

Title – **Light of the World**

Prayer

Purpose/Review

You will see that this mornings theme is Light of the World...

A title that is reserved for Jesus...

Yet at the beginning of His Sermon on the Mount...

Jesus gives us that title... why?

Over these last couple of weeks,we've discussed the teachings...

From the Sermon on the Mount

NOTE-

We've taken a look at worry...

We've taken a look at walking on the narrow road...

And we've taken a look at dealing with anger...

We might say that each of these topics are to be looked at as defensive...

NOTE-

Be on your guard not to worry about things...

Be on your guard not to drift off of the Narrow Road...

Be on your guard in how you deal with anger...

But what about the offensive side of our faith...

What happens if we remain defensive and never offensive in our faith...

EXAMPLE-

Many of us have a favorite sports team
We know that a team can be great defensively

But if they lack a good offense they will never score
They will never win and be successful

Jesus gives us an example of this idea of developing a good offense

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO Matthew 16:15-18

Because a good offense will overcome a good defense

Matthew 16

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Gates are defensive... the Church is to be offensive...

It is the church that Jesus established that will overrun the gates

Somewhere along the lines those who call themselves Christians reversed the purpose of the church. We stopped being gate crashers of the kingdom of darkness... **Fourth Year Ministries**

Gate crasher... a rather aggressive title

NOTE-

We're not talking about physical violence
We're talking about claiming ground from the kingdom of darkness

Offense is proactive while defense is reactive

EXAMPLE-

The church is great at being defensive

We spend lots of time defending out faith to an unbelieving world

When our faith is challenged or our freedom to worship is challenged

We are great at being reactive

It's almost like it's the gates of the church that we are protecting...

What about the offensive side of our faith...

One the last commands of Jesus was to go out into the world and make disciples...

In his first letter Peter reminds us of this command...

1 Peter 2

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

And how are we to accomplish this task...

How do I know if I am a Christian playing defense or a Christian playing offense

SERMON Sub-Title - Am I Playing Defense or Offense

Reading

Matthew 5

13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden...



15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Doctrinal

You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world

Two very well know verses...

Are they compliments...?

What does it mean to be the salt of the earth...?

What does it mean to be the light of the world...?

So let's break them down individually...

You are the salt of the earth...

Question-

What is salt...?

Answer-

Sodium chloride (NaCl)... is a crystalline mineral

Question-

How is salt used...?

Answer-

Salt is used for flavoring food
And it is used as a preservative

Salt is one of the oldest and most effective natural preservatives. It works primarily by creating an environment where spoilage-causing microorganisms cannot survive

It prevents food from spoiling and rotting.

The second thing Jesus tells us is...

You are the light of the world...

Question-

What is light...?

Light is electromagnetic radiation that is visible to the human eye, consisting of waves and discrete energy packets called photons. The term light is often used more broadly in physics and optics to include infrared and ultraviolet radiation.

SLIDE – The Full Spectrum of Light

SLIDE – Orion Constellation

SLIDE – Orion Nebula

You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world...

Why... When in the fullness of time... At the very beginning of His ministry...

Why did Jesus tell us that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world...?

Our being the light of the world points to the world being in darkness. Our being the salt of the earth points to the decaying world's need for preservation and rescue from death. God calls us to live our lives in contrast with the world...**Burk Parsons**

Our world is in darkness... and we can see societal collapse all around us...

God calls us to live our lives in opposition of these forces...

We are called to go on offense...

QUESTION-

Am I a Christian playing on defense or am I a Christian playing on offense

Do I make excuses why...

Or do I develop reasons why...?

Am I salt to those around me... do they thirst for the life I live...?

Am I the Light to the World to those around me or are living in darkness...?

If I take a good honest look at myself...

Does my life conform to the world...

Or do I live in contrast to the world...

How do I make sure that I am salt to the earth and light to the world...

What paths does the bible teach us to take to accomplish these tasks...

Application

Solet's look at our first bullet point... our calling...

Living Our Lives in Contrast to the World

1) Be Salt to the Earth

Jesus taught by using examples that His listeners would have been familiar with...

NOTE-

We have already discussed the fact that salt was used to preserve food
It was a preservative that prevented decay and it was used to improve taste of food

Christians are called to function spiritually in these same capacities
Believers in Christ are to be preservatives to the world

NOTE-

Salt's preservative qualities symbolize
The influence Christians are to have in preventing moral decay

According to Christianity, moral decay refers to the deterioration of ethical standards and behaviors within society, primarily linked to sin and the rejection of God... **Wisdom Library**

NOTE-

During my Fourth of July message, I mentioned a myth
A myth that many Christians have latched onto
And that is this... Politics don't belong in church

Well... I'm going to get political
Political in reference to our lesson this morning

EXAMPLE-

This November we will be voting on 3 constitutional amendments
To the Virginia State Constitution

One is the Voting Rights Restoration- to restore voting rights to individuals
Who are released from serving time in jail

It's the other two that I want to focus on this morning...

The Reproductive Rights Amendment...

Enshrines the right to reproductive freedom, including abortion and fertility care, in the state constitution.

Marriage Equality...

Removes the constitutional ban on same-sex marriage and requires the state to treat all marriages equally regardless of sex, gender, or race.

NOTE-

We know what the bible teaches about each of these topics
Each of these amendments are in stark contrast to God's Word

Jesus warns us that we can lose our saltiness...

Matthew 5

13... but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

NOTE-

Pure salt cannot chemically lose its flavor

But in the ancient world, salt was often mixed with impurities

If exposed to moisture or contamination

The actual salt could leach away, leaving a worthless residue.

NOTE-

Spiritually Jesus is warning us against compromise and contamination

If we compromise or are indifferent to moral decay

We run the risk of becoming indistinguishable from the world.

And we lose that preserving power

Christians are the indispensable agent sent to stop the spread of evil. This role is not passive; it requires an active presence within society to counteract the corruption inherent in unredeemed human nature... **John Stott**

You are the salt of the earth...

A preservative in an attempt to prevent moral decay...

You are the Light of the World....

We are to live our lives in such a way to let the Light of Christ shine...

Which brings us to our second bullet point...

Living Our Lives in Contrast to the World

1) Be Salt to the Earth

2) Be Light to the World

Matthew 5

14 You are the light of the world... 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

NOTE-

In a world filled with darkness this can become an overwhelming task
Let's look at what Jesus said just before our reading

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO Matthew 5:11-12

Matthew 5

11 Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

NOTE-

We will face trials... we will face tribulation
We will face moments of distress

Yet Jesus tells us to rejoice
For great is your reward in heaven

Paul builds on the theme trials in his letter to the church at Ephesus...

Ephesians 5 NLT

6 Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. 7 Don't participate in the things these people do. 8 For once you were full of darkness...



...but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! 9 For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. 10 Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.

This is the ultimate goal of a believer's life... to live in a way that is pleasing to God

NOTE-

In the analogy of light to the world
Christians are to let their good works shine for all to see.

Matthew 5

16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven

NOTE-

Ultimately, Christians do not generate the light or the flavor themselves
We reflect Jesus Christ... Who is the One and true Light

1 Corinthians 11

1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

NOTE-

The idea here is that the presence of light in darkness is something that is unmistakable.
The presence of Christians in the world must be like a light in the darkness

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 JB Phillips

The spirit of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, and prevents the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, the image of God, from shining on them. For it is Christ Jesus the Lord whom we preach, not ourselves; we are your servants for his sake...



...God, who first ordered 'light to shine in darkness', has flooded our hearts with his light. We now can enlighten men only because we can give them knowledge of the glory of God, as we see it in the face of Jesus Christ.

Am I a defensive Christian or am I an Offensive Christian...

Am I living my new life in contrast to the world...

Our role as a Christian.... as salt and light in the world
Will be hindered through any choice to compromise

Any choice that allows us to settle for that which is more convenient or comfortable
Rather than that which is truly best and pleasing to the Lord.

It is when we depart from the Spirit-led lifestyle of genuine discipleship
That the distinctions between ourselves and the rest of the world become blurred

Be focused on Christ...Be obedient to Him
Be the salt and light in the world.

No matter the cost... For Great is your reward in heaven

CLOSE