

Radiant Church, December 14, 2015  
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**A Believer's Heart...Embraces its Identity and Radiates Jesus  
Matthew 5:13-16**

Jesus finishes up the Beatitudes, which talked about our condition. Understanding our condition and new status leads to talking about our identity...

**Matthew 5:13** *you are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.*

Salt preserves - functioning as a retardant to decay, saving meat, even preserving dead bodies

Like Jesus is saying: "Humanity without me is a dead body that is rotting away and falling apart. And you, my followers, are the salt that must be rubbed into the flesh to halt the decomposition."

Salt also spices food - elicits the best from those around us, drawing others to God and want to live lives like ours in Christ

To be "the salt of the world" we have to get out of the "saltshaker"

Salt is an extremely stable compound; it does not become tasteless

But it can lose its saltiness by being diluted

Indistinguishable from the surrounding culture

Bland, tasteless, insipid Christianity

Who is exporting their culture to whom?

How can we respond to Jesus calling us "salt?"

Thank him for dealing with your sin on the cross.

Praise Jesus because he is going return as King and reverse the effects of sin and decay permanently.

Ask the Holy Spirit to deepen your understanding and to help you see opportunities where your saltiness is effective.

Thank Jesus for his unprecedented sacrifice for your preservation.

Praise him because he has conquered and is returning in power to make all things new.

**Matthew 5:14-16** *you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine*

*before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Illumination of the Temple ceremony

Four massive candelabra, each topped with huge torches

As tall as the highest walls of the Temple

Great bowls (held 65 liters of oil) mounted on top of each candelabra

The Mishna tells us “Men of piety and good works used to dance before them with burning torches in their hands singing songs and praises and countless Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals, and trumpets and instruments of music”

Done to celebrate the great pillar of fire that led the people of Israel during their 40 years in the wilderness, and also the presence of God in the Temple

The morning after, with piles of ash all around, Jesus radically identifies Himself as “the light of the world”

**John 8:12** *I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*

The light is glorious - and the world is dark

**John 3:19** *and this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and the people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*

Darkness is dark, but intentional darkness is far worse.

Jesus says, we are “the light of the world”

It’s like Jesus is the sun during the day

And the Church is the moon, reflecting the light of the sun in the sun’s absence

But the analogy doesn’t fully describe:

**Ephesians 5:8** *at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

**2 Peter 1:4** *...partakers of the divine mystery...*

Jesus is the light; the world is in darkness; somehow we believers are light. If we are believers, we will shine somehow, some way.

C.S. Lewis said: “the heavens only reflect or suggest the glory of God. But we share the glory of the Father with Christ”

**2 Corinthians 3:18** *and we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit*

If you want to shine in the night, keep your eye on the Light

City on a hill:

If we hide our light, we need to make sure it really is light

Lamp in a house:

Believers are to provide illumination

We make it so people can see what really is: their sin

We make it so people can see the difference between good and evil

We are lamps, and the Householder places us strategically to shine to best advantage

Brighten the corner where you are

How do we shine? Good words, good works

**Psalm 115:1** *not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory*

We can read this and conclude it's all about performance, our performance, but it's all about God's grace to us.

It is the Holy Spirit who changes your will and causes you to act according to God's good purpose.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal why you return to your own merit when it comes to good works, and repent of just that.

Ask the Holy Spirit to transform your heart so that your life would overflow His love. Thank Jesus for the love he poured out for you on the cross.

If you are excited to radiate Jesus' light and help bring truth to a dark world, praise God for his supernatural work in your heart!

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you opportunities for good works, which bring glory to your Father in Heaven.

Thank Jesus for the gift of mercy he gave you, when he took the punishment for your sin instead.

Thank Jesus for his gift of grace, not only saving you to a life of good works, but an eternal hope as well.

Jesus used these metaphors to describe us, His children, His Church  
He used them in the present tense - like it's who we already are

If you're not feeling it, then thank God, because we are who we are and what we are because He has chosen in His grace to regard us as such.