

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, February 10, 2019

**How to Change Your World
A Study of Matthew 5:13-16**

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Think about a Habitat for Humanity building project, or a park cleanup project, or a Food Bank project. Have you ever been involved in something like that? If so, why did you get involved? How did it feel to see the completion of that project?

We all hope to make our little corner of the world a better place. In the verses we'll study, Jesus told us how.

The Encouragement of Jesus: Your Christian Convictions Are Like Salt and Light

What makes a Christian distinct from the world is our worldview. That is, our view of what is right and wrong, our assurance of forgiveness in Jesus, and our hope of eternal life. Jesus said this distinctiveness is like salt and light.

According to Matthew 5:13, you are like **salt**. Read 5:13.

Describe the following ways salt is used:

- ❖ To bring out the flavor of food. (What do you like to salt: popcorn . . . watermelon . . . do you shake additional salt on your chips at a Mexican restaurant?)
- ❖ To disinfect. (Do you gargle with salt water?)
- ❖ To preserve (e.g., cheese and pickles and jerky use salt to preserve dairy, vegetables, and meat)

Now, go back through the three uses of salt and apply them to the Christian worldview.

- ❖ How can the Christian worldview (ethics, divine forgiveness, eternal life) make life more flavorful and savory? (Alternately, in what ways can life be tasteless and flat without the Christian worldview?)
- ❖ How can Christian worldview “disinfect” a life? A marriage? A society?
- ❖ How can a Christian worldview “preserve” what is worth preserving in a life? A marriage? A society?

According to Matthew 5:14-16, you are like **light**. Read those verses.

Describe a time when you were surrounded by complete darkness.

Do you use a nightlight? If so, why?

In what ways do we need and value light?

How can the Christian worldview be like light to an individual and to society? How can the *absence* of the Christian worldview be like darkness?

The Warning of Jesus: Don't Lose or Hide Your Distinctiveness

After Jesus declared his followers were “salt” and “light,” he warned us not to **lose** or to **hide** our distinctiveness. In Matthew 5:13-16, which phrase warns against **losing** our distinctiveness and which phrase warns against **hiding** our distinctiveness?

Our Christian worldview makes us different, and that can be hard. We may be tempted in one of two directions:

- ❖ **Tempted to lose our distinctiveness.** In what issues are Christians likely to simply blend in and go along with the world's view of things? Why is this a strong temptation?
- ❖ **Tempted to hide our distinctiveness.** Instead of blending in, some of are tempted in the opposite direction. We're tempted to separate from the world so that our only real interaction is with people who think and behave like us. Why is this a strong temptation?

Practical Ways to be Salt and Light

To many American Christians, the way to change the world is through political action. In what ways can political action bring the change we want to see? In what ways can political action actually backfire or interfere with our efforts to make the Christian worldview attractive?

Discuss the best ways to be salt and light in the world by putting the following *in order of importance*. (And feel free to strike out any actions that should not be part of our efforts to be salt and light.)

- ❖ Get politically involved.
- ❖ Minister to those affected by a certain issue.
- ❖ Set a personal example.
- ❖ Educate Christians.
- ❖ Educate the broader community.

Now that you've put the actions in order, apply them to three issues your group decides are the most urgent in our day. (For example, if you believe that the most pressing issue is building a culture of life, **how** do you set a personal pro-life example, **how** do minister to those in a crisis pregnancy, **how** do you educate people, etc.?)

For the last four weeks, we looked at the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-10. The Beatitudes come immediately before Jesus's call to be salt and light. In what ways do the Beatitudes help us understand what it means to be salt and light?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests