

# Being Salt and Light

Matthew

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Before we turn to our Bible study, if you want evidence that I'm an old soul, it's hard to hear that song without thinking of George Beverly Shea. In fact, it was about two decades ago, I had the opportunity and the privilege of not just being at a Billy Graham Crusade, but being a part of kind of the inner workings and I had to pass that allowed me backstage, and I'll go and answer the question, I did not get to sit and talk with Billy Gram, so I'll go ahead answer that question. But I saw whom we know as George Beverly Shea just sitting on a bench all by himself. Now think about it, at a Billy Graham Crusade there are a lot of what we might call Christian celebrities there, whether it be the musicians, those that are going to be giving testimonies, those who have access backstage, and everybody was carousing around. So I just made it a point to go make myself happy and sit right next to George Beverly Shea, and when I got next to him, he asked me, he said, "Why are you sitting next to an old man tonight?" And I said, "Well, Mr. Shea, I know who you are." He said, "Well, nobody else here does." And I said, "Well, I bet they will in a few moments." He said, "You bet they will." I said, we talked, I said, "Are you going to be singing tonight?" He said, "Well, of course. Why else am I here?" And I said, "Please tell me you're going to sing 'I'd rather have Jesus.'" He said, "Son, is there any other song to sing?" And I thought what a fitting conversation for this evening as well.

Let's pray.

*Heavenly Father, as we open your holy word tonight, may the theme of our lives be, it doesn't matter the amount of silver or gold, of lands, riches untold, but may it only be you. Lord, this world offers us so much as an alternative to you and, Lord, yet even though it is glistening on the outside, it will be, as you said in your word, it will be eaten by moths and rusted one day on the inside. Tonight, Lord, as we read your word, as we study your word, as we are challenged by your word, Lord, may we rather have you than anything else. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

Tonight we turn to Matthew 5, beginning in verse 13. Very famous passage of scripture, what we know collectively as the Sermon on the Mount, and for those of you that are gathered with us tonight whether in person or online for the first time, I want to welcome you to a study of what we know as the book of Matthew for more purposes than just one

of the respective gospels of Jesus Christ. Matthew serves a very strategic place in scripture, not just because it comes after 430 years of inspired biblical silence of the Old Testament, not just because it is the first book of what we know as the New Testament, but because it draws from the riches of the prophecy of the Old Testament, not only introduces us to the church rather than the temple, to the new covenant rather than the old, to the messiah in the flesh rather than just promised of days of old, but it also gives us so much insight not just to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ but ultimately to what we know as end time events, second coming. I'm of the belief that if you can grasp the book of Matthew you can get the totality of scripture, so this really is more than a study of Matthew, it's a study of the entirety of the bible with what we know as the gospel of Matthew as the platform by which we will spring off of. In what we know as the Sermon on the Mount, it begins with these famous beatitudes and then beginning in verse 13 through 16, Jesus Christ uses two illustrations that of being salt and that of being light, and tonight I'm going to begin the message by addressing our traditional perspective or teaching on these respective illustrations, and then I want to take a deep dive in the deep end, so to speak, and look at what might have been lying underneath what Jesus was communicating to an audience that had gathered great in number.

He said,

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Two very basic and simple illustrations that those that were listening are called to be salt and they are to be light, and I want to begin with what we might call the inspirational perspective of this passage. Remember that every text that we study has a historical application, a doctrinal application, and an inspirational or devotional application. What that simply means is historically, Jesus was here on the mount, there was a large crowd gathered, he spoke the words that we have recorded in the text of scripture. Doctrinally speaking, as we'll spend the majority of our time tonight, he spoke these words to a specific people at a specific time for a specific purpose. Inspirationally or devotionally, it doesn't matter what passage in the Bible that you find yourself in, as a born-again believer in Jesus Christ, every story, every scenario, every character somehow can teach us what it means to walk in a deeper walk with the Lord.

So what is the inspiration? As a believer in Jesus Christ, what does it mean when the Bible says that we are to be salt, we are to be light? When we speak about salt, this passage warns us that we can "lose our savor." It's not just written here, but it's also in Luke 14 as well, and what that means is we don't lose who we are, but we can lose our

impact. We can lose our testimony. We can lose our influence on the world that is around us.

I'm reminded of the parable of the sower. In fact, Jesus told us in Mark 5, he said, "If you can understand this parable, you can understand all parables." The sower goes to seed and that seed falls on four different types of ground. It falls on that which is bearing in such and immediately the fowls of the air take it away. It lands on that which is rocky and immediately springs up, but soon thereafter is scorched because it lacks root. Then it speaks about one that bears fruit for a season, but because of the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of other things, it becomes unfruitful. And then there's one that bears some 30, 60 and 100 fold. It's that third seed that is so convicting to me. It became unfruitful. That means there was a time it bore fruit, there was a time that it had impact, there was a time it had influence, there was a time that had brought nourishment to those that were around, but now has found itself lacking.

What does it say here? That salt can lose its savor. It doesn't cease to be salt. It hasn't lost its identity per se, but it's lost its impact. It's lost its influence. And you and I, as we'll come full circle at the end of the message, have become, at least in our culture today, our salt often has lost its savor. There's another means by which salt is used throughout the scripture, it's used in a discourse in Mark 9 in regards to the concept of the doctrine of hell. There in Mark 9, Jesus is speaking about the tragedy of one who descends into hell, the length of time, the gravity of what is experienced there, the torturers they're in, and it says there that the flame is salted with salt, as if the picture is to increase its intensity, to increase its impact. And so again, whether we have the illustration of one losing impact or influence, or one adding to, that is the premise of salt. In fact, as a friend of mine of days gone by said that we have not been called to be stew, we have called to be salt. You say, "What do you mean, stew?" Well, if you think about it, when we make stew, we put a lot of different items in it. Usually there's a meat product and a variety of vegetables. But the thing about stew is this, it doesn't matter how big a bite you take, it all tastes the same. Yet salt, no matter what you place it on, brings a distinctiveness to it. It makes it different. It allows that which is there to come out, to stand out, to be different and distinct.

So the illustration of salt is for us as believers that we can lose our savor, but we also can bring influence and impact. What about the picture of being light? Obviously, in John 8:12, it says that Jesus is the light of the world. In a world that has so many opportunities and options to "light itself," Jesus is the only one who can bring true light into the world, and believers are called the agents of light. In fact, in 2 Corinthians 4:4, it says, "Marvel not that Satan has blinded the eyes of those in the world today lest the glorious light of Jesus Christ be shown unto them." I don't know if you've ever had a personal conversation, or you've just been mesmerized by what happens in the culture and in the news, have you ever had a conversation or watched a news story, and you thought to yourself, "How can people actually think that? How can they actually believe that?" And typically our flesh creeps up and we say, "Have you lost your mind?" They haven't lost their mind, Satan has blinded their eyes so they cannot see the truth though it be right in front of them. And it says that that has occurred lest the glorious light of Jesus Christ be

shown unto them, You and I as believers in Jesus Christ, are agents of light. In a world that is growing increasingly dark, one of the things that I've witnessed, and you have as well, is that no matter how dark the room is, if one point of light enters in, it can make a dramatic difference, particularly over time. One light can light the darkest corner of any room, no matter what the depth of darkness is.

We've been called to be salt, we've been called to be light, but before we come back full circle of that, let's look at the doctrinal application of this passage because remember, as I've stated almost every single time we gather, there is not one born-again believer in Jesus Christ at the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus Christ has not gone through the totality of his ministry. He has not shed his blood on the cross. He has not risen from the grave. The tomb is not empty as of yet which means that that which we inherently know, that which we've testified as the Church for 2,000 years is not who is there. In fact, who's gathered before him? Almost every single person, if not every person, grew up in what we know as the Jewish faith system. They grew up going to the synagogue on a weekly basis, to the temple during the feasts and the festivals, they gathered their resources, they brought the sacrifice, they were there at the Day of Atonement praying that God would receive the confession and the repentance of their sins. But yet there was a man by the name of John the Baptist who called them out of that works-based system and pointed them to Jesus, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. What did he declare to those that were there? That they are the salt of the earth, that they are the light of the world.

Now, I'm going to go ahead and confess from the very beginning that on a scale of 1 to 10 of political incorrectness, we're about to go to stage 11, if that's okay with you, because who is Jesus speaking to? He's speaking to those who had the bloodline of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is speaking to those that, though it be years later, were a part of an ancestry that began with Abram in Genesis 12, and would climax in whom we know as the Messiah, Jesus Christ who stood before them. When Jesus spoke to them as the salt of the earth, as the light of the world, it was more than just making influence and impact. In fact, we have biblical history, we have human history that will testify to such.

Four aspects of this that I'd like to address tonight. The first in verse 13 is the potential that Jesus spoke about those that stood before him, whom we know as Israel. By the way, according to Romans 2:28, Israel is not just somebody with a specific "bloodline," though oftentimes that comes into play, Israel are those who were circumcised in the heart, not just in the flesh. Israel is the salt of the earth. In fact, if you go back to Genesis 12 and 15, and also Isaiah 49, one of the things that we discover is that God used the mechanism of Israel to bring the totality of the world unto himself. In fact, he says, "I will bless all nations." And I have friends of mine who are Jewish by blood and also Jewish by faith. I have friends of mine that are Messianic Jews, meaning they're Jewish by blood, they're Christian by faith. And I love to have conversation with these friends of mine and remind them that all of us were Gentiles until Genesis 12, but there came that point when God called out Abram and he called out Sarah, and eventually we had child of promise with Isaac and Jacob and the 12 tribes, eventually Jesus Christ, whom we know as Israel has not always been. According to Isaiah 42 and 45, they are the elect of God, chosen by God to be the means and the instrument by which he would bring salvation to the ends of the

earth. Israel was called out. Israel was specifically designated for this purpose, and this means that what did God say? He said that because of who they are and what he had called them to do, they would be a light to the Gentiles, they would be an arm to the Gentiles, and that all nations would be blessed because of them.

One of the things that we're going to discuss tonight, it is there is amazing phenomena that you can study anthropologically or any other way, that where the people of God are there is blessing and where they are not there is not. However, today Israel has "lost its savor." I didn't say it lost their identity, I said it lost their impact, their influence, their savor. Why? Because there's that famous scene in Matthew 27. Jesus is there on the steps of Pontius Pilate's palace. There's two men that stand before the people. There is Jesus of Nazareth and there's a man by the name of Barabbas. Jesus is only guilty of healing people, multiplying food and bringing hope to the hopeless. Barabbas is guilty of mass murder, extortion, among many other things. You remember what the people said, "Give us Barabbas." When Pilate declared, "But this man has done no wrong," remember what the leaders of Israel said, "May his blood be upon us, our children and future generations." Can I just say one of the most unwise decorations that was ever made.

And there in Acts 7, we have a man by the name of Stephen. The church is in its infancy days and stages. This man named Stephen is taken outside the gate. He declares that Jesus Christ is the Messiah much against those that held to that Jewish thought, belief and philosophy. It says they gnashed on him with their teeth. It says they came upon him and they physically removed his life with the stones that were in their hands. You remember who was present that day, a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus. I'm sure that he was grinning from ear to ear, after all, it was his purpose to eradicate these people that he called "of the Way." In fact, it says that the clothes of Stephen were thrown at the foot of Saul of Tarsus. It wouldn't be but just a little ways that he would make his way to Damascus, he would meet the Savior Jesus Christ there on the road, and his life would be forever changed, so much so that the book of Romans, he says, "I am the apostle to the Gentiles." And ever since, the overwhelming majority of people who come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior have been Gentile by background, even though the early church in its initial days was primarily Jewish, hence Acts 2 through 7.

Yet today, not only has Israel lost its savor, it's been cast out. The year was approximately 70 AD. The Romans gathered around the city of Jerusalem, the place of Judea, and they made sure that whom we know as the Jewish people no longer had a place to reside and live. In fact, it was there that a remnant of Jewish people found their way to the southern border of what we know as the Dead Sea, a mount by the name of Masada. For three years, they waited out those Roman mercenaries until finally their life was taken from them and for 1,900 years they found themselves nomadic in nature. They found themselves going from, shall we say, rental agreement to rental agreement, lease agreement to lease agreement wherever they could find a place to stay. They were cast out, and can we agree that they were trodden under?

There's never been a group of people more hated in this world than the Jewish people. They've been despised by almost every leader who's ever come to power, and one of the

common denominators of most dictators is to eradicate all Jewish people from any place of the land in which they rule. One of the most famous trodden under has actually happened in a year that's very well-known to those of us here in the United States of America. The year was 1492. Isn't that not the year that Columbus sailed the ocean blue? Yet one of the reasons that most people don't realize that 1492 is such a critical year, is that was the famous year of the Edict of Expulsion. The country of Spain had been home to the Jewish people for many, many years, yet they were told that a certain day, at a certain time they were no longer welcome. They were to remove themselves. They were no longer to be residents of that great country. Spain wasn't the first, and it surely wasn't the last. In recent days, I think we can all agree one of the greatest trodden downs of the Jewish people came at the hands of the 20th century Nazi regime where at least six and a half million Jewish people were eradicated from the face of the earth simply because of their lineage, their history, their heritage and their faith. There's never been a group of people more hated and more despised than these people and yet at the same time, as we'll discover tonight, they may be trodden down, they may lose their savor, but they haven't lost their identity and ultimately, prophetically, they have not lost their impact and their influence.

So what is the promise that God says? Not only do they have the potential to be the salt of the earth, they have the promised that they are a light, a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. Yes, lost savor. Yes, has been cast out and trodden down. But in the book of Genesis, 17 as well, 2 Samuel 7, we discover that Israel has an everlasting covenant. Now, what was that covenant that the Lord established with them? That there is a very strategic piece of dirt on planet earth that is to have no owner other than the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is the most controversial piece of dirt on the planet. As the old adage says, in real estate it's location, location, location, and if you've been to the Middle East, if you've been to the Holy Land and you ask somebody who's in the know, what's the price tag on the Temple Mount, do you what they will tell you? There is no price for this piece of land, this piece of dirt. What was the covenant that God gave them? He called it an everlasting covenant and I remind people who question what the Bible says about this: the same God who said that dirt is an everlasting covenant is the same God that told you in John 3:16 that Jesus Christ would give you everlasting life. So before you dismiss the covenant of the dirt to Israel, be quick that you don't dismiss your own relationship with the Lord as well.

Jesus promised that even though cast out, even though downtrodden, even under the foot of man, that whom we know as Israel would return. Matthew 24. Jesus preaches another famous and yet controversial sermon. We call it the Mount of Olives message or the Olivet Discourse. Alongside the Sermon on the Mount, probably the top two messages or sermons that people know from the lips of Jesus Christ. There he was on the eastern side of the Temple Mount looking down not only on that famous temple, but on the side of the events that were to come in days ahead, and though he teaches this great eschatological or second coming truths, right there in the middle, Matthew 24, he says, "Let me tell you a parable of a fig tree." He said, "The fig tree will go bearing, but you know that when it begins to bud that there soon will be fruit again." Now all throughout your Old Testament, whom we know as Israel is parallel to and is mentioned as a "fig tree." What

was Jesus saying? Jesus was prophesying what you and I know today as history, that the Jewish people, the Israelite people would be downtrodden, they would be cast out, they would be attempted to be exterminated but there would be a time that they would return.

I know that there are a lot of things in scripture that should cause us to believe, should inspire us to believe, two of the things that I'll mention tonight on a personal level and then on a corporate level personally. Every person who despised and hated Jesus Christ, not one of them ever questioned if he walked on water. Not one of them ever questioned if he healed three different blind men. They never questioned what he did, they questioned the authority by which he did it. But on a corporate level, if you were to come to me and say, give me a reason that I should believe the Bible, give me a reason that I should believe what the scripture doesn't just say about days past but of days future, I would point you to a black-eyed pea size of dirt in the Middle East known as Israel. You explain to me who a group of people that the world has tried to exterminate from time beginning is not just still here, but they thrive. You explain to me how Israel that was a desert 70 years ago now is inhabited by these people and it's the leading exporter of fruit to Europe. You explain to me how everybody is all upset about all the oil in the Middle East, and yet Israel's got plenty yet to discover. You explain to me that though they are .02% of the world's population, they've won almost half the Nobel Prizes. You explain to me that. You can't explain it. What did the Lord Jesus Christ said? He said, "They will be trodden under, they'll be cast out but that fig tree is going to bloom again and when it does, you better have your eyes to the eastern sky because your redemption draws nigh."

He says those who care for the Israelites are blessed. According to Genesis 12, all nations will be blessed and then in Psalms 122 it talks about praying for the peace of Jerusalem and Israel collectively. What I'm about to share with you is not a political statement. It's a theological statement. Now I know there are those that will read it as a political statement and I understand why they would, but it's really not political in nature at all. It is completely theological. The most unwise, unscriptural thing that any entity can do is turn their back on the Jewish people. You turn your back on them and you better go ahead and kiss your back goodbye because I've got news for you: when Jesus Christ comes back, he sets up shop in Jerusalem in Israel and he works his kingdom through his people. And the rest of us who think it's about us are exactly what we are, we are narcissistic and unwise.

So what was Jesus' response in verse 15? "Neither do you put it under a bushel, you giveth light to all the house." I want you to think about the impact, the influence that the Jewish people have had while in a foreign territory or foreign country. What God did through them even if they weren't in their homeland, even if they weren't in their place of permanent residence. At the end of what we know as the book of Genesis, there was a man by the name of Joseph. Joseph was Jewish, of course. He was a descendant of the patriarchal family gene. He found himself sold by his brothers, eventually in the land of Egypt, but what happened to Egypt because of Joseph? They were blessed, were they not? Everybody else was in famine. Oh, not Egypt, because they had a man by the name of Joseph who was there, who acted wisely on behalf of the Lord. And when. Egypt went sideways, according to scripture it says, "There rose a pharaoh who knew not Joseph," and when that happened, though the materialism of Egypt rose, the debauchery increased

alongside. What we know as the wilderness was blessed because of who was in it. If you'll do a study of where the Israelites were during that famous wilderness experience, you cannot draw any conclusion other than it was hell on earth. There wasn't a fruit tree anywhere. There was limited to no water. In fact, the water was so scarce they had to go to a rock to get it. Nobody could have even imagined living there a few days, much less 40 years, but think about what happened to the wilderness when the Jewish people were there. Water came out of rocks and manna came out of the sky. Where they were was blessed not because of the geographical location, but because of who was there.

So Egypt was blessed because of their presence. the wilderness was blessed because of their presence, and even Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, the man who ransacked Jerusalem, tore down the temple, and took all of those of wise and potential to his understudy and eliminated the rest, even Babylon was blessed because of the Jewish people. Who did Nebuchadnezzar put in charge? Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He found them 10 times better than any other young man that was there under their system of learning and education. What do we discover? That Jesus Christ said that the Jewish people are like the light of the world. You put them in the darkest place and they'll light it up. Put them in a desert and fruit will come forth. Put them in a barren land and water will come out of rocks.

I want to go there tonight because whether we know it or not, the place that most of us call home, not everybody online, but most of us here, this great place, this great country, you realize that we've been the home of the Jewish people for most of the last 500 years. This is where they resided. They've been kicked out of France, they've been kicked out of Spain, they've been kicked out of every place else but they found themselves a home in what we know as this country, the United States of America. Until 1948, 1948 by just the sheer hand of God, after losing six and a half million people to the Holocaust, the Jewish people fight for their independence and somehow win. That's another one of those if you don't believe they're of God, just watch and look at what happened back then. I'm going to ask you a very difficult question tonight. Prior to 1948, get your history books going in your head, prior to 1948 name for me a single war that America lost. You can't. In fact, if you study the history of the wars, particularly World War I and World War II, I don't know how we did it. I want you to think since 1948. I want you to name one war we've won. Silence, isn't it? What's the difference? The Jewish people. The Jewish people called this place their home until 1948 then they "went back home." We never lost a war with them. We've never won one without them. You tell me they're not the light of the world. You tell me they're not the salt of the earth. And how dare any of us think turning our back on them? Last time I checked, wherever they are, things happen, where they're not, things happen the opposite direction.

Jesus said you don't put it under a bushel, you let it shine. And finally, in verse 16 he says, "Let your light so shine before men so that they might glorify your Father." Tonight, I want to speak to three what I call restorations. He said in that famous parable of the fig tree that they would return. The first is the easy one, it's the geographical restoration. They are in the land by which the Lord said that was theirs with an everlasting covenant. By the way, as far as technicalities are concerned, in 1917 Prime Minister of what we

know as England by the name of Balfour declared that the Jewish people could go back home. It was theirs. They had a right to it. Of course, they did not reside there, nor lived there until what we know as 1948. When the world at large acknowledged that this was their home, this was their place, they won their independence somehow, supernaturally and miraculously, even after what we know as the Holocaust. 1967, every country that geographically surrounds what we know as the people of Jewish descent decided to attack. They decided to take them out and eliminate them. We call it the Seven-Day War. Why? Because six days later they won. How do you explain it? You can't. How do you explain that for the first time in 1,900 years they actually didn't just possess land by way of declaration from the United Nations or Balfour, they actually could put residence in Jerusalem.

The Yom Kippur War, if you haven't studied that of 1973, those that despised the Jewish people had a pretty good battle strategy, attack during the Sabbath. Attack during Yom Kippur when all the men who serve would be in Jerusalem, they'd be worshipping, they'd be doing the things that they do on that special feast day. Without speaking ad nauseam tonight, when you study what took place in that famous war, there are accounts of men who are there by less than 12 in number with only tanks that numbered one, and those who attacked claimed they saw an entire battalion before them. It just sounds like the book of Joshua and Judges again in this contemporary culture.

Geographically there has been restoration. The fig tree has bloomed. But let's talk faith for a moment. Not so much so. In fact, if you were to go to Israel today, the overwhelming majority of Jewish people are what they call secular Jews. They are just Jewish by birth, by "national pride" or in family descendancy going to the synagogue, reading the Torah, observing the feast. It's not on the radar. It's not about who they are. It's secular at best. Yet in the last book of the Bible in Revelation 7, which is in the midst of all those second coming activities, it speaks about the 12 tribes, it speaks about out of each of them there will be 12,000 young men who proclaim the truth of God's word. And yet today, one's tribal ancestry is rarely, if ever known.

It's not the first time. In fact, when the Israelites found themselves in Babylon for 70 years and they came back, and when Ezra and Nehemiah did the things they did, one of the things that took place is they found the scrolls in the temple and when they found the scrolls, if you'll read Ezra 2, it testifies to this, there's this entire chapter of all the lineages of the families. And I'll be honest with you, as a pig-eating Gentile, it's boring. But it's purposeful. What was God saying? Those that had gone to Babylon that had lost their tribal identity, it's now been regained. Those tribes were set-up in a certain way, in a certain means for a very specific purpose.

And then in Revelation 11, again, last book of the Bible, it speaks of a temple that is there physically. It speaks of the measurements thereof. It speaks of the courts. It speaks even later of these famous two witnesses that bear testimony. I realize that the faith-based religious restoration of what we know as Israel has not yet occurred as of the speaking of tonight's message. They may be in the land but they are secular at best. But the Bible says that one day there will be a restoration. In fact, in Romans 11:25 and 26, it talks about the

time of the Gentiles, that's our time, that one day will come to an end and then it speaks of all of Israel. Most importantly, a spiritual restoration. It's one thing to have a temple, it's another thing to have some type of tribal ancestry, but more importantly is one's relationship with the Lord and there in Revelation 7:9, it talks about those of every tribe and every nation who believe. In fact, there's ample evidence in the last book of your Bible that there's not just the restoration of the Jewish people, there is a revival of the Jewish people who finally, after the abomination of desolations, after all these horrific, prophetic events, realize that the one that they declared, "May his blood be on us and our children forever," finally turn to believe in the blood that was shed for them.

Why is this important for you and I today? Well, again, it speaks to our everyday life, speaks of the covenant, speaks of the geopolitical movements and how God has, continues and will always operate. But you and I as believers in Jesus Christ, we're the body of Christ. Israel inherits the earth, not us. Israel has a covenant with dirt, not us. But it is these doctrinal teachings that should inspire us to be the salt and the light in the world wherein we live. Let's think about the parallel here, where you spend your days, whether that be in home, whether that be at work, whether that be with a lot of people or with few people, wherever you reside, it should be better with you present than with you absent. In fact, I believe that believers in Jesus Christ ought to be the most valued employee of any company, not because they make the most money, but because they have the greatest character and the greatest faith. We should be the light in a dark world. We should be those that wherever we go, our countenance, because of Christ Jesus, lights up the room, changes the place and makes a difference. We have been called as believers to be salt and to be light, and we may not own, we may not possess "the land," but we do have the ability to change the atmosphere. You and I have been called to be salt, we've been called to be light, and just like the physical Israel changes wherever they find themselves, we ought to change wherever we find ourselves.

And so we, as believers, ought to change the environment we find ourselves, the place of work, our homes, whatever it may be. Jesus says you do not put it under a bushel but you let it shine. Today, you and I as believers in Jesus Christ, we're being told, and I'm just going to speak southernese for a moment, we're being told as believers, "Sit down, shut up and get out of the way." According to scripture, we've got to stand up, speak up and get right in the middle of everything because he called us to be light and he called us to be salt, and the last thing we want to do is lose our savor or be found under a bushel. We were designed to make a difference. We were designed to make an impact. We were designed to influence. And just like the character of Job that we've studied on Sunday morning, we should not listen to our critics who contradict the word of God. We have been called to make a difference. We've been called to make an impact, to do no less would go against the direction and the directive of the one who saved us and gave himself for us.

Let's pray with their heads bowed, our eyes closed. Maybe tonight, as we gather in this place, though the majority of the passage and the message was about that which often goes on around us, maybe the Lord used it to impact that which is within us. Maybe tonight is the night, even in a place and a time such as this, where we would call on the

name of the Lord. Maybe tonight is the night that we finally would admit our sin and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. Or maybe tonight as a believer, one who oftentimes here's the verbiage of the criticism of the world to not shine and to not make impact and influence, maybe tonight it's about heeding the voice of our Savior more than of our critics. Maybe tonight it's a decision to stand on the truth of God's word and not to fall for the lies of this old dark world. Whatever the decision, may we just respond appropriately.

*Lord Jesus, tonight as we come to this time of decision, it may require us to step out and step forward, but most assuredly it will require us to step out of this place. Lord, we cannot help but be convicted by that which we have read and that which we have studied and that which we have heard tonight. Lord, you have called us to be different, you have called us to be distinct, and our flesh is concerned, our flesh is nervous, our flesh is bothered but God, you inhabit us with your Holy Spirit. So tonight, as we come to this time of response, as we come to this time of decision, may your voice be the voice we hear and none other. God, what it is that you have called us to, may we take direction from you and none other. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*