

JESUS ON ENGAGING THE WORLD (MATTHEW 5:13-16)

Video Two

I wonder how this talk of light and salt leaves you feeling?

If you're following Jesus, perhaps you feel a bit discouraged. It's difficult to live in this way.

So often we hide our light. We feel ashamed of following Jesus, or it just feels easier to tone it down. Or perhaps we feel like we've lost our saltiness. We're not that distinctive. We've gotten used to blending in.

Well there is another aspect to these metaphors that it's vital we don't miss. And it's this: these things can't stop being what they are.

Salt can't stop being salt. If it loses its saltiness, it stops being salt!

The same with light. Light can't not be light.

Jesus is saying – if you are part of his kingdom. It's not a case of 'try to be salt', or 'you have the potential to be light'. You are salt. You are light.

How is this the case?

God had always intended that his people would live in this distinctive way, bringing God's influence in the world. But again and again they failed. They blended in and compromised.

But there was the promise of a person who would come to do what God's people couldn't do.

The prophet Isaiah wrote about him. In his book, God speaks to this person and says:

I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

This person will come to be the light. To bring the light of his salvation to the ends of the earth. To do what God's people failed to do.

And that figure is Jesus.

And it's good news for us in two ways:

Firstly – we are the ends of the earth that God's salvation has reached. For all the ways we've failed to be salt and light. For all the ways we've failed to live for God. We're saved from the punishment we deserve. Through Jesus' death on our behalf. We're safe.

But secondly. If we belong to Jesus, he has made us light too. That is who we are. We are light. We are salt. God will use to show his salvation to the ends of the earth. Whether we feel like it or not.

If you feel like a dim light. Or tasteless salt. Take heart. You belong to Jesus. You are salt and light. So live as you are.

And do it together. Did you notice? Jesus is **addressing a crowd here**. We are being called to this kingdom life *together*. He's saying: **'you all are the salt of the earth.'** **'you all are the light of the world.'**

You won't last long aiming to be salt and light by yourself. Together – with the people of God. In your weakness. In the face of opposition. Live as peacemakers. Live for justice. live mercifully. You must do it together.

I wonder how your Impact Group could together seek to live distinctively in your university?

So that **all may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father in heaven.**