



## Being Salt and Light in the Public Square

Message Notes, March 4, 2018

Matthew 5:13-16

The “public square” is more than just the workplace. It includes the education arena, leisure and recreation, commerce, community and civic organizations ... it’s any place we have the freedom to walk, talk, and interact with others. It’s where we spend the majority of our time.

**Matthew 5: 13-16.** Jesus is well into his ministry of preaching, healing, and teaching. On this day, he stops “on a hillside and begins to teach them” (the Sermon on the Mount) about the counter-culture values of the kingdom of God and how we are to live as Kingdom people in the world. In the midst of this message, he proclaims, “You are the salt of the earth. ... You are the light of the world.”

- **You are the salt and the light.** It’s what we *do* so much, but who we *are* by His Spirit within us.
- **Let your light shine.** Not something we work up or make happen. We surrender to His grace and simply let His life flow in and through us.
- **Salt.** Not so critical to us today (just adds flavor to our food, always available), but for them, salt was precious. It was how they preserved foods (they had no refrigeration). It was valuable, at times even a form of currency, but if it lost its saltiness, getting mixed in with dirt and residues, it became diluted and worthless.
- **Light.** Again, for most of us American citizens, light is an expectation, a given. We need never be hindered by darkness, just flip a switch. But for them, light was precious, a delicate commodity to be well-managed. Lamps were lit and put on a stand to give light throughout the house, to everyone. One would never light a lamp and hide it under a bowl! Jesus is saying we must *be* such lights. Shine in such a way – “like a (lit) city set on a hill.”

How do we be such salt and light in the public square? How do we “so shine”? To whom can you shine in your various “public square” places? Think of specific names in your different spheres.

### The Obstacles

- **Fear of rejection or loss.** What if I offend them? What if I look strange? Will I lose credibility or friendships?
- **Confusion about calling versus occupation.** We all have a calling to be salt and light, everywhere we go. This calling is not tied to specific jobs/vocations. It is rooted in who we are as God’s ambassadors in the world, filled with His Spirit. See 1 Peter 2:9-10
- **The (false) sacred/secular divide.** “To a man who lives unto God, nothing is secular, everything is sacred. He puts on his workday garment and it is vestment to him. He sits down to his evening meal, and it is a sacrament. He goes forth to his labor, and therein exercises the office of the priesthood. His breath is incense, and his life a sacrifice. He sleeps on the bosom of God and lives and moves in the divine presence. To draw a hard and fast line and say, ‘This is sacred and this is secular’, is to my mind diametrically opposed to the teaching of Christ and the spirit of the gospel.” – Charles Spurgeon, 1874
- **The (erroneous) clergy/laity divide.** “The mission of God requires that believers leverage their lives for His glory. The Great Commission is not for a select few; it is for the entirety of the church. The movement of God’s mission sweeps across everyday, ordinary lives to draw in business people, soccer moms, grandmothers, neighbors, students, lawyers, teachers,



contractors, white collar, blue collar, and no collar at all - regular people like you and me united by the One who lifts the curse of the fall; filled with His Spirit, laying down our lives, denying ourselves for the mission of God and the good of others. – David Platt, *Radical*

CCC member Larry Crane shared how he has come to understand and celebrate who he is as a minister everyday in his workplace at Columbus Regional and in other community involvements such as Boy Scouts. He is “Larry the Ligament” – helping connect people to God and to others with resources and caring via his daily (imperfect) life and faith.