

# Living As Kingdom People

Kingdom Living #2 - Pastor Gary Combs - March 30, 2025 - Matthew 5:13-16

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We're continuing our sermon series today entitled, KINGDOM LIVING. It's an expositional study of Christ's Sermon On the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. Many have described it as the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who ever lived. This is certainly true. For this sermon is a call by King Jesus to live under His rule and reign as His kingdom people!

It was first called The Sermon on the Mount by Augustine of Hippo, who noted Matthew 1:1's description:

Matthew 5:1 (ESV) Seeing the crowds, he went up on the **mountain**, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

The traditional location is above the North shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Church of the Beatitudes stands on the site today. The sloping terrain created a natural amphitheater, allowing Jesus' voice to carry to a large audience.

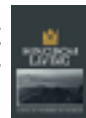


This sermon describes what **Living As Kingdom People** ought to look like, which is why Scottish theologian, Sinclair Ferguson writes:

"The sermon is a description of the lifestyle of those who belong to the Kingdom." — Sinclair Ferguson

Yet, this Kingdom that Jesus describes is radically different from the world's kingdom. For in these 3 chapters, Jesus turns worldly wisdom upside down. This is why John Stott called saw this sermon as Christ calling believers to live as a "counter-culture" to the world.

This is why we're calling our sermon series, KINGDOM LIVING. It's because in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus proclaimed how Christians are meant to live in the kingdom of God. So I hope you picked up a copy of our study booklet. You can study the introductory material and collect your notes together in this booklet.



**Trans:** Last week, we studied the Beatitudes, the blessings of Kingdom living in Matthew 5:1-12. Today, we'll be looking at Mathew 5:13-16, which as Dr. Danny Akin says, "flows naturally out of the Beatitudes." For as he says it is "taking on and exhibiting the character of the Beatitudes that makes it possible for us to be salt and light on the earth" (Akin, Daniel L., *Exalting Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary)*, p. 26.).

While the Beatitudes describe the inner character and blessed state of those who follow Jesus as King, these next verses describe how we are to live as Kingdom people outwardly in this world.

**Need:** Do you struggle with how to live out your faith before others? Some will even say, "I think religion is a private matter." Indeed, many have tried to remove all vestige of the Christian faith from the public square. And this has contributed to making believers even more apt to be quiet about their faith in Jesus. As a result many believers keep their faith a secret, living a kind of dual existence. Others might be open about their faith, yet their lives don't match their message, their walk doesn't match their talk. And so, the accusation of non churchgoers that the "church is full of hypocrites" is proven true.

**Trans:** How are we to live as Kingdom people? What does Jesus have to say about this?

**BODY:** In the gospel of Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus used the two powerful metaphors of salt and light to call His disciples to faithfully bear witness of His transforming power by living as Kingdom people. We can answer Christ's call to live as His Kingdom people. How can live as His Kingdom people? The text gives **two ways** we can faithfully live as Christ's Kingdom people.

**Read text:** Matthew 5:13-16 (ESV) <sup>13</sup> "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. <sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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.

## HOW TO LIVE AS CHRIST'S KINGDOM PEOPLE:

### 1. **Be salt.** Portray the gospel to a world in decay.

**EXP:** (13) Jesus described His followers by two rich and powerful metaphors: salt and light. I am thankful to Danny Akin's commentary for the development of our two sermon points...

"Those who love and follow King Jesus are the only real salt this world will ever taste and the only authentic light it will ever see! Jesus's words in these verses take it as an undeniable truth that we live in a decadent, decaying, dark world. Where there is decay, we need salt. Where there is darkness, we need light. We, the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, are God's plan to stop death and stamp out darkness. This plan finds its crescendo in the last words of the last chapter in this Gospel with what we call the Great Commission. To the nations we go as salt and light." — Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 26.

So, the first way Jesus gives is "You are the salt of the earth." He does not say, "You will be the salt... or You should be..." No, He says, "You are the salt of the earth." He says, "Be salt."

"**You are**" (13) - Lit., "You, you are." Emphatic use of "you." (As in Christ's "I, I am.") Who is "you?" Remember the Beatitudes. The "you" are the poor in spirit, the peacemakers, the merciful, and so on.

"**Salt of the earth**" (13 - 2x) (ἅλας, *halas*) - salt. Believers are to preserve righteousness, bring spiritual flavor, and prevent moral decay in society. Modern use: "My grandparents were the salt of the earth."

"SALT PRESERVES. Until modern times it provided the principal way to preserve use. This ability to preserve, to protect against decay, as well as to sustain life, has given salt a broad metaphorical importance... we associate it with longevity and permanence. Salt was to the ancient Hebrews, and still is to modern Jews, the symbol of the eternal nature of God's covenant with Israel. In the Torah, the Book of Numbers, is written, "It is a covenant of salt forever, before the Lord," and later in Chronicles, "The Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, even to him, and to his sons, by a covenant of salt." On Friday nights Jews dip the Sabbath bread in salt. In Judaism, bread is a symbol of food, which is a gift from God, and dipping the bread in salt preserves it—keeps the agreement between God and his people." (Kurlansky, Mark. *Salt: A World History*, 6-7).



"**Lost its taste**" (13) (μωραίνω, *mōrainō*) - to act foolishly, also "flat, tasteless." "Common salt, as is well known, will melt if exposed to moisture, but does not lose its saltiness." (*Ellicott's Commentary*). Jesus may be making a comparison that highlights the absurdity of salt losing its flavor, or since most of their salt came from the Dead Sea, it contained other impurities. Not having refineries, being water soluble, it would leak out when exposed to water, leaving an unsalty substance behind. (Me holding Dead Sea salt)



"**Restored**" (13) (ἁλίζω, *halizō*) - to salt, make salty. How do you re-salt salt?

"**No longer good**" (13) - good for nothing, good for no one, useless.

"**Thrown out**" (13) (βάλλω, *ballō*) - to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls, to scatter.

"**Trampled**" (13) (καταπατέω, *katapateō*) - to tread down, trample under foot, to trample on.

**ARG:** Salt is to be the "flavor" of your life and speech.

Colossians 4:5-6 (ESV) <sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

**Being salt is good and it displays the spiritual fruit of peace.**

Mark 9:50 (ESV) Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

**ILL:** Salt is not sweet, but it is good. You can live without sugar, but not without salt. While the body needs glucose, it doesn't require it from your diet. But salt is an essential nutrient. A complete lack of salt can lead to serious health problems and even death.



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**APP:** Luther emphasized that denunciation and proclamation go hand in hand, saying “salt has a bite.” Your life must “be sharp and rub salt into their wounds, denouncing what is not right.” It reminds me of Paul’s instruction in Eph. 4:15 “Speak the truth in love.” Being salty, our lives do both.

You are the salt of the earth! Jesus has named you so! Ask yourself: Are you being salt in the relationships and situations around you? Are you standing firm for truth in places where others might compromise? When we embrace our identity as salt, we stop passively watching the world decline and start actively being part of God’s redemptive work. Don’t blend in, be bold in your faith! Our lives are to portray the life-giving gospel to a world in decay!

## 2. Be light. Proclaim the gospel to a world in darkness.

**EXP:** (14-16) Jesus declared, “You are the salt of the earth” and then He says, “You are the light of the world.” How is this metaphor different? Salt preserves and adds flavor, but light reveals and shows forth truth.

“**Light**” (14, 15, 16 - 4x) (φῶς, *phōs*) - light, a lamp or torch. To those who live under God’s blessing (1-12), Jesus says, You are the light in a world of darkness. How? Because He is the Light of the world in us.

John 8:12 (ESV) Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

“Now, in a remarkable and stunning declaration, he looks at his disciples and applies this same image to them! To us! We who follow King Jesus reflect the greater Light who is Christ and in doing so point others to him.” (Akin, p. 29).

“**City on a hill**” (14) (πόλις, *polis*) - A city easy to see from a distance. Sounds a bit like Jerusalem.

“**Cannot be hidden**” (14) (κρύπτω, *kryptō*) - to hide, conceal, to be hid, escape notice. Some have reacted to the difficulties of living out the Sermon on the Mount by separating from the world: the monastics, the Anabaptists and the modern day Amish. However, they overlook this teaching to not be hidden.

“**Light a lamp**” (15) (λύχνος, *luchnos*) - a lamp, candle, that is placed on a stand or candlestick.

“**Under a basket**” (15) (μόδιος, *modios*) - Lit., a measuring container, “bushel” (KJV). A bushel basket.

“**Let your light shine**” (16) (λάμπω, *lampō*) - to beam, to radiate brilliancy. KJV translates it “so shine.”

“**Good works**” (16) (ἔργον, *ergon*) - an act, deed, thing done for good.

“**Give glory to your Father**” (16) (δοξάζω, *doxazō*) - to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate, glorify. Live in such a way in word and deed that others glorify God.

**ARG:** We are commanded to proclaim the gospel the all the world.

Mark 16:15 (ESV) And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

**We are to “shine” brightly in this “crooked and twisted generation.”**

Philippians 2:14-16 (ESV) <sup>14</sup> Do all things without grumbling or disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom **you shine as lights in the world**, <sup>16</sup> holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

**ILL:** In physics, darkness is not a force of its own—it is simply the absence of light. Light, on the other hand, has measurable properties. It travels at an astonishing speed of approximately 186,000 miles per second. The moment a light is turned on, darkness vanishes instantly because it cannot resist light. This means that even a small presence of Christ’s light in us has the power to push back darkness. Just as darkness has no real substance of its own, but is simply the absence of light, spiritual darkness exists where the light of Christ is not present.



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**APP:** Are you letting the light of Jesus shine in your life? Are you proclaiming Him in word and deed? Do your friends and family know about your faith in Jesus? Or are you hiding your light, leaving them in darkness? Jesus says, "You are the light of the world." Our lives are to proclaim the gospel to a world in darkness!

**CONCLUSION:** Jesus calls us to live as Kingdom people by being salt and light in this world. We are to portray the gospel as salt in a decaying world and proclaim the gospel as light in a dark world. This is not optional; it is who we are as His disciples. We were created in God's image, made to reflect His glory to a decaying and dark world!

**In Christ, we can...**

- 1) Be salt, portraying the gospel to a world in decay.
- 2) Be light, proclaim the gospel to a world in darkness.

Let's pray.