

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE SALT AND LIGHT

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: I AM GROWING
SERIES: GOD IS THE TREASURE - I AM BANKRUPT

BIG TRUTH: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE SALT AND LIGHT

2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Romans 9:1-3; John 1:4-13; Philippians 2:12-16

BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 5:16

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven."

BIG IDEAS

- Jesus followers exist to make known the love of God.
- Jesus followers are called to carry the message of life to those who are dead and decaying in their sin.
- Jesus followers are called to shine the light of the gospel in a world blinded by the darkness of sin.

BIBLE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 5:13-16

TRANSFORM - I AM GROWING

The Transform Year is an exploration of what it means to become a "new creation" in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) In order for this to happen, we must first find our identity in Him. Many of us live in a consistent state of identity crises. We wrestle with questions like who am I, where do I belong, why do I exist? The answer to these questions is found in Jesus. Our prayer for this semester is that like the Apostle Paul we would be able to say, "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- Life, joy, wisdom, and purpose are only found in our treasure, Jesus
- Apart from Jesus we are personally, relationally, and spiritually bankrupt
- The Christian life is about growth not arrival.



Every student should feel...

- Encouraged that Jesus is the treasure our hearts desire
- The depth of their personal and spiritual bankruptcy
- Emboldened to live for God's kingdom alone



Every student should strive to...

- Read the Sermon on the Mount
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week
- Begin practicing some of the basic spiritual disciplines



Every student should want to...

- See the Beatitudes become their attitudes
- Put sin to death and live for God's kingdom
- Pursue Jesus by embracing and practicing spiritual disciplines

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 5:16

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven."

God's people are the light of Jesus in this dark world.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others..."

- When Jesus entered this world, He came bringing the light of salvation with Him. He came bringing hope. When people have saving faith in Jesus, they, too, have the same hope to give because every believer has the light of Jesus inside of them. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus commands His followers to let their lights shine before other people in a way that shows people the hope they can have in Jesus.

God's people are chosen to share Jesus with others.

"So that they may see your good works..."

- The good works that God's people are called to do aren't for their salvation, but for God's glory. Every believer receives the Holy Spirit who works inside of them to bring God glory. As believers live for Jesus, their lives will be a testimony of the life-changing salvation that Jesus offers. The Holy Spirit works inside of a person to share Jesus with a lost and dying world.
- God's people have the opportunity to be the hands and feet of God. Being God's hands and feet on earth means living submitted to the work of the Holy Spirit inside of us and sharing the Gospel with whomever God places in our lives. God uses His people as part of His salvation plan as His children tell others about Him.

God's people live in such a way that their lives bring God glory.

"so that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven."

- All that believers do is for the glory of God. God's people should live lives that glorify God. This means that in every part of our lives, we should seek to bring God glory. In our work, school, homes, and friendships, we should seek to live in a way that makes much of Jesus and glorifies Him.
- As we let the light within us shine and share Jesus with others, our lives will be about God and He will receive glory. As we love as God loves, forgive as He forgives, and serve as He serves, we will bring Him glory.

BIG IDEA #1: JESUS FOLLOWERS EXIST TO MAKE KNOWN THE LOVE OF GOD.¹**[THIS]**

Matthew 5:2-12 contains Jesus' teaching on kingdom living. As believers grow in their spiritual life, the Beatitudes will be evident in their daily lives. As a believer grows in their poverty of spirit and meekness, they will share the love of God with the world. As a believer's life is marked by a hunger for righteousness, he or she will share the Gospel with others. A person who is merciful, pure in heart, and a peacemaker has a life that reveals they are living for God's kingdom and not this earthly kingdom. This focus will result in that person's life being a witness to the saving work of Jesus. The overflow of the Beatitudes in a person's life is that they are a gospel witness.

[THEREFORE]

Read Matthew 5:2-12. How do the Beatitudes overflow into gospel witness?

The Beatitudes present a different way of living on this earth. In verse 3, Jesus teaches that it is not the proud or mighty who inherit the kingdom of Heaven, but the poor and lowly in spirit. In verses 6-9, we see that a life lived for the kingdom of Heaven results in holiness, mercy, and peacefulness. Lastly, in verses 10-12, Jesus teaches that believers navigate persecution and difficulty differently. Living out these principles results in a believer sharing the Gospel because their focus is eternity and a focus on eternity will lead a Jesus follower to share the good news.

[THIS]

An overflow of the Beatitudes in believers' lives will result in an outward focus. When there isn't an overflow of the Beatitudes in a person's life, their lives are marked by an inward focus. When people are focused on themselves the lens through which they see everything in life is distorted. A self-focus is a barrier to a gospel witness. A person does not see the importance or urgency of sharing the gospel with the lost when he or she is more concerned with himself or herself or is consumed with difficult circumstances. The Beatitudes cultivate an outward focus on kingdom living. The greatest barrier to a gospel witness is living the opposite of the life the Beatitudes describe. When we are not poor in spirit or do not hunger and thirst for righteousness, we do not share the love of God with others.

[THEREFORE]

Read Matthew 5:5-9. What in your life prevents you from being a Gospel witness?

In Colossians 3:12, Paul tells believers to put on meekness, humility, compassion, kindness, and patience. These are the outworking of a life marked by the Beatitudes. The opposite of this is a life marked by pride, malice, envy, and selfishness. Philippians 2:3-4 teaches a life marked by outward living that will result in a person being a gospel witness. When we are not marked by a hunger for righteousness or being a peacemaker, we hinder our ability to be a gospel witness.

What does it look like to live with a kingdom focus?

One thing that living with an outward focus on kingdom living means for our lives is that we trust that the Lord's plans are greater than our own, as Isaiah 55:8-9 and Romans 11:33-36 remind us. Colossians 3:12-14 gives us a list of things that we should set our minds on that are of the Lord, and Ephesians 4:29-32 presents us with a list of things to put off or remove from our lives in order to live a godly life.

1. Matthew 5:13a: God's people are the salt of the earth. They are called to share Jesus with the world.

BIG IDEA #2: JESUS FOLLOWERS ARE CALLED TO CARRY THE MESSAGE OF LIFE TO THOSE WHO ARE DEAD AND DECAYING IN THEIR SIN.²

[THIS]

In Matthew 5:13, Jesus compares His people to salt. Jesus calls His people the salt of the earth meaning that they have a purpose in this world. Just as salt was and is used to preserve food, Jesus implies that His people are to be salt to a dead and decaying world. By sharing the Gospel with people, Jesus followers are being like salt to them by sharing with them the life-giving message of Jesus.

[THEREFORE]

Read Matthew 5:13. How are Jesus' followers the salt of the earth?

In John 13:35, Jesus teaches that His people are known as His by the way they love one another. Our love is one way we are salt to the dead and dying. 1 Peter 1:16 teaches that we should be holy because God is holy and in 1 Peter 2:9 we see that God's people are a chosen race and set apart for His works. His works are to share the message of life with the lost world we live.

How are you seeking to be the salt of the earth in your daily life?

Romans 13:14 shows us that as Jesus followers we are to clothe ourselves with Jesus and not gratify the desires of our flesh. In order to be salt in this dead world, we must be Jesus to the world. In 1 Peter 3:15, Peter writes that believers are to be prepared to explain why they believe what they believe. As we are salt in this world, we must have knowledge of who Jesus is and be able to share His message with others.

[THIS]

Jesus' metaphor of salt shines a light on the truth that every person is spiritually dead. Salt was used to prevent food from decaying and the Gospel prevents dead and dying people from remaining spiritually dead. Those who have experienced the spiritual life that Jesus gives are called to share His life-giving message with others who are spiritually dead. When we fail to be salt in the world, we fail to share the good news of the Gospel. In Matthew 5:13b, Jesus teaches that salt can lose its saltiness and this means that Jesus followers can live lives that fail to point others to Christ.

[THEREFORE]

How have you seen the Gospel reverse the effects of our spiritual deadness?

In John 5:24 and 11:25-26, Jesus teaches that belief in Him produces spiritual life. This spiritual life is eternal, lasting beyond a person's physical death on earth. 1 Peter 3:18 also teaches that the Gospel makes a person alive in their spirit, though they were once dead in their sin. The Gospel reverses the effect of our sin, which makes us dead. As we, who have received the Gospel, are salt in this world, we will bring the good news that reverses the effects of sin in a person's life.

2. Matthew 5:13b: Those who do not believe are condemned for all of eternity. Believers are called to carry Jesus' light to these people.

BIG IDEA #3: JESUS FOLLOWERS ARE CALLED TO SHINE THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL IN A WORLD BLINDED BY THE DARKNESS OF SIN.³

[THIS]

Just as the world is dead and decaying in its sin, it is also blinded by the darkness of sin. Sin makes a person blind to their sin and to the truth of Jesus as Savior. In John 8:12, Jesus describes Himself as the light of the world. His life, death, and resurrection defeated the darkness of sin in the world. In Matthew 4:14, Jesus teaches that His followers are the light of the world. They are the light of the world because they have received the Gospel and the light of Jesus shines out of them into the dark world. In Matthew 5:15, Jesus teaches that a person does not light a lamp and then hide it in a basket. Instead, they place it on a lampstand so that its light can give light to the whole house. Jesus followers are called to shine their lights in the whole world and not hide it.

[THEREFORE]

Read Matthew 5:14-15. Are you putting your light on display or hiding it?

In Matthew 5:16 and Luke 8:16, Jesus teaches that His followers should let their light shine in the world. When they do, they are shining His light on the darkness of the world. In Acts 13:47, we see that God has made His people to be light in the world and to carry His message to those who have not heard it. Also, in Ephesians 5:8, we see the same picture of God's people as lights in the dark world.

[THIS]

Because sin makes a person blind to their sin and the truth of the Gospel, they are in need of illumination. Many times during Jesus' earthly ministry, He is recorded healing blind people. This is a picture of the spiritual blindness of all people and the way in which the Gospel gives the spiritually blind sight. This illumination is possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit working inside of a person. Though it is the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates, the Spirit uses the Gospel, proclaimed by God's people, to reveal a lost person's lostness to them. In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus calls His people a city on a hill. When a city is on a hill, it is easily seen. God's people are the way in which Jesus reveals the spiritual blindness to the world. As they let the light of the Gospel shine in their own lives and proclaim the truth of Jesus, they are a city on a hill, set apart for God's work.

[THEREFORE]

Read Matthew 5:14. How is your church and/or student ministry being a city on a hill that isn't hidden?

Proverbs 4:18 says that the path of the righteous shines like the light of the dawn. As believers seek to be light in the dark world, they will be like a city sitting on a hill that is easily seen. They will be like a beacon of hope to those who are still in the dark. Philippians 2:15-16 shows us that as we seek to live holy lives, we will be an example to others and point them to Christ, the only true Savior. In Romans 13:12, Paul even speaks of light as being an armor that believers can wear to defeat the darkness. As we seek to be light, we will be like a city sitting on a hill.

3. Matthew 5:14-16: It is important that we let our light shine in a way that shows the world the hope they have in Jesus.