



KICK OFF

'Could Christians have greater influence personally in day to day life in Melbourne?'



KEY VERSE

Matthew 5:16 'In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works, give glory to your Father who is in heaven.'



BIG IDEA

Vs 13-16 are Jesus' summary of the relationship of a Christian to the world.



INVESTIGATE

CONTEXT

Read Matthew 5: 1—16

- One of the first questions to ask when coming to any Bible passage is: how does it connect to its immediate context. So, following this principle, how do verses 13—16 follow on from verses 1—12? Martyn Lloyd-Jones' summary of 5:1-16 might be helpful:
 - 5: 1 – 10 – the character of the Christian
 - 5:11 – 12 – the character of the Christian in the world
 - 5: 13 – 16 – the relationship of the Christian to the world.

- Throughout the history of the Church, in what ways have Christians struggled in their relationship to the world.

SALT, LIGHT AND A CITY

In verses 13—16 Jesus uses three images: salt, light and a city.

- From Jesus' use of the image of 'salt' what do we learn about:

The world

Jesus

A Christian

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says 'you are the salt of the earth' clearly implies the rottenness of the earth, it implies a tendency to pollution and to becoming foul and offensive. That is what the Bible has to say about the world. It is fallen, sinful and bad. Its tendency is to evil and to wars. It is like meat which has a tendency to putrefy and to become polluted. It is like something which can only be kept wholesome by means of a preservative or antiseptic. As the result of sin and the fall, life in the world in general tends to get into a putrid state. ...Far from there being a tendency in life and the world to go upwards, it is the exact opposite. The world, left to itself, is something that tends to fester.

What does this say about the Christian who is in the world?...We are to be unlike the world. There is no need to stress that, it is perfectly obvious.The very characteristic of saltiness proclaims a difference, for a small amount of salt in a large medium is at once apparent. Unless we are clear about the Christian life. The Christian is a man who is essentially different from everybody else. He is as different as the salt is from the meat into which it is rubbed. This external difference still needs to be emphasized and stressed. ...the principal function of salt is to preserve and to act as an antiseptic.

Another function of salt is to provide savour, or to prevent food from being insipid. That is a undoubtedly a further function of salt. ...according to this statement, therefore, life without Christianity is insipid. Does not the world today prove that? Look at the pleasure mania. (con'td)

4. From Jesus' use of the image of 'light' what do we learn about:
The world

Jesus

A Christian.

5. From Jesus' use of the image of 'a city set on a hill' what do we learn about:
The world

Jesus

A Christian.

'The Lord who said, 'you are the light of the world, also said, I am the light of the world. These two statements must always be taken together, since the Christian is only 'the light of the world' because of their relationship to Him, who is the light of the world.

Therefore Jesus does not stop at giving light with respect to life. He also makes Christians light. So not only have we received light, we have been made light, we become transmitters of light. AS those who believe the gospel we have received light and knowledge and instruction. But in addition it has become part of us. From pp 153-168



THINK THROUGH FURTHER

6. In James Davidson Hunter's book 'To Change the World' he concludes Christians can have influence 'through the practice of faithful presence.' Is this any different to what Jesus says 'here? How does this passage and Hunter's comment affect how we go about: our careers, family life, involvement in the community, politics, social action and community life in general?

PRAISE GOD that Jesus is the light of the world.

CONFESS that we have not always lived as salt, light and as a city of lights.

ASK GOD to help you to have a ministry of a faithful presence wherever you are in the world.

PRAY ALSO
For Scots' Church in our witness in the City. For the preaching of the Word of God week by week.



Praise God for the challenges raised by God's Word through this study.

Praying for others in your group:



How does this passage apply to our daily life?



For next week's study read Matthew 5: 17—20