

Light Attracts

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[0 : 00] How many of y'all glad you came to church so far today? Amen. Well, let's go to Matthew. We're going to continue on in our series on salt and light. Matthew chapter 5. Matthew chapter 5. While you're turning there, I want to give you a little recap over the last couple of weeks. We talked all about salt. I don't think there's a whole lot about salt that we didn't cover. We had a lot of fun with it. And we talked about our preservative, how salt is used, and especially used in the ancient times as a preservative.

So when Jesus commanded his followers and those sitting under his voice on the Sermon on the Mount, and he told them they were meant to be the salt of the earth, that was a powerful, powerful illustration.

Salt was called white gold back then, and it was almost on par, sometimes even more practically useful than even money itself. And so the question we had was, are we worth our salt?

[1 : 18] Are we worth that moniker, that name that Jesus has given to us? Are we fulfilling our function as salt on the earth? And we got a little bit more specific with it last week, and we talked about, have we lost our flavor?

Remember, Jesus said, if salt has lost its flavor, it's no longer good for the purpose for which it was created and intended. And that is certainly true of us.

Have we lost our flavor as the people of God, as the children of God, as salt in this earth? Are we fulfilling our function? We're going to look at the other part of Jesus' charge here in Matthew chapter 5.

Let's look at verse 13. I know you've been up and down a lot today. If you wouldn't mind standing one more time while we read this main text with me, if you're able to. If you need to remain seated, that's fine.

Matthew 5, verse 13. I'm reading from the New Living Translation. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty?

[2 : 19] It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. Watch verse 14. You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden.

No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand. And it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

God, we pray for understanding as we read your scriptures. We pray for direct application to our lives that we would not walk out of here, maybe for many, hearing a passage that they've read many times before.

That they've heard preached or taught many times before. But that your word, which is living, relevant, and applicable for us in this moment as much as it ever has been.

That that word would kindle a fire in us. A fire that shines brightly for you. In Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Thank you for standing. I can only imagine the picture that these disciples had in their minds as they hear these words, You are the light of the world.

[3 : 39] A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. And I'm thinking of what that must have looked like in ancient times. This was the best picture I could find on a Google search that might fit the picture that they had in their minds.

I'm thinking of when we used to drive, when I lived in Southern California, And we used to drive out toward Las Vegas, and we were going other places, And, you know, I was going to make a little bit of extra money in Vegas.

But I'm just kidding. I wasn't doing that. For one thing, if that's your goal in going to Las Vegas, you're probably going to end up sorely disappointed. But anyway, but no, I remember because you

are just driving in desert, And especially if you're going there at night, it is pitch black. Might go through occasional towns. Get out through Barstow, California, and that's kind of the last little, tiny little town before you just hit the middle of nowhere. And you're driving and driving and driving, and it's just dark, and there's some mountains, shadows you can see. And then all of a sudden, it's like out of nowhere, you top this rise, And it's like the largest city in the world laid out. Obviously, Las Vegas is not that, but it looks like that in that moment. [4 : 57] Just this huge glittering. You can't miss it. As soon as you top the rise from this black pitch darkness, You see this massive city of light.

Now, I'm not anti-everything that goes on in Las Vegas, Because I used to live in Reno, Nevada, and ministered to all the different churches across Nevada, And we spent a lot of time in Las Vegas.

There's, apart from the strip where all the crazy stuff is, There's a lot of just kind of normal life happening, you know? Just regular folks living and going about their lives. There's actually a lot of great Christians out there and great churches out there.

But, certainly, we could look at Las Vegas and say, Maybe a lot that happens there is more in line with spiritual darkness rather than light.

But, man, physically, it is such a city of light. And people are drawn to it. And you look at Christians today, You look at Christians representing what Christianity has become, And you wonder, Are we more a city of light?

[6 : 15] Or have we become more shrouded in darkness? How could that have happened? What could have gotten in the way and obscured, obscured the light?

I want to share some really obvious points with you today. Number one, when Jesus called them a city of light, And in doing so, called us as his followers a city of light.

We have to understand a few things. A city on a hill, as he was talking about that, A city on a hill that sheds its light all around, A city on a hill attracts attention.

It attracts attention. Now, you may not love that part of being a Jesus follower, But I can promise you, If you call yourself a follower of Jesus, You will attract attention.

Much of that may be negative. And there's all kinds of reasons for that. But the truth is, You can't hide when you call yourself a Christian.

[7 : 20] Because people hold you up, Ultimately, To the standard of Jesus himself. Now, none of us, Are ever going to quite live up to that standard, right?

And we can own that. But there are certain aspects of who Jesus was, And is, That people would expect his followers, To mimic.

To share. I think that's why Paul wrote, To the church in Philippi, In Philippians chapter 2, He said, Work hard, To show the results of your salvation.

Obedying God, With deep reverence and fear. Why? Because God is working in you. Giving you the desire and the power, To do what pleases him.

Apart from God working in us, We don't have the desire and the power, To do what pleases him.

And so if it's been a while, Since God's been working in you, Then there's a great chance, That you've lost your desire, And you don't feel that power, To do what pleases him.

[8 : 38] What's the result of that? Your part of the city, Has plunged into darkness. Your light's not shining anymore.

Thank God, That there are others, That are still available for his use. There are other imperfect vessels, That still have the desire, And the power, To do what pleases him.

And so the light still shines. But how much more dimly, Is the light of the church, Shining today, Than it did when it first began. When Jesus first instituted it.

A city on a hill, Will always attract attention. Look now at verse 14, In Philippians 2. Do everything without complaining, And without arguing. Did y'all catch that?

Do everything without complaining, And arguing. How easy is that to do? Anybody? I'm prone to complain, And argue.

[9 : 42] If you've spent any time around me, Then you probably know that's true. Many of you are the same, Because I've spent time around you, And I know that's true. We like to complain, And argue, Don't we?

Paul says, That's not Jesus. That's not shining your light. That's not being the city on the hill. Why? Because it opens you up for criticism.

What did we say last week? We get criticized for everything, Except Jesus. If they criticize Jesus, Fine. Take him on, You're going to lose every time.

But usually, That's not what pushes people away. It's us. It's our critical spirit. It's our complaining spirit. It's our argumentative way, That we carry ourselves around others.

And that invites all this unnecessary criticism. So instead, Live clean, Innocent lives, As children of God, Shining like bright lights, In a world full of crooked, And perverse people.

[10:49] And that's not us, right? We're not the crooked and perverse people. Oh yes we are. I remember a passage that says, Such were some of you.

But God stepped in, And God saved you. God rescued you. This is a church full of crooked and perverse people. And I'm number one on the list. Right here.

I promise you. But you are not any different. So instead of being just another crooked and perverse, Person, Like we really are, Lean into, That Holy Spirit presence, That's in you, That allows you to live clean, Innocent lives.

And then you shine like bright lights. You can't help it. It's not that I gotta, Wake up each morning, And I gotta, Hype myself up, And I gotta, Turn my light up to full power.

Remember, When we live clean and innocent lives as children of God, We stand out. We're different. But why don't we usually stand out? Because we're not living clean, Innocent lives as children of God.

[11:55] So I don't know about you, I'm not engaged in any, Dark, Gross, Secret sin. What do you mean? Calling me crooked and perverse. The truth is, We are perverse, When we don't honor God, And give Him the place, That He deserves, In our minds, In our hearts.

That's perverse. That's blaspheming, Blaspheming the Holy Spirit of God, When we don't acknowledge Him as God. That's hard, y'all.

I know it is. You wake up every day, And you want to be God of your life. You encounter a problem, And you don't turn to God, You turn to yourself, Or you turn to depression.

Or you turn to a friend, Someone else, Instead of God. God can certainly use other people. God can certainly use us, To encourage one another, But our first place, Has to be to acknowledge God. Say, God, You are in charge. You have this. I'm going to give you, The place, That you so deserve. And then, I'm going to not be perverse.

[13:09] Not going to be a blasphemer. I'm going to let this light shine, And not fall, Into that pull, Of my flesh, To be like everybody else, Out there in the darkness.

Where do we find this instruction? Where do we find, The guidebook, How to do this, The recipe, It's the word of life.

It's the book you're holding in your hands. Or it's the Bible app, That's plugged into your phone there. Whatever it is, It's that word of life.

If we've got it in every conceivable way, You could want it today. It's available to everyone, Everywhere. But even though, It's more available now, Than it ever has been, Seems like, God's people, Follow it, Less devotedly, Than maybe ever before.

We don't hold firmly, To that word of life. So, A city on a hill, Attracts attention, Right?

[14:24] My question to you is, How are you handling, The attention? How many of y'all love attention? Anybody in here?

Look, I'm going to be honest with you, I have my hand raised. Me and Ray, Are the only ones in here. We share a bond, We both love attention. I don't know if it was, It was the life I lived growing up, I don't know what it was, But my comfort zone, Is being in front of a group of people, Talking to them.

I love it. I eat it up. My least favorite part of the service, Now, I love the music, And I can get into that, And really, Worship with the Lord, Through that music.

During that part, But my least favorite part of the service, Is when I'm sitting down there, Waiting to get up here. It's like, I just want to get up here, You know, Let's just, Let's get it going, Man. I write my sermons on Monday, Okay?

So, Usually, Now, Sometimes, Joy knows, A couple weeks ago, I'm not going to tell you which one, Because you're going to go back, And judge it in light of this, But I finished my sermon, At 9 30 Saturday night, I'm not going to tell you which one, But that's very rare, Very unusual, That week was just nuts, But, Usually, I write my sermons on Monday, So I've got the whole week, To think about it, Get ready for it, And by Sunday morning, It's like, Let's get this thing going, So I love

attention, Now, There are times, When I just got to shut down, You know, And get away from the spotlight, And I don't want to be around anything, Or anybody, But those are rare, Truth is, Most people don't like attention, Like I do, Holly is like, Please, No, Do not look at me, Talk to me, I think a lot of you, Do not love the spotlight, You don't love attention, The truth is, That's an area of, Of, Weakness for me, That sometimes,

[16 : 16] I've got to watch out for, Sometimes I love the spotlight, Too much, Sometimes I want to be, The one out there, And God doesn't want me, To be the one out there, And I've got to be careful of that, But I'm sorry, Because the fact is, You're going to get attention, There's no way to avoid it, You know what the ironic thing is here, As much as, I don't mind being up in front of people, Sometimes, Sometimes, In my weakest moments, Of flesh, I don't want anybody, Looking at me, I want to get off the radar, Because I know, That I'm not filled, With God's spirit, In that moment, I know that I'm giving in, To, My weaknesses, And I don't want any attention, On that, And I think maybe, A lot of you are the same, You know you're not filled, With God's spirit sometimes,

And maybe there's a pattern, Or there's a stretch of life, That you're going through, Or have gone through, Where you would say, Yeah I really wasn't very close to God, During that time, And I didn't want a lot of attention, On me, At that time, I didn't really want a lot of people, Knowing or thinking, That I'm a Christian, And Paul said, Follow me as I follow Jesus, You're like, No thank you, Don't be following me right now, I'm not following Jesus, All that closely, Truth is, We don't handle the attention very well, But we have to, That's what Jesus called us to, He said, Look, I'm not making you, A city on the hill, You are that, You've been changed, You've been reborn, Your life is no longer the same, So you are going to stand out, It can be for good, But unfortunately, It could also be for bad, So how are you handling, The attention, He called us a city on a hill, And then he likened us to a lamp, And a lamp has a specific purpose, See a city attracts attention, Luke 8 17 says, Nothing is secret, That will not be revealed, Nothing is hidden, That will not be known, Or come to light, How does that happen, It happens, Through, The light, When the light shines on darkness, It illuminates it, And nothing is secret anymore, And so a lamp, Has that purpose, Of illuminating, A lamp has that purpose, Of shining, And revealing the secrets, Of the darkness, When you walk into a room, From the light, Everything is pitch black, There might even be, A little bit of light in that room, But you don't realize it,

Until your eyes adjust, To the darkness, You don't know, What's in that room, You don't know, Where the furniture is, That you might stumble over, You don't know, What secrets that room holds, Until the light comes on, Then the secrets are revealed, A lamp has a specific purpose, To shine light, On the darkness, But there's two ways, Of looking at this, You can look at it as though, Man I don't want the light, To reveal the secrets, In my life, I'm not the perfect person, That everybody thinks I am, Trust me, Nobody thinks you're perfect, Alright, But you say, I don't have it all together, I put on this front, I portray something, And the truth is, I don't have it all together inside, I'm more crooked, And perverse, Than I would like to admit, Maybe my family knows it, Maybe those closest to me know it, Maybe I'm the only one,

That knows it, But I don't want the light, To eliminate all that, But you see, That's looking at it, From the negative perspective, Sometimes God has to do that, But there's another, Positive purpose to light, God does not judge us, Based on keeping up appearances, He doesn't look at us, As worthy of him, Or his grace, Based on how well, We can put on a show for everybody, He doesn't judge me, Based on how good of a job, I do on Sunday mornings, Some of you might, But he doesn't, He judges me, Based on his son, Washing my sin, Forgiveness, With no strings attached, And then he says, I brought you out of darkness,

[21 : 21] Into the light, I've opened your eyes, You now can see, Me, You now can see my grace, You now can see my love, And now, Let somebody else, See that in you, God used somebody, In your life, Maybe it was a parent, Maybe it was a brother or sister, Maybe it was a neighbor, Maybe it was a co-worker, Somebody in your life, Introduced you, To the light of Christ, Let God use you, To be that light, For somebody else, And introduce them, To the light of Jesus Christ, Daniel 12, Man, The book of Daniel, Has so much rich prophecy in it, That ties in with the book of Revelation, And talks a lot about the end times, But there are actually, Some really great, Right now, Here and now, Applications for us today as well, And this is an awesome, Awesome example of that, Those who are wise, Will shine as bright as the sky, And those who lead many, To righteousness, Did you catch that?

That's being the light, For somebody else, To introduce them to Jesus, Those who lead many, To righteousness, Will shine, Like the stars, Forever, We're going to talk a little bit, More about that next week, About how to be a star, For God, But, This verse, Reminded me so much, Of something, If you are wise, You will shine, As bright, As the sky, If you lead many, To righteousness, You will shine, Like the bright stars, Forever, Would you turn to, Second Corinthians chapter four, Second Corinthians chapter four, In verse one, While you're turning there, I want to remind you of something, Don't turn there now, But judges chapter seven, Tells us the story of Gideon, Gideon and his men, It continues on, From how Gideon was called,

And in verse one, I'm sorry, Verse 19, Down through verse 20, Gideon's men, Broke their clay jars, So their lights, Could shine, And God won, A great victory, Against the Midianites, That day, This mighty army, Was camped, Against God's people, The people of Israel, He called, The least likely, Of the men, In their tribe, To be his warrior, To be his commanding officer, To rally the troops, And lead, A battle, Against Midian, But God had a plan for it, Right?

We talked about a little bit, A few weeks ago, About the men getting down, And looking, And which one was going to be, The best one to call, Looking in the water, Who's going to just drink like a dog, Who's going to keep their wits about them, And be aware of their surroundings, God's ultimate plan there, Was to use, This small, Tiny little army, To seem much larger, Than they were, And he woke up the Midianites, Out of a deep sleep, They were completely disoriented, They see, They hear all this crashing sound, Of these clay pots, These jars breaking, And then they see all this light, On the hillside around them, They think, It's all over, They're about to be destroyed, And they were, God won, An incredible, Victory that day, Because he had them, Break, Their jars, To reveal, The light inside, Now look, At 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 4,

And verse 1, 2nd Corinthians 4, Therefore, Since we have this ministry, Because we were shown mercy, We do not give up, Instead, We renounced, Secret and shameful things, Not acting deceitfully, Or distorting the word of God, But commending ourselves, Before God, To everyone's conscience, By an open display, Of the truth, You see how this is all about openness, The light shining, Not hiding things, Verse 3, But if our gospel, The good news of Jesus, If our gospel is veiled, It is veiled, To those who are perishing, To the people, Who need to hear it most, That's the ones, Who won't get to hear it, In their case, The God of this age, Has blinded the minds, Of the unbelievers, To keep them, From seeing the light, To keep them, From seeing the light, [25 : 59] Of the gospel, Of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God, For we are not, Proclaiming ourselves, But Jesus Christ, As Lord, And ourselves, As your servants, For Jesus' sake, Watch verse 6, For God, Who said, Let light, Shine out of darkness, Has shown in our hearts, To give the light, Of the knowledge, Of God's glory, In the face, Of Jesus Christ, God said, Let there be light, And there was light, God looks at you, And he looks at me, And he says, Let there be light, And my question is, Will there be light, Through us, He gave it to us, He shone the light, In our hearts, Verse 7, Now we have this treasure, In clay jars, So that this extraordinary power,

May be from God, And not from us, My question to you is, You have this light, In your clay jar, Are you going to be a little bit, Like Gideon's men?

Are you going to break the jar, And let the light shine? Nobody, Nobody, Hides a lamp, Under a basket, Because that hides the light, Light has a specific purpose, A lamp has a specific purpose, It's to shed light, If you obscure the light, Then the lamp is not fulfilling, Its purpose, Maybe we need to break, Our jars, But that's hard, Isn't it?

So the question is, Does God want to break you, So your light can shine? What jar in your life, Does God want to break, So that light can shine brightly?

It's not a direct application, Of the story of Gideon, But we can kind of take an example there, Say yeah, God had a plan for them back then, Break those jars, The noise would wake them up, And then boom, There's the light, Well if one guy said, I just don't like that plan, He convinced his buddies, Man, Let's not, Then all of a sudden, There's a gap in the light, And maybe that army, Rushes toward that gap, And overpowers, And escapes, Everybody had to follow, The command of the Lord, To break the jars, And let the light shine, Is there a jar in your life, That God wants to break, So your life can shine, So your light can shine, And are you holding it back, Are you just not willing, To surrender it, Look I get it, I've been there, And I trust him, But not completely, I don't know how to get to heaven,

[29 : 09] So I'll trust God, I'll believe what I read about that, But I know how to handle my retirement, I know how to handle this relationship, I know how to handle this, In my life, So I'm not

surrendering the keys to that, I'm going to hold on to that jar, Light's not going to shine, In this area of my life, You know why, I can't afford to be a Christian over here, I can't afford to give God control, Of my finances, Who knows what he's going to do with it, I can't afford to give God, Control of this relationship, What if I end up with egg on my face, What if people see, Where I've failed, Is there a jar in your life, That God is waiting on you to break, So the light can shine through, Acts 13 and verse 47, Acts 13 and verse 47, The Lord gave us this command, When he said, I have made you a light to the Gentiles,

To bring salvation, To the farthest corners of the earth, Why don't you start right here in your corner, It's so much easier sometimes, For churches to think about, Bringing salvation to the farthest corners, Not the ones closest to them, Salvation needs to go, To those people in Africa, That don't have churches like we do, It needs to go to those countries, That we can't pronounce, It needs to go to all those, Third world places, Or maybe Europe, You know where, The gospel used to be, Everywhere and now the churches, Just are poorly attended, Gospel needs to go to those places, Right?

But not right here in Texas, Man, we got it, We got it figured out, We're the Bible Belt, Or hadn't you heard, God made us a light, To the Gentiles, Well we can look at that, Now today, As the people who don't know, About Jesus, Do you realize, That over 80% of the people, That live in Henrietta, Texas, Do not attend the church, Realize that?

I didn't come up, With those numbers, There's darkness, There's darkness, All around us, And we are the light, To bring salvation, Right here, And all around the world, I want to share a quote, From one of the greatest, Preachers that we would, Read and look at today, From England, They called him, The prince of preachers, Charles Spurgeon, He said this, The Bible is not, The light of the world, Now if you just stop it, Right there, And you say the Bible, Is not the light of the world, What are you talking about man?

But he puts it in perspective, He says the Bible, Is the light of the church, But the world, Doesn't read the Bible, Did you know, That if you go to sleep, With the Bible held over your heart, Every night, That's not going to make you, A Christian?

[32 : 08] Did you know, That if you sleep with it, Under your pillow at night, You're not going to memorize, What it says inside? There's no osmosis system there, Okay? The Bible has to be read, Understood, Meditated upon, Applied, To make a difference, In your life, Well the world without Jesus, Is rarely if ever, Going to do that, But Jesus' followers, His children, That is what we are supposed, To be doing, So that is where, We get our light from God, The understanding, That the Holy Spirit gives us, When we read his words, But the world doesn't read the Bible, They read Christians, They read us, So Jesus was right, When he said, You are the light, Of the world, My question for you today, Finally, Is this, How bright, Is your light?

How bright, Is your light? Is there an area, That you are still hiding, In a jar? Is there an area, You are still hiding, Under a basket? Is it fear? Is it doubt? Is it bitterness?

Is it apathy? Is it self absorption? Being self absorbed? Is it lust? Is it ego? Is it priorities? Is it tradition? What area of your life, Or maybe of this church, Are we still holding back, Under a jar? And we will not let, God's light, Shine through there, How bright, Is our light, Would you bow with me, In prayer? God, It's hard to, Live with the attention, That we get, As Christians, And that's why, Sometimes we fail, Sometimes we just give up, And say, Forget it man, I can't do this, People judge me, People judge me, Unfairly, People have unreasonable, Expectations of me, But we know, That your expectations, Are obeying you, From the heart, Doing everything, Without complaining, Without arguing, Living clean, Innocent lives, And you're going to, Empower us to do that, But so often, Your people, Have done the opposite, God, I want to repent, To you today, For the many times, That I've done the opposite, I pray that you would, Lead our church, Into repentance, For not, Brightly shining, Our light, We want to look good, We want people, To think highly of us, But so often times, We're not shining your light, We're trying to, Convince everybody, To look at us, Instead of looking at you, God I pray that you, Would convict hearts right now, Starting with mine, And if there's somebody, Here today, That doesn't know you, As their personal savior, Maybe it's somebody, Who started coming recently, Maybe it's a guest, Maybe it's somebody, Who's been here a long time, But they're going to, Admit today, I need Jesus, To change me, I'm finally putting, My faith in him, Not myself, Nothing else, Just the sacrifice, Grace and love, Of Jesus Christ, Church if that's you, If there's anybody here today, Who says I'd like to surrender, My life to Jesus today, Would you slip your hand up, And I'll pray for you, Thank you,

[35 : 37] Thank you, Thank you, Put your hand down, Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, How many of you would say, God's dealing with me, About something else right now, Maybe it's something, About shining my light, Maybe it's something, Totally different, But I need prayer right now, Would you pray for me as well, Would you slip your hand up, And I'll pray for you as well, Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, All over the room, God you see the hands, But more importantly, You know what's going on, In each heart, And I pray that you, Would win the day, That flesh, And that Satan, Would not overwhelm, Your voice, Your word was preached, And God, I didn't do the, Best job of it, But you, By your spirit, Can overcome, All of our weaknesses, You can change us, Change us by your power, Let your light shine, From your people, Draw them to you, Make an impact, In this area,

For your kingdom, In Jesus name we ask it, Amen, Church would you stand to your feet, Jared's going to leave us, Very briefly in a song, This is a great time to pray, Amen,