



## river west church

### Salt and Light

Matthew 5:13-16

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*"There is nothing more useful than salt and sunshine." -Pliny*

In our brief survey of the Sermon on the Mount, we come to one of the more popular passages in the New Testament. Immediately after the Beatitudes, Jesus says to His followers, "You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-14). The metaphors of salt and light have become commonplace in our Christian language, and rightly so. For through them Jesus offers us a compelling description of the penetrating power of the Gospel and of the people who have been transformed by it.

#### **Blessed to be a Blessing**

The Beatitudes remind us that God has poured out His grace on some pretty pitiful folks! They begin with spiritual poverty, humility, and brokenness (Matt. 5:3-5). This is the "holy paradox of the gospel". Jesus blesses the spiritually inadequate. Jesus pours out grace on those who come with nothing but desperate need, humble repentance, and faith. He blesses, redeems, and transforms...but then, He sends. He sends us into the world because He knows that a person who has been so blessed and transformed will be a blessing to the world, like salt to a meal, or light in the darkness.

#### **Don't Become...Just Be**

The astounding truth of Matthew 5:13-16 is that Jesus does not ask us to become salt or light. He declares that this is what we already are! Christians are like salt and light in our world not because of anything inherently wonderful about us, but simply because we have Jesus. The disciple whose life is shaped according to the Beatitudes will become a living expression of the beauty of the Gospel in a hurting world. So the goal of Matthew 5 is not that we would conjure up spiritual zest on our own, but that we would embrace and express what we already have.

As you listen today, here are some questions to help you reflect and grow.

How do the metaphors of salt and light help me to understand how Jesus wants to use me in this world?

What relationships or situations has Jesus placed me in to be a blessing?

What is the purpose of good works according to Jesus and how can I keep that focus in my life?