

Community Group Discussion Questions

“The Identity of the Church”

Matthew 5:13-16

Sermon Series Title: “The Church of God”

Sermon Series Summary: The Church of God is the people of God throughout the ages, redeemed by Jesus Christ. We’re going to take a look at who we are and who we are called to be as the church of God. More specifically, we see that who we are is directly connected to whose we are in Christ.

Passage Setting: Matthew is the first of the four Gospels in Scripture. It focuses on the kingship and Jewishness of Jesus. He is the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. Our passage is the second topic of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, after He spoke about the Beatitudes. Essentially, through the Beatitudes, we see that those who are spiritually poor, hungry, and weak are the ones who are blessed.

Summary: After declaring the blessings over the spiritually hungry and needy in Christ, we see that Jesus declares our identity. We are the salt of the earth, meaning that we preserve, purify, flavor, scatter, dissolve, and make others thirsty for Jesus. We are the light of the world, by living the life of Christ and revealing the truth. We can do this through the ultimate salt and light, Jesus Christ.

Central Truth: “Let us be the salt and light of the world for Jesus who was the ultimate salt and light for our salvation.”

Sermon Points:

1. The Salt of the Earth
2. The Light of the World
3. Jesus, the True Salt and Light

Opening Question

1. Read Matthew 5:1-12. What sticks out to you?

(Answers may vary.)

In vv. 1-12, Jesus lists the beatitudes, talking about the blessings we have received. In our passage, we see the applications of the blessing we have

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received. In essence, we have the call of Abraham from Genesis 12. We are blessed to be a blessing.

Read Matthew 5:13-16

2. What does it mean for us to be salt and light?

(One of salt's main functions back then was to keep food from rotting and decaying. In the same way, we are called to be a preservative for those around us. Salt also purifies. We edify one another through community. Salt adds flavor. We are to bring out the beauty of humanity in those around us. Salt scatters. We are not supposed to be huddled together, isolated from the rest of the world. We are to go out. Salt dissolves. We die to ourselves for the sake of the food (or even snow). We are to die to ourselves for the good of our neighbor. Lastly, salt makes us thirsty. We are to make others thirsty for Jesus.

Light illuminates. In the same way, we are to illuminate the truth of this world. And we are also called to illuminate the truth of the hope of salvation in Christ. Light gives life. We give life to those who are hurting, hopeless, helpless, grieving, broken. In our passage, we see that the point of light is to be displayed. We are to be in the world but not of the world. This light will move others to glorify God. Lastly, just like the moon, we are to reflect the light of the sun (Son). We reflect Christ to those around us.)

3. Where are we the weakest? Where are we the strongest?

(Answers will vary.)

4. How does Jesus empower us for such an identity?

(Ultimately, it is Jesus who empowers us to live out our identity of being salt and light. We are united to Jesus who is the ultimate Salt and Light. Jesus is the One who preserves us for eternity. He is the One who sanctifies us. He is the One who gives us life. He is the One who was scattered into this world and away from the Father. He is the One who died to give us life. He thirsted so that He may satisfy our thirst. He is the Light of the World who reveals to us the truth. He is the One who took on the darkness of our sin on the cross, so that we may be delivered into the kingdom of light.

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Because of what Christ has done for us as the ultimate Salt and Light, He now empowers us to be the salt and light of the world for Him.

Final Thoughts: *We are called to be salt and light of the world. This is our identity as Christians. But both of these identities mean that we are to be missional and outward-facing. It means that we are serving the world for their good and for the glory of God. It means that though uncomfortable, we are empowered to be salt and light because of Jesus' first work as salt and light for our salvation.*