MESSAGE NOTES

Different: How The Church Lives – Part 1 of 7

 *Shine*

**Matthew 5:13-16**

Today we begin our next message series on Jesus’ most well-known sermon which we call *The Sermon On The Mount*. During the next months, we are doing a deep dive into Jesus’ words in Matthew 5-7 and dividing his teaching into three message series. This second series is: *Different: How The Church Lives.*

Read Matthew 5:1-12…

**Read Matthew 5:13-16… Issues and Applications Highlighted by the Text:**

Without salt, the earth decays. Without light, the world plunges into darkness.

Don't decry the decay, don't curse the darkness.

Don't blame the earth, don't condemn the world.

Darkness is the natural state of a fallen world. Entropy prevails everywhere.

Instead ask:

Where is the salt? Where is the light?

Why is the salt not seasoning? Why is the light not shining?

Ask God. Ask the church. Ask yourself.

Salt preserves, purifies and adds flavor --- salt is essential.

Ordinary people --- faithfully, actively caring and serving --- are the salt of the earth.

Light represents the presence of God, preeminently in Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

Light represents the truth about God as embodied by Jesus.

Light represents a clear vision of reality as illuminated by Jesus.

Light represents judgment as imposed, and redemption as delivered, by Jesus.

As those who claim Jesus as Lord and choose to follow him, *we* are called the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Imagine that!

We are called to infiltrate the world with lovingkindness, to permeate the world with a taste of grace. Assuming we ourselves have experienced this.

We are called to shine in dark, difficult, desolate and dangerous places with the revealing and inviting light of Christ. This takes courage.

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Kingdom Blessings come before Kingdom Commands. Why?

2. What is the flavor that followers of Christ are supposed to release into their world?

3. How do you typically respond when you see your world (family/neighborhood/community/country) falling apart?

4. What does it look like when you shine? Where are you shining? Where are you called to shine, but you're not there yet?

5. In this discussion group and/or circle of friends, share how the good works of another person are reflecting the glory of God.