

# Salt and Light

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Preacher: Brian King

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Father, as we come to today's passage this morning, will you really teach us to understand what it means to be salt and light? And will you help us to live out that calling in our lives?

We ask, Lord, that your Holy Spirit be working. All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Picture the scene.

You're in the first century and you're in the middle of a Middle Eastern countryside. The area is generally mountainous, but there are some flat spots. And it is in one of those flat spots that you join the crowd, listening to a Nazarene preacher.

He's beginning to get quite popular, amassing a large following from Galilee, the Decapolis and Jerusalem. So both Jewish and non-Jewish territory.

And he's teaching. He's speaking to his disciples, but the crowd gets to listen in and he says this. Let me tell you why you are here.

[ 1 : 0 7 ]     You are the earth's salt. But if the salt should become tasteless, what can make it salt again? It is completely useless and can only be thrown out of the doors and stamped underfoot.

You are the world's light. God is not a secret to be kept. We are going public with this as public, as a city on a hill.

Now keep that scene in your head, but I'm just going to hit the pause button for a while. This morning we're looking at Matthew 5 verse 13 to 16. And I think many of us are familiar with these words of Jesus.

Many of you have been Christians for a long time. And you've probably heard your fair share of sermons on this passage. Perhaps one or two of you are already predicting what I'm going to say.

I know Pastor's three-point sermon for today. Salt is flavorful. Salt is a purifying agent. Salt is a preservative. So Christian, you need to be flavorful too, spicing up those around you.

[ 2 : 1 1 ]     You need to be pure and live pure lives. You need to act as a preservative, sustaining society with your values. That was certainly the gist of a sermon I read this week on this very passage.

And even if you've not been a Christian for so long, you've probably heard your Christian friends talk about being salt and light. Maybe you were at a Bible study. And during prayer time, your leader said, let's pray to be salt and light.

Everyone nodded along, and so you did too. But you didn't actually know what it meant. You got the vague idea that it was something generally to do with being a good influence in this world.

But you weren't sure. So the term salt and light has been around and used constantly in the Christian world. But it's also become somewhat of a Christian cliché, where we either assume that we already know what it means, or we're embarrassed to ask even if we're not sure what it means.

Ironically, talk about being salt and light has become bland and monochrome. But let's hit the unpause button, and let's return back to that scene back in the first century.

[ 3 : 36 ] And I want us to try to get to hear those words afresh. I want you to imagine now that you are a pious Jew in that crowd. All your life, you've heard that Israel, the nation that you're part of, is to be the light of the world.

Did not the prophet Isaiah say in chapter 49, I will make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth?

And wait a minute, doesn't Isaiah also sometimes describe Jerusalem like a light? Isaiah 62 verse 1, for instance, where her vindication shines out, and her salvation like a blazing torch.

And the law is also sometimes described like a light. Here's the famous Psalm 119 verse 105. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light unto my path.

And now, this Nazarene preacher is saying, his disciples are the light of the world. Then, what about the law? The city? The nation?

[ 4 : 44 ] Are you saying there is something wrong with Israel? You would have a very strong reaction. Or imagine now that you're an off-duty Roman soldier in the crowd.

And once again, you're hearing Jesus' words. Maybe you don't know much about the Old Testament. It's not your religion after all. But you're getting the general idea.

Basically, this preacher is saying, his bunch of disciples is going to make a tremendous impact on the world. They're going to make a difference to the planet.

After all, this preacher uses quite grand rhetoric. He doesn't say to his disciples, you're going to be the salt of Galilee. You're going to be the light of Judea.

No. Rather, he says that their sphere of influence is much larger. The earth. The world. The world. And you survey who they are.

[ 5 : 47 ] Let's see now. A few fishermen. A tax collector. And you cannot help but laugh. Complete nonsense. Who believes such rubbish?

Haven't they seen our glorious empire? But, hmm. One of his disciples is a zealot. He belongs to one of those political parties who sometimes like to stir up trouble.

Better be on my guard, just in case he gets some funny ideas. Hmm. Report back to my superiors. So you too will have a pretty strong reaction. And to extend this a little, imagine now you're a 21st century Malaysian non-Christian listening to these words for the very first time.

For all I know, there might be one or two of you listening right now. And you're thinking, hmm. You mean those Christians who always insist on going to church and spreading the coronavirus?

You mean those Christians who are so anti-science and obsessed with superstition? You mean those Christians in America who, to me, always seems to be promoting conspiracy theories and blindly supporting one political party?

[ 7 : 00 ] They are salt and light? Those are positive words. But to me, Jesus is mistaken. I think they are poison and darkness instead.

And so you too might have a strong reaction. Well, do you see that Jesus' words here are anything but bland?

From a variety of perspectives, they can be very provocative. As Christians who have heard these words many times, we might have become somewhat desensitized.

But we must not miss the fact that Jesus is making some very huge claims here. If we have ears to hear, we will have reactions, not respond with indifference.

But the question still remains, what exactly is Jesus talking about? What does he actually mean? To get at the answer, what we must do is what we do with any passage.

[ 8 : 05 ] Read it in its biblical context. And so to begin with, we must remember that Matthew 5 verse 13 to 16 comes after Matthew 5 verse 1 to 12.

Often, Christians tend to read verses 13 to 16 on its own, forgetting that it's actually part of one sermon Jesus preaches. Jesus begins, you remember from last week, by telling us about the blessed life.

He's actually spelling out what the life of a disciple looks like. They will have the values of the kingdom of heaven. They are going to live in a radically different way to the world.

And that's not going to please the world. Notice how the Beatitudes end with suffering and persecution for the sake of righteousness.

You see, the Beatitudes are nice in theory. The world looks at the list. Mercy, purity, peacemaking, and so on. And they'll say they like them.

[ 9 : 12 ] They'll nod along to them. But they won't do them. They won't be happy with mercy when it's preferable to name and shame people they strongly dislike, like an angry mob.

They won't like the idea of being concerned with what's right if it's detrimental to their business or gives a leg up to their competitors. They certainly wouldn't want meekness if that means losing face in some way.

And they won't be happy with those who live this way. After all, they crucified the very embodiment of these Beatitudes, Jesus. And so when Jesus says these are the defining characteristics of his disciple, he's also saying this is a way of living that will get you persecuted.

And Jesus wants to make sure that we don't miss this. That's why we don't just have verse 10, but verses 11 and 12. Notice how Jesus now personalizes it.

He doesn't just say blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness. But he now says blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you.

[ 10 : 35 ] You, follower of Jesus, can expect trouble. After all, did not the prophets of old encounter trouble when they live God's way? Were they not unpopular when they challenged the world's values with the values of the kingdom?

Well, you too can expect the same. So put yourself back in the first century, but this time, put yourself back in the shoes of the disciples.

As you hear this, what would you be feeling you're beginning to realize, wow, this kingdom life thing is attractive, but it's also a tough gig.

There's going to be persecution, slander, dishonor. And so what would be your temptation? Retreat, withdrawal, escape from the world.

You know, maybe self-isolation doesn't sound like such a bad idea after all. And so that seems to be why verses 13 to 16 come after verses 1 to 12.

[ 11 : 42 ] Jesus knows we won't find it easy. He knows we'll be tempted. He knows we'll be asking, Jesus, if it's going to get tough, how can I persevere?

How can I pull through? And in short, Jesus' answer is this. When the going gets tough, remember your identity.

Remember you are salt and light. Remember you are salt and light. But of course, we've got to unpack that a little, and so we'll need a slightly longer answer.

And so that's where the rest of this morning's sermon is going. We're going to try to understand what it means to be salt and light from verses 13 to 16. And then we'll try to think about how we can be salt and light today.

So here's the slightly longer answer, and I'll do it in two parts. Firstly, though the world is against us, we are to be for the world.

[ 12 : 48 ] Though the world is against us, we are to be for the world. Verse 13, You are the salt of the earth. Verse 14, You are the light of the world.

Now typically, when people try to understand these verses, they try to work out what each of those things signify. So for example, they might look at the uses of salt during Roman times.

That's probably why, quite often, your study Bibles will give you that kind of information. And there is some value in doing that. But I deliberately started by reading both the first sentence of verses 13 and 14 because I wanted you to hear the parallelism.

You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. They both begin with, you are, and they both end with of the earth and of the world, which are more or less equivalent.

Indeed, one or two English translations even use the word world in both verses. And then, both those phrases are followed by some statement about what the opposite of those things look like.

[ 14 : 05 ] Either saltless salt or hidden lights. And that provides us with a big clue for interpretation. It's clear we are meant to take salt and light together, not separately.

They are both communicating one message. They are saying more or less the same thing in two different ways. So a good first question to ask is this. What do they have in common?

What common aspect does Jesus want to bring out? And I think it's this. They each do something. They each have a function.

Salt contributes saltiness. Light contributes brightness. That's why, after stating each of those metaphors, Jesus goes on to point out how meaningless it is if they lost their function.

Salt that has lost its saltiness is useless. A lamp that is covered up is pointless. That's verses 13 and 15. I learned this from the Australian preacher, Philip Jensen.

[ 15 : 15 ] As he insightfully points out, the point Jesus is making isn't so much about salt and light and their substance. It's about what you do with salt.

It's about what you do with light. Salt and light have to be used for them to be worthwhile. And they exist for the sake of something else.

You put salt on something and you have light to see something. If you had absolutely nothing to put salt on and you had absolutely nothing to see, salt and light don't really have a point to them.

So I hope you see that the very words of Jesus found in the text itself gives us some pointers about how to think about salt and light.

We don't need to become experts in the historical background of the New Testament to get the point. And so when Jesus is saying we are salt and light, he's saying this.

[ 16 : 19 ] We don't exist for ourselves. We exist for something else. More specifically, we exist for the world. Now notice how that fits the context.

What have we just learned about the world? That the world isn't going to like Jesus' disciples very much. They are not going to light the kingdom life we are bringing in. And so they are going to slander and persecute us.

And so what are the disciples tempted to do? Either they will be tempted to retreat and withdraw from the world. Or they will be tempted not to put on display the vision of the kingdom life Jesus has just been showing them.

And Jesus' answer to them in the face of such temptation is this. Guys, don't forget. Remember your identity. Remember you are salt and light.

Remember you are for the world. Don't give in to either temptation. You are for the world. Now, what does it mean when you say you are for something?

[ 17 : 32 ] If you tell your kids or your friends I am for you, that means you're on their side. You want the best for them. And so to be for the world, in this case, is to want the best for them.

You want to show that you care for them. You are on their side. You are not giving up on them. And that's kind of where Jesus is heading. Though the world is against you, don't give up on them.

But how is that going to happen? To want the best for the world is not simply to go along with their flow. Remember the Beatitudes?

To enjoy true blessing. To enjoy the blessed life, you've got to embrace Jesus' culture. And as you do so, plenty of people are going to be against you.

But know that that's okay. Because as you adopt kingdom life, as you follow the Beatitudes, you are still for the world. Because it's going to be for the good of everyone.

[ 18 : 35 ] Just as salt and light both contribute something positive, so you are contributing something positive to the world. Even if they can't see it.

That's exactly what happened to Jesus, isn't it? As he allowed himself to be crucified. He was for them, even as they were against him.

So the first thing to say about salt and light is that it means although the world is against us, we are to be for the world. Though that doesn't simply mean going with their flow.

But that still leaves us with the question, how exactly are we to be for the world? How do we care for them? How exactly do the metaphors of salt and light help us here?

That's a good question. And that brings us to our second part. We are for the world when we are faithfully in the world proclaiming and promoting Jesus.

[ 19 : 38 ] We are for the world when we are faithfully in the world proclaiming and promoting Jesus. Let's look at the imagery of the light first because that's the more obvious one.

Then that would help us to understand the salt because remember the two are to be taken together. They are not saying two completely different things. So how should we understand the light?

Well, remember the pious Jew in the crowd earlier? As he heard Jesus' words, he recalled the prophet Isaiah and wondered, how does that fit in?

Well, that's the right question. And once again, look at the wider context. Even before the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew is getting us ready for this image.

In Matthew 4 verse 13, as Jesus begins his ministry, this is what we are told. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah.

[ 20 : 49 ] Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people living in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. From that time on, Jesus began to preach, repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.

So Matthew frames the beginning of Jesus' ministry as one where light is breaking into darkness. What kind of light is it? Well, notice how the Isaiah quotation puts it.

To live in darkness is to live in the shadow of death. And so light here must refer to the light of life. And so Jesus is bringing life to where death reigns.

He brings it to Jews, that's for sure. But as he deliberately goes to live in Galilee, that's where Capernaum was, which has a large non-Jewish population, he's clearly thinking beyond just the Jews.

[ 21 : 57 ] And how does he bring light into the darkness? Matthew 4 verse 17 tells us he begins to preach a message about the kingdom of heaven and about repentance.

Of course, John's gospel puts it in an even stronger way. Jesus says in John 8 verse 12, I am the light of the world.

I am the resurrection and the life. I alone can bring people out of the shadow of death. I am the fulfillment of all that Isaiah promised.

And so when we come to Matthew 5 verse 14, we should understand it in terms of fulfillment too. The big difference, however, is that instead of saying, I am the light of the world, Jesus now tells his disciples, you are the light of the world.

You have a role to play in fulfilling the Old Testament story too. How exactly? Well, Israel was meant to be a light to the nations, a light to the world.

[ 23 : 08 ] And now Jesus has come to fulfill that role successfully. But now he also invites his disciples to come into his light, share in his mission, and shine that light.

This, I think, is confirmed by the third image Jesus uses. Don't forget, although salt and light are primarily in view here, Jesus does use one more image in verse 14.

A town or city on a hill cannot be hidden. And once again, that seems to be an allusion to the prophet Isaiah. Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, was precisely such a city.

A city on a hill. And come with me to Isaiah chapter 60, our call to worship for this morning, and listen to what happens to that city.

In verse 1, the prophet announces to Jerusalem, Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

[ 24 : 17 ] God himself has come as that light. That's confirmed in verses 19 and 20, where the Lord is described as such. But then come down with me to verse 3.

Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. You see, although Jerusalem is not the source of light, they are bearers of that light.

And as they shine their light, nations and kings will journey to them. The city on a hill, with its bright light, cannot be hidden. And the disciples are now to be the new Israel.

They are like this city. They are not the source of light. Jesus alone brings the light of life. But they are the bearers of light.

They bring the message of Jesus. Jesus has brought the light. We are to do the shining. In Isaiah 60, as Jerusalem shines, what happens is that the nations will come and offer worship to God.

[ 25 : 31 ] If you're taking notes, look up Isaiah 60 verse 9 and 13 to 14 yourself later on. And Jesus says in Matthew 5 verse 16, that similarly, as you shine your light before others, others will come and glorify your Father in heaven.

They will worship Him. And we shine not just by proclaiming Jesus in words, we shine by promoting Jesus in our deeds. Matthew 5 verse 16 makes that clear.

When we shine our light before others, what are others meant to see? Our good deeds. Earlier in Isaiah 58 verse 7 to 8, the prophet Isaiah describes sharing food with the hungry and providing shelter for the poor wanderer as light breaking forth.

See, ultimately, to be the light is to be people who attract others to the worship of God. And that can only happen if our light is visible and observable.

That's why in verse 15, Jesus makes this point. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bow. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house.

[ 26 : 55 ] Well, that brings us to salt. If we see light against the big picture of the Old Testament story, I suggest we see salt in a similar way.

In the Old Testament, salt was added to every sacrifice. It was a sign of covenant faithfulness. In Numbers 18 verse 19, Moses talks about an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord.

The idea is one of lifelong loyalty. As you add salt, you are saying, I'm binding myself to this covenant. In 2 Chronicles 13 verse 5, we read, Don't you know that the Lord, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?

It's a sign of faithfulness and commitment. And so when Jesus says, you are the salt of the earth, he's really saying, you're people of faith.

That's your identity. So don't be like Israel, who lost their saltiness and were judged accordingly. Don't lose faith. Stay committed.

[ 28 : 12 ] Although the world is against you, be for the world as you faithfully keep proclaiming and promoting Jesus, bringing his message of the kingdom of heaven and repentance, and as you keep doing your good deeds of mercy, of peacemaking, of meekness, and so on.

And as you do so, you win some people over into the kingdom. This is what it means to be salt and light.

So how then can we be salt and light for today? Let me bring out three implications. One, if we are salt and light, our faith cannot be private.

Our faith cannot be private. Our society constantly insists that religion is largely a private matter. Believe what you want as long as you don't impose it on others.

But the imagery of salt and light simply does not allow for us to think of following Jesus as my own private thing or something I do in secret.

[ 29 : 27 ] Christians are not stealth planes designed to avoid detection by others. Indeed, Jesus insists that we must be observably different. A city on a hill cannot be hidden, neither is a lamb to be hidden under a bow.

So if someone were to watch you closely, over a period of a year, they are supposed to see someone whose way of life is distinct.

And so we must live our lives of faith in public, and our culture is Jesus' culture. Now that doesn't mean you will suddenly start hanging large crosses around your neck or putting bumper stickers of Fishers or Philippians 4 verse 13 on your car.

It doesn't mean you suddenly start praying loudly in your office or telling your friends that Chris Tomlin songs are superior to Ed Sheeran. It certainly doesn't mean being obnoxious or foolish.

Jesus' culture isn't really about the objects you have or the jargon you use. Rather, Jesus' culture is simply about living for Jesus in such a way that shows he is not just your personal preference.

[ 30 : 42 ] He is Saviour and Lord. It's simply allowing the teachings of Jesus to make an impact on your day-to-day life, some of which will be constructive, some of which will be costly.

It means occasionally taking risks to communicate the importance and significance of that faith to others. And the way to keep shining is to keep going back to the source of the light, Jesus himself.

If we try to do it by ourselves, our light will keep flickering and may even die out because we're not plugged in. But we can only give what we have.

And so it's important to keep close to Jesus, to remember his love, to let his grace saturate you, to let his word nourish you.

You know, if you want love and grace and wisdom to flow out of you to others, well, you need to receive it first from Jesus. Remember, he is the light.

[ 31 : 52 ] We only do the shining. And when personal intimacy with Jesus helps charge our public faith, a life as beautiful as the northern lights can emerge.

You know, think about that. You could be the northern lights to someone in your life if you plug in the Jesus. Two, if we are salt and light, we should not preserve ourselves, but pour out ourselves.

We should not preserve ourselves, but pour out ourselves. For many Christians, the world is an undesirable place. We think of it as a place where moral standards are decaying, where anti-Christian attitudes are proliferating, where temptation is abounding.

And so we simply want to hide away. We try to hide our kids away. We think of Jesus' culture as simply creating our own alternative world with our own Christian YouTube channels and Christian social gatherings as a way of preserving ourselves.

And yet that is not the way of Jesus. He saw a world against him, but rather than hide away, he went to them. He saw a world living under the shadow of death, and he brought the light of life to them.

[ 33 : 20 ] He did so by pouring himself out, not preserving himself. And that is what he now calls on his followers to do. The plague of Cyprian was a pandemic that afflicted the Roman Empire from about AD 249 to 262.

Notice that's more than a decade. Dionysius, a church leader, tells us what happened. At the first onset of the disease, they, the pagans, pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead, and treated unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease.

He then noted how his fellow Christians responded. Heedless of danger, the Christians took charge of the sick, attending to their every need, and ministering to them in Christ.

And with them, departed this life serenely happy. that means that if they died, they were very satisfied. For they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbours and cheerfully accepting their pains.

And so based on these facts of history, one historian bluntly says, non-Christians who did not come into contact with Christians were more likely to die, and non-Christians who received Christian charity were more likely to live.

[ 34 : 57 ] They were also more likely to develop friendships with the Christians who saved them, especially as they probably lost a few friends already to the plague. And in this way, Christians not only demonstrated the love of Jesus, but also spread their influence and presumably the message of Jesus.

As the early Christians poured themselves out for the world, their light shone before others, and many could not help but also glorify our Father in Heaven.

And I see it still today. I see it in my friends Lawrence and Lilling, whose parents immigrated to Australia from Malaysia when they were still young, so that they could have a better life.

But moved by the love of Jesus, as adults, they moved to Bolivia, which I think is a poorer country than Malaysia, as medical missionaries.

It doesn't make sense, does it? But they wanted to be salt and light, so they didn't preserve themselves. You might have heard the story of Joyce Lynn this past week, an Asian-American missionary pilot who died in a plane crash while serving with the Missionary Aviation Fellowship, delivering essential supplies and even COVID-19 test kits in Papua.

- [ 36 : 23 ] She graduated from MIT and had a secure job. What made her walk away from all that? The core to be salt and light.

And the world took notice with her death covered in mainstream media outlets, reporters marveling as they interviewed her colleagues, discovering how she would quietly help her Indonesian neighbors and find her contentment in God alone.

What can you do to pour yourselves out so that those around you will glorify God? Three.

If we are salt and light, we will not partake in the ways of the world. We will not partake in the ways of the world. Remember, God has also called us to covenant faithfulness.

We are for the world, but we are not of the world. Salt shouldn't lose its saltiness. In the Roman Empire, pagan culture permeated nearly every aspect of life, from sports, social clubs and the arts, to military membership, political groups and trade associations.

- [ 37 : 42 ] Larry Hurtado, an expert in the history of early Christianity, writes this. He says, practically any formal dinner you attended included ritual acknowledgement of gods.

Now, rarely were any Christians asked to renounce Christ. More regularly, they were simply expected to raise a cup and offer a word of acknowledgement to the gods of the day.

failure to do so would result in a kind of social death, political banishing and familial discord. But they didn't.

For Christians, they knew worship was reserved for the triune god alone. And that's how they impacted the world. Larry Hurtado noticed this.

That's why his book is called *Why on earth did anyone become a Christian in the first three centuries?* He was asking the question, given the political and social costs, why would anyone bother following Jesus?

- [ 38 : 51 ] And his conclusion was this. It came down to their unique beliefs and affection. Because Christians were completely convinced that there was only one god, who wasn't distant from the world, but who loved the world.

And because central to their belief was that love for others was hugely important, they want people to Jesus. Their distinctiveness was the key.

In the ancient world, there was no other group like them. You know, we are rarely asked to deny Christ. But we're often asked to put him away in a compartment for a while instead.

Ayah, you know, just cheat a bit on that test, it's okay. Ayah, I know tipsy a bit already, but just have another drink, okay? But Jesus says, stay salty, stay distinctive, stay faithful.

And so my brothers and sisters in Christ, you are the soul of the earth. You are the light of the world. You are bearers of the best story in the universe.

- [ 40 : 01 ] this past week, the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson released a statement. And in that statement, he had this one interesting line.

We are shining the light of science on this virus, and we will defeat this devilish disease. Now, Boris Johnson is not a Christian as far as I know, but notice his language.

There is an enemy, so terrible, that the Prime Minister has to use a word borrowed from religion, devilish, to capture its impact, because it brings death.

And we need saving from it, but there is a saviour. According to him, his name is science. He will bring light into the darkness. And so the British Prime Minister, although he doesn't realise it, is proclaiming a salvation story.

Christians have a salvation story too. We have always known the enemy is there. The pandemic is but one form of it. But we know an even better saviour.

[ 41 : 10 ] His name is Jesus. And he has already brought light into the darkness. Our job now is to be salt and light, being faithful to Jesus, proclaiming his good news, promoting him by good deeds.

That was the case during the plague of Cyprian. It is still the case today. So let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven.

Let us pray. once again I'll just give us five to ten seconds just to digest all that we've heard.

Let us Lord Jesus, you say that your words are spirit and life.

And Father, as we have just heard your words again this morning, we pray that they will impact us afresh. We pray that we will not become desensitized to the familiar language of being called salt and light, but that indeed we will truly be the salt and light that you have called us to, to be people who are faithful, who want to proclaim your name, proclaim the kingdom of heaven, proclaim the message of repentance, and who want to shine your light by our good deeds in any and every way.

[ 42 : 52 ] Will you help us to know how to do that? How we can be salt and light, even in our current age, where we will probably need lots of creativity to figure out how to do that.

But we pray that you will motivate us afresh, give us a fresh vision that we want to do this, because that is what you have called us to be. And even though sometimes the world might be against us, help us not to take it personally, but help us to continue to be for the world, knowing that the Lord Jesus is the best news that the world could possibly ever receive.

And so Father, please empower us by your Holy Spirit to live lives that please you and honour you, and attract others to worship you.

All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.