

Living Out Your Faith for BIGGER Impact

A Bible Study Lesson of The Mt. Zion Church

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Introduction: God calls believers to live in a way that clearly reflects their faith and draws others to Him. The people we encounter each day should be able to notice something different about how we speak and act. That difference can lead others to become curious about the reason behind it.

That curiosity can open the door for us to share that we were not always the way we are now. We can explain that Jesus is the One who saved us and changed us—not because we deserved it, but because of His grace. In time, we may also have the opportunity to help others understand that what He has done in our lives, He can do in theirs as well.

Often, before we speak about our faith, others see it through the way we live. As believers, we are called to consistently follow and reflect Jesus in our daily lives. When our faith is lived out, it strengthens our influence and supports God’s mission to reach those who do not yet know Him.

In the following lesson, we will consider what “visible faith” looks like in our own lives as we respond to Jesus’ call to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13–16) and to the truth of our place in God’s greater plan (1 Peter 2:9–10).

Opening Question

1. What are some specific ways that you “live out” your faith publicly without saying a single word about Jesus?

Key Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16

I. Our “Mission” from Jesus, Part 1 — Matthew 5:13

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Matthew 5:13-16 is part of Jesus’ well-known Sermon on the Mount, which was His first major teaching moment following His baptism and temptation in the wilderness. In that sermon, Jesus lays out a comprehensive overview of His message to His followers. Verse 13 of Matthew 5 reveals the first of two metaphors Jesus used to describe those followers. “*You are the salt of the earth.*”

In His day, as in ours, salt was used as a flavoring or seasoning in food, as a natural preservative, was used as medicine, as a soldier’s pay (root word of salary), and was also used in purification rituals. It was possible, however, for salt to become

impure, in which case it would lose its “saltiness” and no longer be useful for any of its purpose. Jesus suggests that a disciple who does not function according to his or her purpose is a useless disciple.

In Matthew 5:13, Jesus lays out a challenge for His hearers in clear terms. Like the agents in the popular “Mission Impossible” television series back in the day, Jesus’ followers are presented with a mutually exclusive choice: **Accept the mission to be the salt of the earth**, thereby gaining access to the backing and resources of the high-level authority behind the mission (i.e., God’s empowerment, guidance, care, and resources), while greatly boosting the potential for a successful outcome, **OR reject the mission** and prepare for a total mission failure.

In other words, if we heed Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:13, our actions will sprinkle the potent salt of His example, His wise teachings, and His influence wherever we go. As we live unashamed and acknowledge that we are His, we have the opportunity to significantly impact the lives of those we meet.

Consider the outcome we have when we display kindness, humility, love, and compassion for others. The savory God-bestowed “seasoning” that clearly identifies us as followers of Christ attracts people to may ask why we behave as we do. Further it opens the door to a relationship where we can offer prayer; engage them in studying the Bible and even invite them to visit our church. But it begins with how we live before them. Some lost person may be encouraged, to repent of their sins, and to trust and follow Jesus because of what we show them in our living.

If, however, we reject our “mission” by failing—or worse, deliberately refusing—to exhibit godly behavior, demonstrate benevolence toward others, or show genuine concern for the lost, we have passed up a precious opportunity to make a significant difference in someone’s life, and we become as useless and as ineffectual as flavorless salt.

We might wonder, however, if losing our spiritual saltiness is even possible. Is it truly conceivable that we who are seasoned believers (Pardon the pun!) could mindlessly begin to blend in with those around us such that we become indistinguishable from unbelievers to those who might be watching?

This bleak outcome is a warning to all of us who claim the name of Christ. We would all like to think that this is an utterly impossible scenario. Yet, Jesus chose to include this ominous warning to His followers for a reason: *“But if the salt has lost its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”*

This leads us to consider how effective we are for Christ. At the same time, it should cause us to humbly pray for our spiritual saltiness to be restored.

Bigger Thinking Questions

1. Think of a time when you passed up the chance to be “salt” to someone who crossed your path. What held you back? How would you behave differently if given another opportunity?
2. Rate your own “saltiness” level on a scale of 1 to 10. How can you boost your score?

II. Our “Mission” From Jesus, Part 2 — Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

The second metaphor Jesus applied to His followers was: “*You are the light of the world.*” He spoke of things that should be displayed rather than hidden, such as a town built on a hill, and a lamp which is lit and placed on a stand rather than under a bowl, so that everyone in the house can benefit from its light. He then urged His followers to let their own light shine in the presence of others. Examples of light might be good deeds, steadfast faith and perseverance in the face of obstacles, godly character, kindness, humility, compassion, generosity, and the like.

As people observe good deeds being performed and godly characteristics shining forth, Jesus explained, those watching will then be moved to glorify the Father in heaven. A godly life of obedience and a willingness to display one’s faith through action offer convincing evidence of the saving power of God and, thus, He receives glory.

Though we can certainly see the relevance of Jesus’ teachings to our own lives, we might be concerned that being told to let our light shine by allowing our good deeds to be displayed contradicts the Bible’s warnings elsewhere about being careful not to do good deeds in order to be seen. The distinction, however, lies in our motives. If we are displaying our good deeds merely to gain praise and attention for ourselves, we have missed Jesus’ point entirely, and have, in essence, negated the positive benefits of whatever we have done.

If, however, we display our good deeds for the sole purpose of demonstrating God’s power to transform self-serving sinners into humble, benevolent servants who

seek God's glory rather than their own, we have successfully grasped the lesson Jesus is teaching.

Bigger Thinking Questions:

1. What are some everyday opportunities to live faithfully?
2. Where is God calling you to have greater impact?

III. Our Place in God's BIGGER Plans — 1 Peter 2:9-10

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

In strong contrast to those who reject God and face His judgment, believers are chosen by Him for salvation. As 1 Peter 2:9–10 reminds us, we are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession,” called to declare His praises. This calling is not just a title—it shapes who we are and how we live.

The idea of a “royal priesthood” goes back to Exodus 19:6, where God told Israel they would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation if they followed Him. From the beginning, God's desire has been for His people to reflect His character to the world around them. Now, through Christ, that calling extends to all who belong to Him.

So, what does this mean for us today? It means our lives are meant to put God on display. In every place and every situation, we are called to live in a way that reflects His holiness. As 1 Peter 1:15–16 says, “Be holy in all you do.” Holiness means being set apart for God—living with purpose, guided by His truth.

Holiness is not about appearances or empty words, but it does shape both what we say and how we live. Our attitudes, our choices, and even how we present ourselves should point back to Him. In this way, our lives become a visible testimony, aligning with Jesus' call in Matthew 5:13–16 to be salt and light in the world.

Living this way is a daily decision. It is choosing, moment by moment, to reflect who God has called us to be. Those who, like the Israelites, belong to God—and all who have been brought into His family through faith—are called to

continually declare His goodness. As 1 Peter 2:10 says, we were once not a people, but now we are God's people; once without mercy, but now we have received mercy.

Bigger Thinking Questions:

1. In what specific areas of your daily life do you see opportunities to more clearly reflect God's character to others?
2. How does understanding your identity as part of a "royal priesthood" change the way you think about your purpose and influence in the world?

Action Steps!!!

- Commit to one visible act of faith each day. Look for the opportunity!
- Reflect on who God may be calling you to reach.

Conclusion: Today's lesson reminds us that we have been specially commissioned by Jesus to reflect His character in the world. Many of us are quite familiar with this concept, having grown up with parents and/or extended family members who expected us to reflect the upright values they taught us, no matter where we went.

Similarly, we must begin to take our roles as Jesus' special emissaries **much** more seriously. Have we lifted someone's spirits with a sprinkle of our "salt" lately, or angled our light so as to brighten someone's path? Could we put down our phone while standing in line, for instance, and tune in to the young mom next to us with the cute baby in her cart? Is there a kind word we can offer to the checkout clerk who looks so exhausted and discouraged? Might we share a few of our fresh Sam's Club muffins with our elderly neighbor down the block who seems to be alone so often? (Could we finally learn her name, while we're at it, and maybe chat for a bit?) What about that really efficient pharmacist who's always super courteous, as well? Would a word of sincere appreciation offer an unexpected lift, perhaps?

It can be all too easy to stick so closely to our routines that the opportunities to live out our faith openly and point people to Jesus become totally invisible. Thankfully, we can ask God to help us break out of our ruts and equip us to **let our lights shine** more and more. And since Jesus Himself called us **the salt of the earth**, we can be sure that, if Morton's Salt still pours when it rains, then, by the Spirit's empowerment, **SO CAN WE!!**