

Matthew 5:13-16

Discussion questions

Read Matthew 5:13

Salt has a preservative quality and is also a flavor enhancer but the main thing Jesus seems to focus on is the distinctive taste of salt and the risk of losing our 'flavor'.

1. What are distinguishing characteristics of a Christian? (cf. 5:3-12)
2. What influences can cause us to lose this distinctive character?
3. "The way we impact the world isn't by blending in but by being different"
 - Why do we try so hard to 'blend in'?
 - In what aspects of your life do you find it most difficult to be distinctively Christian?
 - How can we encourage one another to develop and display Christian character in the areas where we struggle?

Read Matthew 5:14-16

1. A hidden city on a hill, a lamp under a bowl – neither of these makes sense. What point is Jesus making about the life of the Christian?
2. We often experience the tension between these two things: being different from the world and being engaged in the world.
 - a. How do you experience this tension:
 - i. in your home life (e.g. in the way you raise your kids)?
 - ii. in your workplace?
 - iii. in your interactions with your neighbors?
3. Which do you struggle with the most: being different or being engaged? Why do you think that is?
4. The ultimate goal of 'letting our light shine' is the glory of God (verse 16).
 - a. What other, false motivations can drive our good works?
 - b. How can we be vigilant to avoid these motivations?
5. Read Matthew 5:11-12 then, look up 1 Peter 2:11-12.
 - a. What do these verses reveal about how people might respond to our 'good works'?
 - b. How does having the right motivation help us when this happens?

Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God for saving us and making us distinctive, salt-and-light people through Jesus.
- Pray that God will help you grow to be more and more radically different from unbelievers (i.e. holy!)
- Pray that God will help you be engaged in the world in a way that openly points other people to him.