creates thirst. Salt is crucial for survival. Without salt, meat will rot. During the time of Jesus, there was no “refrigerator” yet. You needed salt to survive! Don’t blame the meat when it is rotting. We should ask, “where is the salt”? **Colossians 4:6** reminds us to “season our speech with salt” so that we can respond better in our conversations. When the world is decaying, we should look for the “salt” – Christians who need to affect the world around them. Jesus tells His disciples, “YOU AND YOU ALONE” are the salt of the earth.

Jesus talked about how when salt becomes tasteless, it becomes useless. Salt is a stable compound and will not rot but loses its saltiness when contaminated. As Christians, we also lose our saltiness when we compromise our Biblical values. To remain “salty” you must live out Christlikeness and model the life of Christ. **Matthew 5:13** reminds us to be useful because if we are not functioning according to this purpose, nothing can be done to us but be “thrown away”.

1 Peter 3:1-2 is an instruction that shows how this concept works: Peter writes to the church and instructs the wives to win their husbands with their “**chaste and respectful**” behavior, “**that they may be won without the word**”. For men and women, this is something we could do when we relate with others!

To be “salt of the earth”, we need to build relationships and connect with people. For salt to be useful, it must spread, and come in contact with food to preserve and add flavor to it. The problem with Christians is that we are satisfied just being with fellow Christians. Are we associating with people who are not yet Christians?

Jesus gave a good example (**Mark 2:15-16**), Jesus was dining with His disciples, and many tax collectors and sinners were with them. The religious people (scribes of the Pharisees) saw this, they questioned why Jesus was eating and spending time with sinners. He addressed the question in **v:17** saying “... **I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners**”. As Christ-followers, we are “**in the world**”, but “**not of the world**” (**John 17**). We must be able to build relationships with those whom we want to influence and lead to Christ.

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WORD

We are all influencers – but the question is, do we draw people to Christ, or further away from Christ?

2) LIGHT

Jesus tells us that we are the “**light of the world**” (**Matthew 5:14**). When our friends do not understand the gospel, don’t get angry at them...the world is in darkness and the blind do not see. Jesus claimed, “**I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**” (**John 8:12**), and those who follow Him “have the Light of life”. Since we have the Light, we need to function as light in this world.

Those who are perishing and those “who cannot see” are so because “the god of this world”, Satan the devil, “has blinded the minds of the unbelieving” (**2 Corinthians 4:3-4**). In this world, we must know the reality of the devil, and the reality of truth. What is the purpose of light? To illumine, guide, and warn against danger like a lighthouse prevents shipwrecks. This too is our responsibility as followers of Christ. We are to shine the light of Christ to others. We must point people to the Truth!

We must intentionally embrace this responsibility to show the light and not hide it (**Matthew 5:15**.) When we light a candle when electricity is out, we don’t put it in a box. We let it shine! The command to “**Let your light shine**” (**v.16**) is in the permissive imperative tense, meaning you must allow your light to shine intentionally, so that others may see your “**good works**” –so that others can glorify God in heaven. We must reflect Jesus in the “**good works**” (**Gk. Kalos**) that we do and attract others to Christ, impacting their lives and the communities we live in.

To shine this light: we must check our behavior; watch out for grumbling, etc., and be as lights in the world, behaving as Christians should (**Philippians 2:14-15**). Historically, as Christianity grew, culture has been impacted. Respect for life and children, empowering and elevating women, creation of hospitals, caring for the sick – these were transformed by Christians who wanted to shine the light of Christ. Prestigious schools like Princeton, Harvard, Cambridge – were all started by Christians. Christians were great examples of good working habits, bringing success to the business sector. Arts and music were greatly influenced by Christianity and Christians led the movement to abolish slavery and the slave trade. Most government constitutions are based on Christian values. Christians today should be able to impact the world!

Tracing generations of Jonathan Edwards’s family shows many successful descendants in politics, education, etc. Compared to the family of “Max Jukes” who rejected God, many descendants were paupers, notorious for debauchery, murderers, thieves. The difference was the alignment to Jesus and the Word of God. You can impact your family and the next generation towards Jesus. Let us all be influencers for Christ: BE SALT & LIGHT!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

What does it mean to be salt and light?

2. Setting It Right.

How do we become effective salt and light?

3. Living It Out.

How do we lose our saltiness or light?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for family members who need to feel and see the effect of your “saltiness” and light as a follower of Christ. Use every opportunity to connect with them and care for them through your Christlike behavior. Share the gospel to them with your life and words

PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God’s help and comfort for the Sudanese people caught in violence and conflict.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; tension in East Asian and Middle East countries to stop.
- Continue to pray for the rest of Israeli hostages to be restored back to their families safely. Pray for Israel and the war with terrorists to end according to God’s purpose and for His glory.
- For the recent political and social upheaval in the US to result in spiritual awakening in the church and a great spiritual harvest.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 5:16

¹⁶ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.