

Salt & Light: Your Purpose in Christ

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[0 : 00] Open up your Bibles again, Matthew chapter 5, verses 13-16. I want to remind you what the apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2, verse 9.

! So that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

We're talking this morning about salt and light. Salt and light. The passage again, it says, You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty?

It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 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. This is the word of the Lord. So, salt and light.

[1 : 20] You've probably heard this passage of scripture before. You've probably heard a sermon or two or ten on this passage before. If you grew up in church and went to youth camp at any point in time, I guarantee you, you heard a sermon on this passage of scripture.

And that's for good reason. This is a beautiful reminder of our purpose in Christ. Our purpose in Christ. So we've made it out of the Beatitudes now.

Some of you are like, finally. It was only two weeks, okay? It was only two weeks. Three sermons, but two weeks. The Beatitudes, of course. Blessed are those who are poor in the spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness. For the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

[2 : 22] And in the Beatitudes, in that list, we've talked about how we have certain qualities that Christ expects of us. There are certain things that Christ expects us to do.

There are certain ways that Christ expects us to live. That is what Jesus expects of his kingdom citizens, of his followers. That we would be described by those things.

That we would be defined by those things. But now Jesus shifts from what we do to really who we are. Now, as we talk about salt and light.

In other words, Jesus is describing for us the purpose of his followers. Beyond what we do, or beyond what qualities make up, you know, our personhood. It's beyond that.

It's more what we were made to do. Not just what we do, but why we do it. Why we were made to do the things that we do. And purpose is kind of an elusive idea, right?

[3 : 16] Everybody wants to find their purpose in life. Raise your hand if you feel like you've found your purpose in life. Can we do that? You feel like you've found your purpose in life? Not a lot of confident hands went up there.

Anybody feel confidently, I've found my purpose in life for sure? Okay. Alright, that was a little bit better. Alright, good. Good. Anybody still wondering what their purpose is?

Raise your hand. Anybody? Alright. Still wondering? Yeah. Is anyone else somewhere in between? I don't know what that is. Hey, praise the Lord.

Alright, there we go. We got a few. Alright. Alright. I want full participation. You know what I'm saying? Alright. Look, purpose is kind of an elusive idea. Everybody wants to know what they were made for.

Everyone looks for a reason, right? Like, what am I supposed to do with my life? Not just, I don't just want to work a job. I want to work a job with purpose. I don't just want to have a family. I want to have a family with purpose.

[4 : 11] I don't want to just go to church. I want to go to church with purpose. Like, we all want to live a purpose-filled life. That's why Rick Warren sold a billion books called The Purpose Driven Life.

It's because we all want to know what our purpose is. What are we supposed to do? What are we called? Who are we called to be? Right? I think there's a ton of people in life that we would look at and say, yeah, they found their purpose.

You know what I mean? Like, Michael Jordan. I mean, he was made to play basketball. You know what I mean? Like, he was made for it. Tom Brady, he was made to throw a football. But even them, in their jobs as professional athletes, I would say that's not really finding their purpose.

I think that they found what they're really gifted at, what they enjoy doing, but that's not necessarily finding purpose. We want to know why we do what we're called to do. Like, what's the why behind it?

If we have a why, then we're more motivated to live faithfully. And that's no different in the church. I would argue that most people who are in Christ have found their purpose in Christ.

[5 : 12] Or, at the very least, you have the opportunity to find your purpose in Christ. I want to remind you of 2 Corinthians 5, 17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, and see, the new has come.

You are a new creation in Jesus Christ, and you were made in Christ with a purpose. You have a purpose. So, for those of you who are still looking, still wondering what your purpose is, I have good news for you.

Jesus has the answer. Jesus has your purpose. For those of you who are still looking and don't know Jesus as Savior and Lord, I think that by the end of this, you'll see your great need to follow Jesus, so that you can live the life that he has called us to in this short time we have on earth.

So, Jesus talks about this idea of purpose, and he uses two very familiar illustrations for us. He uses, the first one is salt. You are the salt of the earth.

Verse 13, you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty?

It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

[6 : 20] So, if we're going to look at this, we have to understand in context the people that Jesus is talking to. So, salt in the day, in the first century, in the day of Christ, was an essential commodity.

It was not just like something that people had a billion little packets of laying around their house.

Like, if you went to a restaurant, you weren't taking a salt packet to stop the table from wobbling, okay?

Like, salt was essential. Salt was very, very valuable. And so, understanding this, how they used salt, it was very, very important for them in their culture. It was valuable. It was so valuable, in fact, that salt was part of the Roman soldiers' pay package, their compensation package.

You've probably heard before that Roman soldiers were paid in salt. Have you ever heard that?

Yes, some of you have? Okay. Yeah, that's true, they were. But it wasn't like they were only paid in salt, you know what I mean?

Because how would they buy anything else? But salt was so essential in that day that it was part of the Roman soldiers' pay package. Matter of fact, the word salt in Latin is where we get our word for salary.

[7 : 26] This is why whenever people say something like, that we want to find someone who's worth their salt, you know that phrase? That's where this comes from. It's because the word salt is where we get the word salary.

It was an essential, valuable commodity. It was something that people needed. It was needed because it was a preservative. I don't know if you know this, but in first century Israel, they did not have freezers.

Do you know that? Yeah. They didn't have refrigerators either, for that matter. So how would they keep their meat? How would they protect their food and make sure that it would last for them?

Well, they used salt. So you can cure meat with salt. Some people still do this today. Most of us just use a freezer or a fridge. But I'm curious. Does anybody in the room ever cure meat with salt?

Has anyone done that? You've done that before? Do you do that regularly? That's pretty cool, actually. We've got to talk after this. Because I called someone this week to see if I could get an illustration of what it looks like. And that person, no names, Stephen, doesn't do this.

[8 : 23] So, anyways, we'll talk. Yeah, maybe I'll have you do a demonstration for everybody. No, but salt is a useful tool.

People will, what they would do is they would hang the meat up, and then they would coat it in salt. And then over the next few days, they would continue adding more salt on the outside. And what it would do is it would suck the moisture out of the meat entirely, and would form this kind of hard crust around the meat almost, which was, it was cured.

And then that product could last for up to 18 months. I mean, it was good for a long time. It's pretty impressive, really. That's longer than I think it would last in the fridge. I know. That's longer than it would last in the fridge.

Salt was essential. They didn't have grocery stores where they could go and pick up ground beef and turkey and chicken at a moment's notice. If they had meat, they had to store it. They had to preserve it. So salt was really an essential thing for them.

It was also, in some uses, it was used for flavor. Like we use salt pretty much exclusively for flavor now. They used it in very limited fashion in this way.

[9 : 29] They didn't use it all the time to add flavor to food. But it was. It was flavorful. And we know that they used it some for flavor because the Apostle Paul in Colossians chapter 4 uses that approach whenever he writes to the church.

Colossians 4, 6 says, Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person. This idea of seasoning your speech with salt. The idea is that your speech should be savory.

It should be something that people enjoy, not something that's harsh and rude and ungodly. Your speech should be flavored with salt, seasoned with salt.

So the question that we have is, what did Jesus mean when he said, you are the salt of the earth?

That's an interesting phrase. What did Jesus mean when he said, you are the salt of the earth?

We know how valuable salt was. We know it was a preservative. We know it was flavorful. There were a few more uses for salt back in that day as well. But I think what Jesus is really getting at, to the people that he was talking to, and then I think the application extends to us, is that Christians, his followers, are called to be the preservative in this world.

[10 : 37] What happens if you leave meat uncured and unrefrigerated? It putrefies, it decays, it goes bad, right? I think what Jesus is getting at here is that you and I, as his followers, have a responsibility to keep this world, which is dead in sin.

People who are not in Christ are dead in sin, is what the Bible says. We have a responsibility to keep the world from putrefying, from rotting, from decaying.

To slow the decay, to prophetically speak about the glory of God and call people to forgiveness and to repentance and to belief in Jesus Christ.

We have a responsibility as the salt of the earth to be people who preserve the decay of the world.

And this extrapolates really, really well, by the way, when you look at cultures and directly related to those cultures being the Christian influence.

And you see the slow change, instead of just a rapid, complete, you know, departure from the things of God. You see a slower change, because the world is still worldly.

[11 : 45] But the Christians, when they have a great deal of influence in a culture, in a place, in society, you see this slow down quite a bit. I would say that as Christ followers, we should be committed to preserving the world.

And in order to do that, we have to stand up for what is right, and we have to stand opposed to what is wrong. Right? We have to know what the Bible teaches on specific issues, and we have to stand up for what truth is, for what God's word says.

That's the call of the Christ follower. People these days have said a lot, and you've probably heard this, that Christians are getting more political. Right? I think that politics have gotten more religious.

And there are issues that as Christ followers, we should be willing to stand up for, take a stand, firmly rooted in what God's word says. Because preserving our culture matters.

We're here. Right? God has us here. So where in our lives, where in your life, is God going to use you to be this preservative, to be the salt of the earth? Look, salt had specific purposes.

[12:51] Specific uses. And what Jesus is telling us is that you have a specific purpose also. In Christ, you have a specific purpose, and that is to be the salt of the earth.

To be useful in this world. Now, Jesus doesn't stop there. You are the salt of the earth. He goes on and he makes a point that's actually sparked a lot of questions over the years.

He said, but if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. Look, I'm not a chemist.

So I'm quoting people. I didn't know this off the top of my head. I didn't do good in science. I won't lie. Okay? I'm not a scientist. But salt is a stable compound, which means it can't lose its saltiness. Did you know that? Salt can't lose its saltiness. Can't lose its flavor. Can't really lose its properties because it's a stable compound. At least that's what the books I read this week said. If I'm wrong, somebody correct me.

[13:52] Okay? After the sermon. Salt can't lose its saltiness. So what is Jesus saying here? He said, he says, if salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? Jesus is not giving us a chemistry lesson.

I listened to a sermon this week where a pastor was preaching on this passage. And he said, just imagine, if Jesus had to give us genuine chemistry lessons and biology lessons on everything that he addressed, how long would the New Testament be?

How much time would that have taken? Obviously, Jesus knows the chemical makeup of salt. He's not giving a chemistry lesson. What Jesus is doing is showing us the folly of not living our purpose in Christ.

Right? The word here for should lose its taste. Literally, that word, it means be made foolish. It has a reference to salt, and it has this other meaning of to be made foolish.

And so there's kind of a double meaning here. If salt should lose its taste, or if salt should become foolish. If we're the salt of the earth, if we become foolish. Matter of fact, this word in Greek is *moreno*.

[14:54] And this is a fun one. This is a good biblical name-calling thing. *Moreno* is where we get our word for moron, actually. So, when we don't live out our purpose in Christ, when we are not preserving the decay of this world, when we are not living for Jesus in a public and bold way, we're morons.

Right? We're not living out the faith that Jesus has called us to. That's the point that he's making. He's not saying that salt can literally lose its saltiness. He's saying that if you, as a follower of me, are not effective, then you're useless.

You're as useless as salt that has lost its flavor. That's the point that Jesus is making here. So we have a specific call to a specific purpose from a specific person, and his name is Jesus.

And the question is, how do we respond to that? How do we live under this call from Christ? Christ, you are the salt of the earth. I want to remind you of that. You, if you believe in Jesus, you are the salt of the earth.

That's what Jesus is saying here. So how, where God has you, how can you live out your purpose of being the salt of the earth? What jokes do you not need to put up with around you?

[16:07] What comments do you need to not let slide? Where do you need to stand with integrity? Where do you need to stop what is evil and stand for what is good? Where do you need to be the salt of the earth?

Jesus didn't stop there. He went on. He said, 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. Jesus said, you are the light of the world.

Now this is interesting because Jesus later would say that he is the light of the world. In John chapter 8 verse 12, Jesus says, he says, Jesus spoke to them again, I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life. So Jesus called himself the light of the world. And here he says that you are. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world.

[17:07] So look, we are the light of the world because we are in Christ. That's the idea here. You get what he has. If you believe in Jesus, then you get what he has.

That's his righteousness. That means that his light lives within you. He lives within you. And you shine bright for him. You are the light of the world. Right? You aren't the source of light, but the source of light lives within you.

That's the idea. So you are truly, if you are in Christ, the light of the world. In the same way that Jesus calls people out of darkness, you have a purpose, which is to illuminate the darkness and call people out of it into the light.

In Ephesians chapter 5, Paul carries this idea. Light and darkness is a very common theme in the New Testament. But Paul carries this idea. He says, Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things.

Therefore, do not become their partners. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light. For the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth, testing what is pleasing to the Lord.

[18:14] You are light in the Lord. I want you to notice what Paul said, what God's word says. It's not that because you're in Christ, now you have light within you.

He says, like, this has to do with your personhood. You were darkness. Not just in darkness. You were darkness. Separated from God, you were darkness. Now, in Christ, you are light in the Lord. Like, you have become transformed by the person of Jesus Christ from darkness. Now you are light. And we should walk as children of the light.

Right? That means, you know, goodness, righteousness, and truth. Living the life that Christ has called us to. In other words, you are the light of the world, and look back on the Beatitudes for how you're supposed to live. Right?

Look back on what Jesus has already said for instructions on how you ought to live. But what does it mean that you are the light of the world? Well, it's distinct from darkness, and we are called as Christ followers to stand out.

[19:11] Light in darkness is hard to hide. Right? Light in darkness is easy to see, in other words. We're called to stand out as followers of Christ. Not stand out because of our political opinions, or not stand out because of our intelligence, or we're called to stand out as followers of Jesus, as the light of the world, for our faith in Christ, and our commitment to Him and His Word.

That's how we're called to stand out. Jesus uses the imagery of a city situated on a hill that cannot be hidden. Look, I don't think that we can fully understand and appreciate the level of darkness they would have understood back in the day that Jesus was living and speaking in.

We have cities all over the place. Right? Even if we're hundreds of miles away from the cities, the lights from the cities reflect off the clouds, and we have more light around us because of the lights in cities.

These people did not have that. But they were in true darkness when it was nighttime, especially on a cloudy night, where the moon and stars weren't easy to see. They were in true darkness.

And so Jesus uses this picture of a city situated on a hill. When someone was traveling to a specific place, they would often find their heading at nighttime and direct their tent, orient their tent opening towards the city because they could see the light from a great distance so that when they woke up and broke down camp, they could continue their journey towards the city that they were headed to.

[20:41] Right? Like this idea of being so visible as the community of God that we stand out like a city situated on a hill. I like to think about it like this.

I don't know if you guys have ever been to Dallas or Fort Worth, Texas, but there's something unique there. Well, actually, I'm not sure how unique it is. I haven't been many places. Okay? It was unique to me whenever I went there.

I was like, whoa, that's cool. But here's what it was. Driving up to Dallas at night, I don't know why. I thought it was so cool. You drive up to Dallas, and then when you drive up to Fort Worth, you see the same thing. They have this crazy thing where they have lights going down the skyscraper.

Like that's year-round. It'll just change colors. It's like the whole city's always decorated for Christmas. You know? It's wild. And Fort Worth does the same thing. If I can get this slide to work here. Fort Worth does the same thing.

Fort Worth has it on all of their skyscrapers in the city. It's pretty cool. It really is. But when you're driving up to Fort Worth, like for me, when I was driving up to seminary, it was always really fun because I would pull, I would be getting close, and from a long ways away, not quite from Dallas, but from a long ways away, I could see Fort Worth.

[21 : 48] I could see when I was getting close because it stands out so distinctly with these lights. I think it's a really unique feature. But this is the idea that Jesus has in mind, that we would stand out in such a way that from a great distance, those who are darkness, those who are in darkness, would see our light.

That's what it means to be the light of the world. We should stand out. He goes on to say that we, 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.

So we have this secondary calling to illuminate the darkness. As Christ followers, we should expose darkness. In other words, have you ever had a relationship with someone?

Maybe after you came to faith in Jesus Christ, a person, a friend of yours who was not a believer, who as they spent time around you, they started to feel uncomfortable even though you didn't do anything.

You know what I'm talking about? You weren't super harsh to them. You didn't put them down for the way that they're still living or anything like that. You just told them that you believe in Jesus, and eventually they started to feel really uncomfortable around you.

[22 : 55] Has anybody had that experience? I had that experience with some friends of mine from college. After leaving college and feeling called to seminary and feeling called to ministry, some friends who just over a period of time, now it's to the point where they really don't like me, and I haven't spoken to them in years.

It's wild, right? But it's what happens. It's like I haven't done anything to harm them, but they are uncomfortable around me, and I think, I know, it's because they don't have a relationship with Jesus.

I mean that sincerely. Like this is what happens as people are in the light and are living out their purpose in Christ, which is to illuminate the darkness, which is to expose what is dark, right?

When we are living that out, people who are in darkness will naturally recoil from the light. Jesus talked about this in John chapter 3, that he is the light of the world, but that people, the true light has come, but that people flee from the light because they prefer the darkness.

This is what happens. So as Christ followers, we should stand out and expose what is evil, expose what is dark around us. And here's the thing. Sure, people will recoil for a time, but the hope is that they will see our good works and give glory to God.

[24 : 09] That's what Jesus says. 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. Ultimately, the goal of us as Christ followers, as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, is to live in such a way that God is glorified.

And quick question and answer. Ready? I want an answer. I'm going to start prompting you now when I actually want an answer, okay? I want an answer. In what way is God the most glorified? What?

Praise? That's one. But most glorified. When is God the most glorified? Worship? Obedience? Yeah. We spread the gospel.

Salvation? Yeah. God is most glorified when someone gives their life to Christ. God is most glorified when the work of Jesus is magnified for the world to see.

When a life is transformed. When rebirth takes place. When regeneration happens. When God works in someone's life and takes them from death to life. God is the most glorified. So the goal here from Christ is that we would live before others in such a way that they ask us what's going on, what's different.

[25 : 21] We share the gospel and they give their life to Christ. There's repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. So we have to be prepared. We have to be prepared with a response. We have to be ready to spread the light of Christ.

To show people how they can be made right with God. Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 says, We are his workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Which God prepared ahead of time for us to do. Listen, you are called to glorify God as the light of the world through your good works.

And you're like, well Joe, what does that mean? What good works am I supposed to do? Like, am I supposed to be nice to people? Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. You are called by God, set out with a purpose, which is to do good works.

Which is to live a righteous life. So when you are kind to someone, you show kindness to someone who does not return that kindness to you, guess what?

[26 : 22] Sometimes as a Christ follower, that's your calling. And that is a good work that glorifies God. Someone asks you, hey, why are you kind to me? I haven't done anything nice to you. Well, because Jesus was kind to me when I hadn't done anything nice to him.

And there's an opportunity to share the gospel. You turn the praise from yourself to God. It's when you serve your neighbors with a cheerful spirit. So you're building a ramp for a neighbor, an elderly neighbor.

And people come by and they're like, why are you out here? Why are you working? Instead of saying, well, I just love work. It's good to be out in the sun. You know, I haven't done anything like this in a while. No, it's because Jesus Christ has saved me from my sin.

And so I want to help this person. I want to serve this person. Jesus came to serve me. Now I get to serve other people. We can glorify God through our good works. What about when we forgive people? Like what a testimony we have as Christ followers when we forgive the unforgivable. Because Christ Jesus has forgiven the unforgivable in you and me. This is the way that we glorify God. It's when we attribute our good works to God himself and not to ourself.

[27 : 27] But later Jesus would talk about in Matthew chapter 6. I think we're scheduled to get to Matthew chapter 6 in 2027. Midway through the year.

Just kidding. Anyways, we'll be there like next month maybe. We'll see. Okay, I'm done. Okay. I lost my, look, I'm my own worst enemy.

I am my own worst enemy. I lose my spot whenever I think I'm funny. And that's not what I'm here to do. Anyways, in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus talks about practicing your righteousness in front of others.

Okay. So he talks about prayer. He says don't be like the hypocrites who babble on in their prayers. Don't be like the Pharisees who stand up so that they can be praised for their good loud prayers. He says don't give.

Don't tithe. Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Don't give in such a way that people will glory in you. Right. Don't fast in such a way that when you walk around you make yourself look all sick and just disheveled so that you can say, Oh, I'm fasting for the Lord.

[28 : 36] So that people will think, Wow, you sure are spiritual. Right. That is not the goal. And Jesus here in Matthew chapter 5 is not telling us to let our light shine before others so that they glory in us.

That's not what Jesus is saying. Jesus warns against that. The idea is that when we do good works, we do so with the understanding that we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works that he prepared for us ahead of time.

Right. And we are the light of the world. And so as the light, as the moon reflects the light of the sun, they didn't disprove that with that Artemis mission, did they? All right. The light still reflects off the sun.

We still think that? Okay. Look, look, as the moon reflects the sun, you and I are called to radiate the light of Christ. To shine bright in this dark world.

That is what you and I are called to do. So as we do good works, it's not about us. It's about the glory of God. It's not for show. It's always to glorify the Father.

[29 : 43] I want you to understand that Jesus has called us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. And that is your purpose. I said at the beginning that you have a purpose.

You absolutely do. You have a calling. I don't care if you own a business. I don't care if you are a computer analyst. I don't care if you are a farmer.

It doesn't matter what job you have. It doesn't matter if you're single, if you're married, if you're married with kids or without kids, if you're in retirement. It doesn't matter where you are in life.

It doesn't matter what you do for a job. What matters is that you and I understand our purpose as followers of Jesus, which is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. To preserve the world from decay.

And the way that we best do that is by standing against what is evil. We stand for truth. We speak truth in love. Sometimes speaking truth in love hurts.

[30 : 39] Just like getting salt in an open wound hurts. Sometimes people will not be happy when we are the salt of the earth. Because our truth, the truth of God's word, will cut deep.

It will hurt. But that's the call. We have to be bold and willing to be the salt of the earth. And also to be the light of the world. To shine bright for Christ.

To bring others to him. Listen, the Bible is very clear on this. God's word is very clear. That apart from Christ, we are in darkness.

Spiritual darkness. It's also spiritual death. And I want you to understand that Jesus, who calls his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, also calls you, if you don't believe in him, out of that darkness into his light.

So if you've never made a profession of faith, then this calling of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world, this purpose, it means nothing for you. You're probably still searching for your purpose.

[31 : 41] Because apart from Christ, there is no purpose. Apart from glorying in God, there is no purpose. Apart from leading people to believe in Jesus, there is no purpose. But listen, if you are in darkness, Jesus invites you out of that, into his light.

So that you can have a purpose. So that you can have a calling. So that you can glorify God with the rest. That's the call today if you have not put your faith in Jesus.

It's to come out of darkness and into light. And look, if you are a follower of Jesus, then you understand your mission, your purpose.

Your call, your aim in life is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. To lead people to faith in Jesus Christ. By showing people your good works.

This has been called, like in recent years, this has been called lifestyle evangelism. That you live your life in such a way that people start asking questions. And then you have opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[32 : 45] Look, we should all live our lives in such a way that people notice that something's different. Because it is. Jesus has taken us from darkness and made us light in the Lord.

I want to share with you a poem that I found this week that I think explains this well. And after I read this, we'll close. But I want to read this poem that I think describes the importance of being the light of the world consistently.

Right? Looking for opportunities to share the gospel. I don't really read poems out loud. So if this is a little bit awkward, I'm sorry. But it says, There was a man, it's called The Man Who Needed Light. There was a man who lived in town.

His home was large and nice. He worked his life away, unaware. It all came at a price. The home he kept was always dark. He knew no other way. He labored on from dawn till dusk, not seeking light of day.

He struggled through day after day until the news arrived. A dark and harsh diagnosis that he would not survive. Gripped by fear, he called his neighbor. Quick, I need a favor.

[33 : 49] His voice was shaking as he spoke. He tried to be braver. The neighbor entered that dark home. At first, he was frightened. He said, This place is without light. It needs to be brightened.

Then from his heart, he brought the light he would always carry. I know this can help you, my friend. Darkness makes us wary. The man saw a light and turned away.

No, please, not that, he sighed. The darkness hides my mess and shame. He bowed his head and cried. His neighbor asked him what was wrong. The sick man's shoulders fell.

I'm dying fast and going soon. I hate it, truth to tell. I've lived in darkness my whole life. I know more is coming. I'm scared and don't know what to do. I'm glad you came running.

But when I saw your light, I grieved. It was then I could see. You've had that light a long, long time, yet you never shared it with me. You've always seen me here next door, walking through the hollow.

[34 : 43] Why did you keep the light away where I could never follow? The neighbor searched for some defense, a way to shift the blame. But words are empty in the dark. He dropped his head in shame.

I talk about the light all the time with those who know it well. I get reminded every week I'm supposed to go and tell. I know I should share more often. I know this is not right. Still, I'm ashamed.

I never thought my neighbor needed light. Listen, the call for the Christ follower is that we would be the light of the world, a light to those in darkness.

That includes our neighbors. That includes our friends. That includes our family. So who in your life, who is living in darkness that you can be the light, that you can show them the truth and the love and the grace of Jesus Christ?

I'm going to pray for us. I'm going to ask you to stand as we sing a song together. And here's what I'll ask you to do today in terms of response.

[35 : 42] First of all, if you are in darkness, I'm going to plead with you as Christ, we're here pleading with you himself, be reconciled to God. Come out of darkness. Put your faith in Jesus.

Live for him in his light. And if you are a follower of Jesus, I'm going to ask you to commit today to being the light of the world. That means with everyone you encounter.

That means your family members. That means your friends. That means your neighbors and your co-workers. You respond as the Lord leads. Let me pray for us. Oh God, thank you for who you are. Lord Jesus, we thank you for this call to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Help us, oh Lord, to live for you, to be faithful in this dark land. We love you, Jesus.

I pray your blessings over everyone in this room. It's your name that we pray. Amen.