

## SUNDAY

September 26, 2010

**READ:** Matthew 5: 13-14

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** Why do you think Jesus used the metaphors of salt and light to describe what his followers are like? What is the nature of salt. Of light? What do they do? What is their value?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Salt and light make profound differences in the environment in which they are found.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** When served a meal, what is one of the first things that many people do...sometimes before even tasting the food? What would food taste like without seasonings, such as salt? How is it improved? Would you like to eat without the benefit of salt?

Likewise, why do we turn on a light in a dark room or take a flashlight with us when we go outside at night? What does the light do for us?

**PRAY:** As we enter into this week, consider Jesus' description of us as salt and light in the world and pray for God's enlightenment for how these phrases have application in our lives on a daily basis. Pray that He would not only reveal what it means for us, but for His Spirit to prompt us to action when we have the opportunity to act as salt and light

## MONDAY

September 27, 2010

**READ:** Matthew 5: 13-16

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** The passage talks about salt losing its saltiness and the light being hidden from view. Neither of these things allows those important things to be of any use. How might those descriptions apply to us as Christ followers? What is it that might cause us to lose our saltiness or hide our light?

**KEY CONCEPT:** For us to be what God desires us to be, we should not hide the fact that we are Christ followers. As the Spirit transforms our nature, we should desire this to impact what we say and do with our lives.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** When you were a student and earned an "A" on your report card or on a test, were you reluctant to let others know about that because they might treat you differently when you just wanted to fit in with the crowd? From a spiritual perspective, how is denying Jesus' instruction to let our saltiness flavor our surroundings and our light illuminate our environment like that? How is it different? What is it that keeps us from wanting to be fully Christ's ambassador (see 2 Cor. 17-21)? When you consider all that Jesus has done for us...ultimately giving up his life on the cross...are you prompted to live a more openly Jesus-honoring lifestyle? In what ways has your life been changed because of what He has done for you?

**PRAY:** Living a biblically salty life can be a challenge at times. Sometimes we are tempted to hide our light under the bushel basket and go along with the crowd. Today spend some time reflecting on the situations that cause you to put Jesus in the back seat rather than behind the wheel of your car. Ask God for His help in fully submitting those areas to Him, asking Him to help you live by His guidance from the time you hit the floor in the morning until you put your head on the pillow at night.

## TUESDAY

September 28, 2010

**READ:** Matthew 5: 13-16 (emphasis vs. 14)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** Why do you think Jesus said that a city on a hill cannot be hidden? What application does it have in the context of this passage? What correlation does a city on a hill have to being a follower of Jesus?

**KEY CONCEPT:** The transformed life of one who has trusted Jesus as their Lord is something that is easily seen by others who observe them.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** What are some aspects of a life that has been transformed by Jesus?

If you have given your life to Christ at a time in the memorable past, what difference did He make in your life since that decision?

How has the impact of Jesus in your life been observable to others? Have you sensed any impact that your Christian lifestyle choices have made on others around you? Should we expect them to? In what ways?

**PRAY:** Continue to lift your faith journey to God in prayer, asking Him to mold you into a vessel that He can use to bless and influence others around you through what you say and how you live your life. Ask God to help you live a life a life that matches your words about being a Christ follower.

## WEDNESDAY

September 29, 2010

**READ:** Matthew 5: 13-16 (emphasis v. 16)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What can you infer about how important Jesus believes His followers can be if they will allow themselves to be used by Him? What is the end result of a faithful Christian?

**KEY CONCEPT:** God gets the glory when people allow themselves to be openly available and used by God to achieve His purposes.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Does it make you uncomfortable when you are singled out for something good that you have done? If so, why do you think that is?

If you enjoy the limelight, do you use it in any way to bring people's attention to God?

How can we accomplish being commended for our faithfulness without becoming prideful about it? Do you practice anything in your own spiritual journey to help keep your pride in check?

**PRAY:** As you strive to live a life given over to God's purposes, realize that a trap Satan will try to spring is to encourage a prideful spirit to inflate when you receive compliments and words of appreciation for what you are doing. Idea: Take these compliments as if you were receiving individual flowers, and at the end of the day, offer them up to God as a bouquet of love and thanksgiving for His faithfulness to you. Include in your prayers a request for God to help you "die to yourself" spiritually and to block pride from growing in your heart and mind.

## THURSDAY

September 30, 2010

**READ:** Matthew 5: 13

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** How would you translate Jesus' metaphor about the salt that loses its saltiness being thrown out to be trampled by men? How might that relate to a Christ follower who no longer is living a life different from the world around him?

**KEY CONCEPT:** If we are to be of value in helping to establish the kingdom of God on Earth, we respond to the call of Jesus on our lives with willing hearts and ready lives.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** How much of your faith journey is "head knowledge" about the Bible?

Are you open to God asking you to do or say something that may be a stretch for you...putting you outside of your comfort zone? In what ways do you sense that God wants to use you as "salt" in the circumstances of your life? Do you feel you are living out your faith actively, or passively? If passively...what would your life look like if it you were more actively living it for God?

**PRAY:** God wants you to know Him...not just know about Him. Today, pray that God will reveal Himself to you in a deeper, interactive way in your heart. Allow Him to speak to you personally. Ask Him to help you trust Him more, so that you can more easily allow Him to guide you and help you become an active follower of Jesus with saltiness that is value to Him.

## FRIDAY

October 1, 2010

**READ:** Matthew 5: 13-16 (emphasis on v. 15)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** In Jesus' time, people used small clay lamps that burned olive oil. To be of value in lighting the darkness, these small lamps had to be put in a high location so that it could shine its light throughout the room. How does the small lamp in a dark room compare to the actions of a single follower of Christ? Can one person make much of a difference?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Jesus can use every single person to make an impact. Even our "small flame" can light the darkness in a special way, and it's important to God's plan that we step out in faith and let it shine.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Think people you know who shine the light of Jesus in some special way. What is it that they do (i.e. take time to listen to people's concerns, pitch in to help out in whatever way they can for people or the church, help financially when they see a need, etc.). Is this person someone whom you like to be around? Why?

Are you aware of any ways in which God has shaped you to be a light for Him? Do you have certain abilities that He can use for the benefit of others? Are you presently, or have you considered, using them in Kingdom service?

**PRAY:** Spend some time today thinking about yourself...your physical health and abilities, your spiritual gifts (if you know what they are), your talents, ways in which you have heard other people compliment you for what you can do. These are all blessings that God has given to you (see James 1:17). Lift all these before God with a prayer of thanksgiving for His kindness...and offer them to Him for service in the Kingdom of God.

## SATURDAY

October 2, 2010

**READ:** Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 5: 16

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** Reflect on the complimentary aspects of Hebrews and Matthew readings. What is each passage telling us we are to do? Is it good to do one without the other? What would happen if we did?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Balance in the Christian life entails coming together in community for encouragement and going out to shine the light of Christ in a sin-darkened world.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** The church is our haven, our hospital, our training center. It is important that we stay in regular connection with the local church. However to be salt and light, we need to go out into the world of people who are dying without the message of the gospel...in word and deed.

What role does coming to worship play in your life? Do you find that it refreshes you? Encourages you? Inspires you to take the next step of your faith journey?

Do you know what that next step in your journey with Christ is? If you are not involved in any ministry work, have you considered checking out the service opportunities that exist at McLane Church as a way to get started?

**PRAY:** As we close out this week of studying what it means to be salt and light in the world, take time to thank God for the work He is doing in your life, and for any answers to the prayers that you have offered up to Him this week. Keep your spiritual eyes and ears open for more ways in which He is asking you to be salty and a light-bearer....

