

WORK MATTERS

"WORK AND WORKS: WORK AS MISSION"

MATTHEW 5:13-16; 1 PETER 2

This Week's Core Competency

Giving Away My Faith – I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes. Ephesians 6:19-20, *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth" (Mt 5:13); "You are the light of the world" (v. 14). Being comes before doing, but doing naturally follows. So "Let your light shine before men," he tells them, 'that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven' (v. 16). How, exactly, are Christ followers to function as salt and function as light? What are they to do? Jesus spells it out; do good deeds. His command begs the question, "What good deeds?" which is the very question he goes on to answer in his sermon.

In the verses that follow he tells his disciples: be reconciled to your offended brother (v. 24), remain faithful to your spouse (v. 32), love your enemies (v. 43), pray like this (6:9), judge yourself before you judge others (7:3), and so forth. By doing these things, disciples impact their world and bring praise to their Father in heaven, which, by the way, implies more than meets the eye. One author

A pinch of salt does wonders for food; a tiny flashlight floods a dark cavern with light.

– David S. Dockery and David E. Garland

explains the relationship of verse 16 to mission. "The life of discipleship, called good deeds, leads others, however, to 'glorify' God, to come into a new relationship with God. In one sense, therefore, what others see in this life of the disciple leads them to God" (Robert A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 132). Living as apprentices of Jesus is directly related to mission accomplishment. By being what they are, salt and light, they make disciples (28:19-20).

Listen to one commentator's very practical observations on discipleship. "Jesus expects his disciples to make an impression on the earth as salt, on the world as light, and upon humanity as doers of good works. But the disciples of Jesus are not immune to temptations. A number of things may lead the disciples to be less than what they truly are. In time of persecution (5:12), the disciples may be tempted to hide their lights. They may want to lay low instead of standing tall. They may want to go into hiding instead of going public . . . Disciples may also be tempted to retreat from the world. But salt, if it is to do anything, must come into direct contact with the substance we want it to effect. It does not work from a distance. If it is to retard corruption, start a fire, or whatever, it must touch . . . A tiny group of disciples might be tempted to despair of having any significant effect on the world, let alone their own community. After all, who are the poor, the mourners, the meek, the hungry, and the persecuted when compared to the entire world? They are nobodies. How few they seem and how powerless. But salt and light can have great effect in small quantities— a pinch of salt does wonders for food; a tiny

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flashlight floods a dark cavern with light. Likewise, each disciple's life has immeasurable potential-and how the world was changed by God working in and through just handful of them!" (David S. Dockery and David E. Garland, *Seeking the Kingdom*, 38, 39).

One thing is for sure. It is impossible to follow Christ as his disciples in a purely private way. Living as salt and light will attract attention, even if that attention takes the form of opposition. Private Christians may have unchurched friends, but they keep their faith to themselves. Secluded Christians have few unchurched friends, who are mere acquaintances, so they seldom, if ever, share their faith. Public Christians have unchurched friends who are more than mere acquaintances, and they are open about their faith and share the gospel. What keeps Christians from going public about their faith? Perhaps pride: they look down on the unchurched and their lifestyles. Perhaps fear: they fear being rejected or misunderstood. Perhaps pessimism: they presume that the unchurched have no interest in spiritual things. Lastly, perhaps indifference: they lack concern for the spiritual needs of the unchurched. Whatever the reasons, based on what Jesus said, Christians need to move toward an ever more public faith.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 5:13-16

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 by men.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city 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 men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

1 Peter 2:11-17

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men; whether to the king, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. 16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "you" in vv. 13, 14.
- * Circle "salt" in v. 13.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 13.
- * Underline the rhetorical question in v. 13.
- * Circle "light" in v. 14.
- * Circle "world" in v. 14.
- * Box "instead" indicating *contrast* in v. 15.
- * Bracket "in the same way" indicating *comparison* in v. 16.
- * Box "that" indicating *purpose* in v. 16.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. To whom does "you" refer in verses 13 and 14; to whom is Jesus speaking?
2. Explain the meaning of "earth" and "world" in verses 13 and 14.
3. Jesus asks a rhetorical question in verse 13. What is the implied answer to his question?
4. Jesus told his hearers, "You are *salt*." Explain the meaning of the *metaphor*.
5. Worthless salt is thrown out. Does that mean worthless Christians lose their salvation? Be prepared to discuss your answer.
6. Jesus also told his hearers, "You are *light*." Explain the meaning of the *metaphor*.
7. Clarify what "a city on a hill" has to do with "a lamp on a stand."
8. Explain the *comparison* in verse 16.
9. "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine." What does that mean?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about the ultimate purpose for shining your light before people.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount continues in Matthew 5:13-16, which forms a transition of sorts between the opening Beatitudes and the instructions on righteous living that follow. Speaking to "his disciples" (v. 1), Jesus uses two metaphors to make the point that they are to do good deeds so that people might praise their Heavenly Father. Then, he elaborates on the good deeds that he has in mind in the course of the sermon that follows—good deeds that delay moral and spiritual decay and give light to the world.

"You are the salt of the earth," he says. In this first metaphor Jesus likens his disciples to salt. The meaning of the metaphor turns on the significance of salt in their day. In our day salt is for the most part a seasoning; it adds flavor to foods. As a little child once said, "Salt is what makes food taste bad when it isn't on it." Salt was used as a seasoning in that day, too, (Job 6:6), but more importantly, it was used as a preservative. It had other uses as well, but it was used primarily as a preservative. On the meaning of the metaphor one author writes, "Implicitly he is saying that apart from his disciples the world turns ever more rotten; Christians have the effect of delaying moral and spiritual putrefaction" (D. A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 30). To the extent their lives conform to the norms of verses 3-12, his disciples cannot help but have a positive influence on their culture.

He drives his point home by asking a rhetorical question. "But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?" To put it more directly, "But if the salt loses its saltiness, it can in no way be made salty again." Consequently, it's worthless as far as its function as salt is concerned. Analogously, disciples who aren't worth their salt are worthless to the culture since they no longer impede its putrefaction.

"You are the light of the world," he says further. In this second metaphor Jesus likens his disciples to light. The meaning of the metaphor turns on the easier-to-recognize significance of light. Light dispels darkness and reveals what is true. On the meaning of this metaphor one author writes, "Light is a very important metaphor in the Bible. 'God is light' according to 1 John 1:5, and Christ is

described in the Fourth Gospel as 'the light of the world' (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; cf. 1:7-8). God is also described as light in eschatological [end time] contexts (e.g., Isa 60:19-20; cf. Rev 21:10-11). God, moreover, has come in Christ to bring light into the darkness (John 1:4-5, 9; 12:46; cf. Ps 27:1), a point Matthew has already emphasized in his quotation of Isa 9:2 (9:1 LXX) in 4:16 ('the people sitting in darkness have seen a great light!'). In Paul, the metaphor also extends to Christians, who are described as 'children of light' (Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5) . . . When Jesus declares that the disciples are 'the light of the world,' he means that they, as recipients of the kingdom, represent to the world the truth of the salvation that has come. Thus, as in the preceding maxim about the salt of the earth, here too the message is that the disciples are (and will continue to be) indispensable" (Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 33a, *Matthew 1-13*, 99, 100). Note, Jesus does not command his disciples to be salt and be light; he simply declares that they are. Neither does he insist that they live as salt and light in order to receive the kingdom; the kingdom is already theirs.

He drives his point home by commenting on light coming from a city on a hill and light coming from a lamp on a lampstand. In the first case, its light cannot be hidden so it gives light to everyone around, and in the second, its light is not to be hidden so it gives light to everyone around. Light shines! That's what light does. In the same way, disciples are to let their light shine. Better yet they are to shine! "In English this is the only way to render the third person imperative in Greek. But this translation unfortunately implies that we are only to allow our light to shine. In the Greek, it is a command to shine the light. Jesus says, you are the light of the world, so shine!" (David S. Dockery and David E. Garland, *Seeking the Kingdom*, 38). And how exactly are disciples to do that? Jesus makes the answer perfectly clear—by doing good deeds. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (v. 16). Good deeds must be done in order to be seen!

The Message of the Passage

Christ's disciples are salt and light who function as such by doing good deeds that impact the world and bring praise to their Father in heaven.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 *living questions* to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living questions*:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 13 **you** The plural pronoun is emphatic, "you, yourselves, are" (Hagner, 97). What's more, "you" is corporate ("you all"). "This is seen by comparing the saying with Phil. 2:15, 'among whom you shine as lights in the world'" (Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation, 44).

v. 13 **are** "It is particularly important to note that the kingdom precedes the ethics; there is no insistence that people are to live this way in order to receive the kingdom. The disciples are first identified as salt and light, and even here being precedes doing. It is because they are salt and light that they are expected to behave in appropriate ways" (Hagner, 97, 98; cf. v. 1). "One thing is clear: the statement 'you are the salt of the earth,' is a word of assurance. The emphasis is on the 'you are!'" (Dockery and Garland, 36, 37).

v. 13 **salt** "It is hard to know precisely what Jesus had in mind when he told his disciples that they were the salt of the earth because salt had a variety of functions in the ancient world. It was used as a condiment, a preservative, a fire catalyst, a fertilizer, an antiseptic, and, in Judaism, was associated with the covenant in sacrifices" (35). Most take it as a preservative (Carson, 30; Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 102). However, rather than look for multiple significances, or a single significance, perhaps it's best to take the metaphor generally. "It may be best simply to take the metaphor broadly and inclusively as meaning something that is vitally important to the world in a religious sense, as salt was vitally necessary for everyday life (cf., Sir 39:26; *Sop.* 15:8; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 31.102)" (Hagner, 99; Robert A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 126).

v. 13 **of the earth** Given the parallel "light of the world," the meaning is salt "for the earth" rather than salt "from the earth." And given "world" [*kosmou*] in the next verse refers to "mankind," disciples are "salt for all mankind" (TEV). "We should take salt as a metaphor and the earth as referring to people" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 104).

v. 13 **loses its saltiness** Although this expression has been taken in a number of ways (see Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mathew*, 213, 14), it likely refers to the salt becoming contaminated. "'Loses its saltiness' reads more literally 'is defiled' [Gk *moranthe*, lit., "becomes foolish"]. This is not the scientifically impossible notion of salt becoming flavorless but rather the common problem in the ancient world of salt being mixed with various impure substances and therefore becoming worthless as a preservative" (Blomberg, 102; Carson, 30; Dockery, 37). Salt that loses its value as salt is discarded.

v. 13 **thrown out** "'To be thrown out and trampled by men' neither affirms or denies anything about 'eternal security.' Rather, as Luke 14:35 makes even clearer, this phrase refers to the world's response to Christians if they do not function as they should. Believers who fail to arrest corruption become worthless as agents of change and redemption" (Blomberg, 102). "One becomes 'useless' for the mission when one fails to take the role of discipleship seriously" (Guelich, 126).

v. 14 **light** "Light is thus associated with God, his Messiah, his people, the law, the temple, Jerusalem, and the accomplishment and experience of salvation (see Str-B 1:237). Paul writes of 'the light of the glorious gospel of Christ' (2 Cor 4:4; cf. 4:6). Of Christians he writes that in this fallen world they 'shine as lights' (Phil 2:15). For Matthew, the metaphor of light is applied specifically to God's new people represented by the disciples . . . When Jesus declares that the disciples are [*to phos tou kosmou*], 'the light of the world, he means that they, as recipients of the kingdom, represent to the world the truth of the salvation that has come" (Hagner, 100). "Jesus later declares that he is 'the light of the world' (John 8:12; 9:5), who has come as the light that enlightens all people (1:4-14), so that those believing in him will no longer be in darkness (12:46). In the same way as Jesus' life and message of salvation bring light to those in darkness (Matt 4:15-16), his disciples are a living demonstration of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven. The light of revelation from God that accompanies Jesus' announcement of the kingdom is not just carried by his disciples, they are that light (Matt. 5:14-16; cf. Eph 5:8; Phil. 2:15)" (Wilkins, 214, 15).

v. 14 **of the world** I.e., "mankind" (Fritz Rienecker, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 13); cf., Jn 3:16.

v. 14 **city on a hill** The relationship between this reference to light and the one that follows must be inferred. Jesus appears to reason as follows: 1) disciples are the light of the world, 2) the light from a city lifted up on a hill cannot be hidden and so it gives light to everyone around, 3) the light from a lamp is lifted up on a stand, not hidden under a bushel, so it gives light to everyone around, 4) therefore, disciples, lift up your light and let it shine so you give light to everyone around.

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

I'm trying to imagine a world without salt. Eating popcorn, chips, tomatoes, French fries, scrambled eggs and a hundred other things would be so boring! In ancient times, entire communities would be built around valuable salt mines. Salt was often used to pay a person his wages. The word "salary" is actually derived from the word "salt". A recent Reader's Digest article listed 60 different uses for salt. Salt can be used as a household cleaner. It is used to flavor food. It preserves food. In fact, before refrigeration it was the primary means of preserving food. It has antiseptic properties, effectively relieving the pain from sore muscles and expediting the healing of wounds. Salt is a useful and beneficial mineral. It's no wonder Jesus described His followers as "salt of the earth". As I examine my life I hope I am leaving people and places better than I found them. I hope as I spread the gospel, lives are being preserved. My prayer is that my good deeds would relieve and bring healing to others. In the busyness of our lives as we go from one activity to another, are we being salty? Take some time as a family to reevaluate your impact on the people God has put around you. What are some ways you can be salt to them?

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Mt 5:13-16

1. Jesus describes His followers in two ways. What are they?
2. What happens when we shine our light to others?

What Do You Think

The steps in this passage are (1) become followers of Christ (salt and light), (2) do good deeds, (3) point others to Him. What step are you on? What can you do to take another?

What R U Going To Do

Make your own salt dough creation using the recipe found below. Keep your salt creation somewhere visible so you will remember that you are the salt of the earth!
www.busybeekidscrafts.com/Salt-Dough-Recipe.html

Core Comp

Giving Away my Faith - I tell others about Jesus to help with God's work.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:16 - *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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