

Living in the Light as Children of Light – Part 3

Salt and Light: How Believers Stay Salty, Shiny, and Impactful in a Dark World

1. Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed...

- We talked about how we can let His light shine through us into a dark world, how we can and should be continually living and walking in The Light and letting this light that is "Christ in us" shine.
- We focused on the idea of being daily intentional in our walk with the Lord.
- We also discussed what the Bible says we are to be "clothed with," what we are to "put on" and "put off," and how we should be doing this intentionally and daily. Such as *"flinging away the works of darkness, putting on the [full] armor of light] ... and clothing ourselves with Jesus Christ."* **Rom. 13:11-14 (AMP).**
- We also talked about "Humbling ourselves in the presence of the Lord, submitting to His authority and how this will allow us to resist the enemy and successfully put on the armor of light daily and intentionally. Jas. 4:6-10 (NKJV/NLT).
- We also talked about how the Holy Spirit's power in us is what allows us to walk in the light.
- Now we are going to dive into what Jesus meant when He said to His disciples that they were the salt of the earth and light to the world and how we can stay salty and shiny!

2. What does it mean for believers to be salt and light to the world and how do we do this?

- a) Let's start with the Light. Jesus is the light of the world. John tells us this in **Jn. 1:1-9 (AMPC)** (*see note on Jn. 1:9 below) and Jesus Himself tells us this in **Jn. 8:12 (NLT)** and that *"we who follow Him would have this **light that leads to life.**"* Believer's Bible commentary on Jn. 8:12: "A multitude was still following Him. He turned to them and made one of the many grand statements as to His Messiahship. He said, "I am the light of the world." Naturally speaking, the world is in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and aimlessness. The light of the world is Jesus. Apart from Him, there is no deliverance from the blackness of sin. Apart from Him, there is no guidance along the way of life, no knowledge as to the real meaning of life and the issues of eternity. Jesus promised that anyone following Him would not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. To follow Jesus means to believe on Him. To follow Jesus means to come to Him in repentance, to trust Him as Lord and Savior, and then to commit one's whole life to Him. Those who do this have guidance in life and clear and bright hope beyond the grave."
- b) The light we are to be shining into a dark world is Christ, the Light that came into the world and who is in every believer.
- c) **Phil. 2:12-16** talks about shining this light that leads to life: *"shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people." - "children of God without blemish in the midst of a [morally] crooked and [spiritually] perverted generation, among whom you are seen as bright lights... offering to everyone the word of life". Let's read **Phil. 2:12-16 in (NLT, AMPC).***

- d) *"Offering to everyone the word of life" ... This "Word of Life" is important.*
Phil. 2:16 - KJV – *"Holding forth the word of life."* - **NKJV, ESV** – *"holding fast to the word of life."* - **NASB** – *"Holding firmly the word of life."* - **AMP** – *"Holding out and offering to everyone the word of life."* Putting these together: *"We are to firmly hold onto the Word of life and offer it to everyone!"* Hold on to it and give it away. Sharing "Christ," who is the "Word of Life" with everyone! - **1 Jn. 1:1 (NLT, AMP)** – *"Christ is the Word of Life."*
- e) In **Matt. 5:13-16**, Jesus calls His disciples the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" and tells us that we should let this light shine and that we should not lose our saltiness.
Note: He says we are salt and we are light, but we can lose our saltiness and brightness.
 Let's see what Luke has to say about this light in **Lk. 11:33-36 (NLT)**.
 (*see commentary on vs 35 below)
- f) **Lk. 14:34-35 (AMPC)** talks about tasteless salt being worthless and it cannot have its saltiness restored. *"Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?"* Meaning, once it has lost its taste it should be thrown away. **Lk. 14:34-35 (NKJV)** mentions that this tasteless salt is "neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out", noting just how worthless salt that has lost its flavor is. This also ties into being lukewarm which Jesus spoke of in **Rev. 3:14-22** in His message to the Church of Laodicea. We also dove into a warning about lukewarmness in meeting 22. Being lukewarm will make you less salty and if you are allowing the world to mix in with your walk with the Lord (being conformed to it), this will cause lukewarmness and thus make your salt tasteless and your light dim.
- g) I want to take **Lk. 14:34-35** and bring it into fuller context. Let's read **Lk. 14:25-35 (NLT)**. In full context, **Lk. 14:25-35** is talking about the cost of discipleship. The cost is high but the reward is great! Let's read through **Lk. 14:25-35 (AMPC)** – AMPC study notes for **Luke 14:26**, *"The word "hate" in this passage is an exaggerated figure of speech indicating a lesser degree of love, not actual hostility or aversion toward one's earthly family."* Another way to phrase it would be *"and does not (love less) his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life than how much He loves God, He cannot be my disciple."* - Jesus is saying, to be His disciple you must "Love God first and above all". (**Mat. 6:33** "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness").
- h) **Lk. 14:27** in the passage that we just read mentions the following: *"And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple."* – "Your own cross" this is better described in **Lk. 9:23-25 (AMP)** that talks about taking up this cross daily.
- i) Bible and Life Commentary on being salt and light, see homework link below. – *"Being the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" is not about empty words or superficial actions, but about being authentic. Just as salt effects the taste of its environment it's placed in and light illuminates its surroundings effortlessly, we are called to be so different from our environment that we deeply impact it. **Mat. 5:13-16** says we believers should be "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world", but **Lk. 14:34-35** gives us a deeper meaning. It's more than just adding flavor or preserving. We should be agents of transformation.*

We should be able to radically change the environment in which we live with His Light. That's the message Jesus brought to us. We are challenged to be so unique, so authentic in our faith that we deeply and positively impact the world around us."

- j) This ties in well with **Rom. 12:2 (NKJV, MSG)** "And do not be conformed to this world...". See also **1 Jn. 2:15-17 (AMP)** "*Do not love this world*".
- k) Scientifically, salt (Sodium chloride) cannot lose its flavor, but if it is not pure salt, if it has been mixed with sand and other contaminants, it will lose its flavor and will have to be thrown away. If we conform to the world, we are mixing the things of the world in with the light, thus making His Light in us dimmer and our saltiness less salty, thus making both less effective, having less power and impact in the world.
- l) This also ties back into **Lk. 9:23-26 (AMP)** we discussed in our last meeting about daily taking up the cross. Deliberately (and intentionally) choosing the kind of life He lived. Doing this daily will help us not conform to the world but to be set apart letting our light shine.

3. Being Born of God (Born Again) allows us to let our light shine and to love one another and to be the salt of the earth and a light to the world.

- a) We cannot be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" if we are not born of God. To be born of God means to be recreated by the Spirit of God, that is, to be regenerated. It is the same thing as being born anew or born again:
 - Born of God not by natural birth, nor man's will, but by God's will and His Holy Spirit, a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. – **Jn. 1:12-13; 3:6-8; Titus 3:5**.
 - Born again with a new life that will last forever. This new life comes from the eternal, living word of God. - **1 Pet. 1:23**. – believer's Bible commentary on 1 Pet. 1:23 "*The new birth is brought about through the word of God. As men hear or read the Bible they are convicted of their sins, convinced that Christ is the sole and sufficient Savior, and converted to God. No one is ever saved apart from the instrumentality in some way of the incorruptible word of God.*"
 - Born of God by believing that Jesus is the Christ - **1 Jn. 5:1-12 (NLT)**.

Believer's Bible commentary on 1 Jn. 5:1 – "*John now concludes the tests of life. Here he resumes the test of doctrine, or we might also call it the test of faith. In the first three verses, we are given the results of faith. These are, first, the divine birth, then love for God, then love for one's fellow believers, and finally obedience to God's commandments. First of all, then, we have the divine birth: Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Belief here is not a mere intellectual assent to the fact, but rather a committal of one's life to Jesus as the Christ. If we have been truly born of God, then we will love Him. And not only so, we will love His children as well. It is good to notice here that we are to love all believers, and not just those of a certain earthly communion or fellowship.*"

Full Context Homework:

Read all of **John 8:12-20 (NLT/AMPC)** - Jesus, the light of the world.

Read all of **1 Jn. 1:1 – 4:21 (AMPC)** - Living in the light / Do not love this world / Love one another.

Read all of **1 Jn. 5:1 - 21 (AMPC)** - Faith that Overcomes the World

Jn. 1:9 note: "There it was—the true Light [was then] coming into the world [the genuine, perfect, steadfast Light] that illumines every person."

NLT/NKJV and others say "the true light, who gives light to every man." would be better said as "who offers light to every man". This is better said here in the AMPC as "the true light that "illumines every person." i.e. shines upon. (Universalists like to point to this vs. to support the (all-are-saved theology, universal reconciliation. Also called universal salvation, Christian universalism, or in context simply universalism). But this is not what Jn. 1:9 is saying.

Believer's Bible Commentary Jn. 1:9 "It was by the coming of the true Light ... into the world that every man was given light. This does not mean that every man has received some inward knowledge concerning Christ. Neither does it mean that all men have heard about the Lord Jesus at one time or another. Rather, it means that the Light shines on all people, without regard to nationality, race, or color. "

An unbeliever has not yet received this light (who is Christ) and is still in darkness even though the True Light came into the world and shines on everyone (**Jn.1:9**). One must believe in Christ to receive this light before he can be a light to the world.

Believer's Bible Commentary Lk. 11:35 "The men Jesus was addressing thought themselves to be very wise. They supposed that they had a great deal of light. But the Lord Jesus warned them to consider the fact that the light that was in them was actually darkness. Their own pretended wisdom and superiority kept them from Him."