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[Introductory video with words and music background:]

**Jesus** said:  
IF SOMEONE STRIKES YOU ON THE CHEEK,  
TURN THE OTHER ALSO  
IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN, GOUGE IT OUT  
IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE,  
YOUR FATHER WILL NOT FORGIVE YOU  
NARROW IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE:  
ONLY A FEW FIND IT  
SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM, AND  
ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU.

[Then displaying one at a time:]

RIGHTEOUSNESS  
PURITY  
FORGIVENESS  
GENEROSITY  
HUMILITY  
PEACE

[At video concludes by displaying the series title:]

Really!?!\*

\*The shocking statements of **Jesus**

[Pastor Sal begins:]

Good morning, everybody. How are y'all doing? Glad you're here to worship with us [at the] *Jones Road Campus*. For those of you at Cypress, I hear the air conditioning isn't working this morning. So I changed my message to a message about hell, just for you. Nah, in fact I have dropped a point or two so that you guys can get out of that sweltering heat.

We are in a brand new series: [Really!?!\*]—\**Shocking statements of Jesus*. I don't know if you've ever (just) read through the Gospels before or even read through the *New Testament*. In fact, let me challenge you to do something. Beginning in October—this will give everybody lots of time to build up to it—if you go on the *YouVersion* that we've been encouraging you to go to read the Bible daily; from October I'm going to try the 30-day reading through the *New Testament*. If you want to do that, why don't you join me in the beginning of October? That'll be really neat to see if we all got on the same page of what God might be saying to us. You don't have to; but if you've never read through the *New Testament*, it's fascinating—especially the

Gospels. Even if you took 30 days just to read through the Gospels, that is an excellent (excellent) read.

In there—when Jesus says stuff—you just go: Wow! Really!?! (I mean)—

- It was so drastic (what He said)
- It was so anti-the-norm
- It was so different

—that it just shocked people many times. So over these next few weeks I'm going to take some of those (that are found right after the Beatitudes) and let that (just) soak into our hearts and our souls and see—

- If we measure up to these shocking statements
- If we are actually the kind of people that Jesus described [who] are going to be His followers
- Are we having that kind of impact that Jesus wanted us to have?

## OUR CHARACTER

In *Matthew's* gospel, *chapter 5, verse 13*, Jesus says this awesome thing that you (just) scratch your head and you go: Really? That's the way it's supposed to be? *Chapter 5, verse 13*—

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

*Matthew 5:13 (NIV)*

A couple of things about that statement just (kind of) shocked me. First of all it says: You—which means: me, us, everybody in this room—that we are something that this world absolutely needs. It's just not what each of us need when we are together, but it is something that Jesus says the entire world needs (it). What this world needs is inside of us. Our responsibility is to bring it out to the world—the world means that circular thing that we all live on—all around the world. He said: "You are the salt of the earth." That's pretty shocking that no matter—

- Who you are (or)
- What your education is
- How much money you make
- What your mobility might be

—Jesus Christ says that if you are one of His followers, that you have something this world desperately needs; and it's our responsibility to get this stuff (that we have) into the world.

What is it?—it's salt (salt). You're probably saying: Well (you know), I don't think I have a high level of salt inside of me. I don't think my blood pressure's high. That's not what He's talking about.

Back then when they talked about salt, they're talking about something that preserved food—that kept things from rotting (from putrefying). What Jesus is saying—in a spiritual sense—is that we are what this world needs in order to arrest (and put off for awhile) and stop the rottenness of the

wickedness that's in this world. He said: "You are the salt of the earth." But you can't lose your saltiness; you'll never be made salty again if you do. In other words, Jesus said that what we have needs to be in this world.

Roman soldiers sometimes were paid in salt. If they were derelict on their duty, do you know what was said of them?—he's not worth his (what?) salt. That's where that came from. (See?—you ought to come to church more often; I give you little tidbits like that.) He's not worth his salt. In other words, whatever I'm investing in this soldier, he's not worth it; because he's not doing what I'm paying him to do.

Jesus said: I've invested into you—I've poured into your life—and now I want you to pour into the life of this world. It's our God-given responsibility to live our faith in this world. We are down here—

- To benefit (and)
- To bless (and)
- To serve the world in which we live

When we do that, we have the effect of holding off some of the moral corruption and the spiritual darkness that is in our world. So we need to live a life that's out there speaking not just to issues but speaking into people's lives; and living in such a way that (you'll see in a moment); is that, it actually attracts people to us.

Now, I don't know about most people, but what I find usually that gets talked about in the media are the extremes of Christianity. There's an extreme of Christianity that pictures us as—

- Very angry
- Very anti-social
- Very anti/against everything (and)

—we get painted in this picture (and in this light) that people don't want what we have. For instance, this whole last week what has our attention been fixed on?—one pastor of a little church that was going to burn the Koran. Because of that (you know) a bunch of people [who] believe in the Koran, didn't think that would be a good idea; and it maybe would even stimulate wicked things to be done by people who are also wicked.

So when we're salt and light, it's not to stimulate people doing bad [things]. It's to stimulate people doing good [things]. Needless to say, that wasn't a good approach in being salt to the world. That's more like pepper spray in your face. That's not what Jesus had to talk about. We cannot be in the position where we view other points of view and other religions with this massive hatred. Jesus isn't like that.

Now, listen: We're right. There's no doubt about that. But there's a way in which you can be right that'll make you sound really wrong. The Bible says to be salt and to be light. We need to be—

- The salt in our communities
- The salt in our school systems
- The salt in our city government
- The salt in our state

- The salt in our nation (and)
- The salt around the world

It's (just) not simply pointing out what's wrong—

- It's praying for
- It's encouraging
- It's writing the letters that are nice (and not blessing somebody out every time that they hear from you)
- It's about voting
- It's about sticking up for those whose rights are not observed
- It's by helping the poor
- It's by being a moral conscience of what is right in our sexually wicked society—that there are people who actually say: There are certain parts of behavior that are wrong and certain behaviors that are right. Some of these behaviors need to stop, because they damage people.

Not going out and—

- Rioting (and)
- Speaking ill of (and)
- Damaging people

—these are people Jesus died for. If it wasn't for the grace of God, you'd be there (you would be there); I would be there. If God hadn't stopped me in my darkness and my wickedness and if somebody hadn't sprinkled some salt on me, who knows where I'd be—guaranteed not here.

So we're to be salt. We're to be the agent that puts some flavor in this world. (I mean) when you eat food and you taste it and it tastes (kind of) bland, what do you put on it?—salt (salt), not baking soda (you know), but give me some salt. That's why at every table there's salt. What this world needs is the flavor of that salt.

Do you know what that is? I'm going to read this scripture to you in *Colossians, chapter 4, verses 5 and 6*:

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders...  
*Colossians 4:5 (NASB)*

I mean—

- Muslims are outsiders to the faith
- Mormons are outsiders to the faith
- Jehovah's Witnesses are outsiders to the faith
- People who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and believe—
  - He's the Son of God (that)
  - He was virgin born (that)
  - He lived a sinless life (that)
  - He died on a cross as a vicarious atonement for this world (and)
  - [He] was resurrected from the grave

They are outsiders—people [who] don't trust Jesus alone—outsiders

How are we to conduct ourselves?—"with wisdom" (wisdom)—in other words:

- Be careful how you approach people
- Understand who they are
- Get involved in their lives

—because, as you do, you'll understand how to communicate with them. But you just can't use this broad-blanketed way of dealing with people all the time. Use wisdom with outsiders.

...making the most of the opportunity.

*Colossians 4:5 (NASB)*

Look, we've got one opportunity in this life to get people to Jesus and that's it. When this life is over, that part of life will never be again. One time! Now, I don't know about you, but I would hate to be there at the judgment when all of these people who never knew Jesus came before God, and God asked them: Now, why didn't you trust in My Son? [And they say:] because I knew some of the followers of Your Son, that's why. They made me mad. They made me think that the things that they said about You weren't true, because of the way that I observed them living.

Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt...

*Colossians 4:6 (NASB)*

## **GRACIOUS INFLUENCE**

When you speak to people, what are you sprinkling in their soul? Is it a gracious [influence]? Is it words of grace and mercy and kindness? Would Jesus really speak to them in the way in which you speak to them (and I speak to people)? Because when Jesus spoke to people, they either said: You're the Son of God—or they walked away. But because of what Jesus said and the way that He lived, it had an impact.

We need to be wise with the people [who] we rub shoulders with every day, because every day God is saying: Be careful. Everything that comes out of your mouth let it be gracious toward people (let it be gracious toward them). Then—

...you will know how you should respond to each person.

*Colossians 4:6 (NASB)*

Salt exists to be given away and flavor people's lives. Every day what comes out of our mouths [either]—

- Confirms the things that we say that we believe; or
- Denies the things that we say that we believe.

So we are to be a gracious influence on people. We're also to be guiding lights to people.

## GUIDING LIGHTS

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

<sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

*Matthew 5:14-15 (NIV)*

(You know) isn't that something that salt and light do not discriminate? Salt will go on anything, anywhere, anytime. Light, every time it lights up, lights everything around it. There is no discrimination with salt and light. There should be no discrimination with us. All people—

- Need the grace of God
- Need to see the light of the world
- Need the flavor of grace

—so that they might respond to Christ.

<sup>15</sup> ...put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

<sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

*Matthew 5:15-16 (NIV)*

Our job—all the time for all people everywhere—is to declare by the way we live and what we say that God is fully in the person of Jesus Christ, who loved and died for them. So that means that our “walkie-walkie” has got to match the “talkie-talkie.” We can't say: We love people and—

- Hate Muslims (or)
- Hate somebody of a different race (or)
- Hate some country because they're not democratic.

Jesus said that He loved the entire world. That's shocking! That's shocking!

We don't love people unless they're in the—

- Right political persuasion (maybe in the)
- Right culture (maybe they live in the)
- Right place (or make the)
- Right kind of money (or hang around with the)
- Right kind of people

That's not salt; that's good for nothing to be trampled on. That's like taking your light and putting it under a bushel.

Who God really is—most people in the world are (as much as they're educated are) clueless as to what salvation is—they have no idea. They want to know; that's why they get involved in all kinds of religions that give them nothing. They're even further in darkness.

(You know) we are in a twisted and wicked and perverted world. We ought to love it—we—more than anybody else in this world. People who follow Jesus Christ can so stand out, not because we're weird, but because we have Christ inside of us.

Do you remember the movie *E.T.*? (Let me see your hands. Cypress, do you remember *E.T.*? Y'all sweating yet?) When E.T. first got here he was kind of like a funky-looking-turnip thing for sure, but he glowed. (I mean) it was (just) fascinating to watch that inner light inside of him, become a translucent [glow]. Everywhere he went dead flowers would come alive; all kinds of neat things—good things—would happen. But his space ship left him behind. And the longer he stayed away from the source of his life, the dimmer his light grew—do you remember that?—to the point where he gets all grayed and ashen and finally he dies. And then, all of a sudden, the source of his life—his people and that spaceship—started coming toward him again to pick him up. And all of a sudden, even though he was dead—boom!—he's alive. And his little light starts shining, and it gets brighter and brighter and brighter. You remember what E.T. said, don't you? [Singing:] This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine—No!—“*E.T. phone home! E.T. phone home!*” [Pantomimes the light pulsating brighter and brighter]

How do we know that we are close to God?—because people, who live in darkness, are attracted to the life and the light that's inside of us. And that's how they know; and they say: How come you're like that? [You say:] Because this isn't my home. I am here for a different reason. I am here so that you could see the hope that is inside of me.

Now how are people going to know that? Number one, we've got to make contact with people outside of the church.

## GRACIOUS INFLUENCE AND GUIDING LIGHTS...

### 1. MAKE CONTACT

[Gasp!] I know; it's a hard thing to handle. Look at what *John, chapter 17, verses 15 and 18* say. This is Jesus praying for the church, the disciples that were there, and then us, in the future:

<sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that you take them out of the world {He's praying to His Heavenly Father} but that you protect them from the evil one.... <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

*John 17:15, 18 (NIV)*

Now, salt can only influence when it comes in contact with food. Salt in the shaker is great potential for flavor, but it's not being sprinkled. Light isn't really appreciated unless it shines in darkness. And so God is saying to us to live life in public; to let people be a part of your life that are in the darkness and need the grace of God.

Now, here's what happens over time if we're not careful: (that) we program our lives with endless activities that expose us to church and Christian people. Not bad in itself, being around church and Christian people.

- This is where we come to be encouraged.
- This is where we come to be challenged by God's word.
- This is where we develop relationships that are meaningful that—in turn—we spur one another on to love and to good deeds.

We need this. We gather together to be challenged out of God's word and to find some companionship that—in turn—will hold us accountable and we'll become more like Jesus. But what happens is that every single day you're doing something at the church. Again, not bad in and of itself, but remember what Jesus said. Jesus didn't say you're the salt of the church. Jesus said (though) the church is the salt of the world.

And if that isn't enough, on top of that we string together a bunch of stuff that gets us further isolated from the world:

- We have Christian Yellow Pages. (Why?) So you can just do business with Christian people.
- We have Christian schools so our kids won't have to get around kids that aren't Christians (supposedly)
- We've got Christian music.
- We have Christian entertainers.
- We have Christian publishers.
- ...Christian radio stations
- ...Christian newspaper
- ...Christian television
- ...Christian movies

And the more the world around us becomes immoral and dark and corrupt, the more we organize more Christian stuff [so] that we don't have to be influenced by the world. We've got it backwards! The darker it gets, the lighter we become. The more decayed, the more salt we are [and] the more we are needed—not the more we ought to cloister up and hide ourselves from the world.

We have the light of the world living inside of us. Jesus was never worried about us going into the world. He took the world *out of us* and then put us *in the world* so the world could see who He was. As God sent Jesus, now Jesus sends us. And I don't see Jesus insulating Himself from the world. I see Jesus opening up His arms and walking into villages and going places all over the place that He could go, so that He could bring the Good News to people.

The more occupied we become with other believers, the less involved with unbelievers. The more isolated we become from the people of the world, the more we need to work at building new connections with people that God intended for them to see us. Look what it says—it says:

...they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

*Matthew 5:16 (NASB)*

And so when we're out there and we're loving people and we are being salt and light, and we're praying for folks—and we're just being what Jesus asked us to be—people aren't going to look at us and go: Man, dude, you're a great guy! They're going to say: Man! This God that you worship (I'm going to tell you) He's real. I can see Him inside of you. I can see Him working through you.

That will go a long way in punching holes in this dark world in which we live. But we've got to contact people—take the initiative—let's not hide from the world. Building a city isn't—look, you build a city on a hill (why?) so everybody can see it. (Everybody can see it.)

We need to build relationships.

## GRACIOUS INFLUENCE AND GUIDING LIGHTS...

### 2. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Now listen to how the apostle Paul [describes] when he came to Thessalonica to preach the Gospel. He's writing back to them now and said: I want you to remember how we were when we were with you. Here's what he said:

<sup>7</sup> but we were gentle among you, {gentle} like a mother caring for her children. <sup>8</sup> We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel [of God] but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

*1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 (NIV)*

When you see people, do you just see (like) a potential for a convert, or do you see somebody who is a person? The apostle Paul, he preached the Gospel all the time. (He never *didn't* preach the Gospel.) But along with that (not only did he share the Gospel) he shared his life. Listen to what he says: We didn't just give you the Gospel. We're not just out here preaching the Gospel with no relationship at all; we're right here in the middle of you. And we want you to know that we gave you our very life because you became dear to us.

Now I want to ask us a question: Do we have people in our lives that are outside of the church and outside of Christ that we can say: I love that person so much that I'm not just sharing the Gospel with them; I'm giving them everything that my life has to give them?

Now, here's a verse we like to quote. Well, if they don't listen to you just wipe the dust off your feet and walk away. [*Matthew 10:14, Mark 6:11, Luke 9:5* (paraphrased)] That's just giving the Gospel only. That's just saying: Hey, you know what? That's between you and God. Now I've done what I was supposed to do. No, no we haven't.

We need to ask ourselves some tough questions sometimes:

- When you see a Muslim, how do you feel?
- When you see somebody of a different faith, how do you feel?
- When you hear countries say about our country what they say, how do you feel?

Are you angry? Are you defensive? Are you afraid? Do you hate? Or does your heart break?—because that person, looking for the truth, got caught up in the darkness and is even more entrapped now. When people that you know that aren't good people, that you have to rub shoulders with, what does it make you feel about them?

The apostle Paul, no matter where he went, he would go and he would preach, and no matter what (kind of) gods they were worshipping, he would say: Okay, that's good. Now let me tell you about the one true God. He never let his personal bias or his cultural influence, influence the way that he treated people.

We live in a country that has deep-rooted bias and prejudice inside of it, and just not white-to-black and black-to-white. We have somehow gotten in our minds that nobody in this world is as good as we are; therefore, we can look down on everybody. And that creeps into the church. We ought to be humble and broken before God because—by the grace of God—that could be you that could be me! And if that were me and I was in darkness, I would sure want someone to sprinkle some salt on me. I would sure want someone to turn the light on so I didn't go over the cliff and spend eternity without God.

And do you know what else salt does? Here's what Paul did. He loved them so much that he did what salt is supposed to do; it creates thirst. (It creates thirst.)

Kristi and I went to a movie a couple of—maybe last weekend—and I bought a \$15 bag of popcorn and a coke [soda/pop]—couldn't believe it, man. I thought: Who in the world is ever going to drink \$15 worth of coke? And so now they give you the cup and you go and you get your own. And I thought: Well, I'll drink one here right now for sure and get my money's worth. And as I was walking out of the place where you fill your cup, I saw (you know) the butter stuff and the salt. And I hate that butter stuff because it just (kind of just) stays on top of that popcorn. But I like the salt because it filters all the way through. So I said: Oh, there's that buttery salt. And I took it and I did this [pantomimes tipping the shaker up]. I guarantee you; eight pounds within three seconds came out. I drank my \$15 worth of coke after I ate that popcorn.

Salt makes you thirsty! When we get around people, they ought to say: Man, I'm thirsty! What is it that you're hiding? I want my thirst quenched. Oh! Oh! Well you need *living* water! Yeah, you can have all that other stuff and it's just not going to satisfy you. And what you're thirsty for, only Jesus can provide, Because He said: All you who thirst come to Me and from your innermost being will come bubbling, living water. [John 7:37-38 (paraphrased)] That's what you want.

But if you never get close to people—

- If it's always an academic debate (or)
- [If] it's always just a religious duty to tell people about Jesus (and)
- [If] there is no personal involvement

—they're probably not going to get that thirsty.

Do you know when this human race really got thirsty for God?—when Jesus came down here. He'd given commands already—had an *Old Testament* full of them. Now He comes down and everyone says: Now we see. Wow! Never have we seen or heard a man teach like that. Never have we seen a man do those things. We believe that you're the Christ, the Son of the Living God. That's what people need to say.

Do you know what? Be just like Jesus. You know—

- Jesus is merciful; be merciful.
- Jesus is kind; be kind.
- Jesus is gracious; be gracious.
- Jesus is loving; be loving.
- Jesus is redemptive—He’s a reconciler—then do your best to be at peace with everybody and help them to be reconciled to God.

Really!? Yes, really! That’s what Jesus is saying. And then, be available.

## **GRACIOUS INFLUENCE AND GUIDING LIGHTS...**

### **3. ARE AVAILABLE**

People will glorify your Father in Heaven. In other words, they’re going to recognize that we’re God’s people. We’re going to draw attention to God, not ourselves. Listen to what 1<sup>st</sup> Peter says:

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have....

*1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)*

People don’t know about your hope unless they know you. They look at you and the way that you live and say: Okay, I need to know about that.

...But do this with {what?} gentleness and respect.

*1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)*

Don’t burn the Koran! It’s a book! (It’s a book.) When we burn the Koran, it burns people, and they’re not going to listen to what we have to say. Man, it’s craziness. How would you feel if someone started burning the Bible? You’d better feel like Jesus and say: That’s okay, I love you anyway. You can’t kill the word of God—never will be able to—it’s living and abiding and it’s forever. So they burn the Bible; okay. They crucified Jesus and He still loved us. So, let them burn a few books. Let them say some things about us that are probably true from time to time anyway. And if they *really* knew what *really* went on, they would *really* be mad. Do you know what I’m saying? But Jesus knows and He loves us and He loves people.

Every day—

- If you set apart Christ as Lord
- If you’re loving the way He loved
  - You’re being salt (and)
  - You’re being light
  - You know God is working through you

—then you’re going to care about people. You can’t help it! And then you’ll be looking for the opportunity—the moment that someone asks you—that you’re ready then to speak into their lives about the hope of Jesus Christ.

Are there relationships in your office, at your school, where you hang out (or whatever), that you're just [saying]: God, give me the opportunity. I'm looking for it. I'm praying for it. I want to be this person's friend. I want to love them. Just give me the opportunity to share. And you know what? Sometimes people don't always respond immediately. And sometimes they even respond in a very difficult way. That doesn't mean that you ought to walk away. It took my dad 25 years—25! I never said: Forget you, Dad. I may have thought it a couple of times, but I never let him know that. Frustrating! Difficult! But never gave up hope.

What if Jesus gave up hope on you? What if He said: You know what? I've just tried so hard that (you know)—have it your way. I've heard that promise before; you're not really serious. Man, Jesus doesn't do that! Jesus doesn't give up on people.

And we have a moment of opportunity—a window, a small window—where we have the opportunity to let Christ so radiate through our lives, through the love that we have for Him and the love that we have for one another [that] it just spills out in the love that we have for this world.

Now if you find it difficult loving people in here, you're going to find it very hard loving people out there. They don't even have Christ.

Doesn't it give you a deeper appreciation for Jesus?—when He comes down [to the Earth] and—

- Everybody's blind (and)
- Everybody's in darkness (and)
- Everybody is wicked (and)
- Nobody can see

He was the light of the world and the darkness comprehended it not, but it didn't stop Him [*John 1:5* (paraphrased)]. He went right and did exactly what He wanted to do. He died for us; was [risen] again from the dead, and now He is saying: Look! Here is what I want you to do: be salt and be light.

Then finally, be good people (and we're through with this).

## **GRACIOUS INFLUENCE AND GUIDING LIGHTS...**

### **4. ARE GOOD PEOPLE**

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

*Matthew 5:20 (NIV)*

Here's what He is saying, when people heard that they went: Whoa! How can you be better than a Pharisee? They keep all of the laws. (I mean) they tithe off of everything. They (you know) will do all types of stuff to prove to everybody that they are not sinning. They fast. They pray. They are constantly at the Synagogue. They do all of this stuff. Jesus said: Yeah, but you have to be better than that.

How can you be better than that? Our righteousness—our standing with God—the goodness that is inside of us is not ours. Because remember we were in darkness and sin and we couldn't get out of it because we're not good enough. The Bible says, "There is none righteous, no, not one." [*Romans 3:10 (KJV)*] Nobody is good—Jesus said—only God is good. [*Matthew 19:17, Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19* (paraphrased)] So what God did, in Jesus, was He made an exchange. He said: Here's the deal, give me your sin and I'm going to give you His righteousness. In *2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 21*—

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

*2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)*

Do you know how I got to this Church? Not by my effort, not by my goodness but through Jesus Christ. When I say "this Church," I mean Church universal, belonging in Jesus.

So when we go to people, it's not about the standards they can keep or morality they can have or any of those things. It's about: you can do so much better than any religions because you can have a relationship with God. And God will put His very righteousness inside of you as if you have never sinned. There's nothing you can do but ask for it and turn your back on this world and turn your face toward Jesus. That is Good News. (Good News!) Have you done that? As hard as you may have been trying to be good, none of us can really be good, can we? But Jesus Christ can put His righteousness inside of us—

- He can live His life through us
- He can change us

—if you give your life to Him. That's the story that the world needs to hear. And that is what it is to be salt and that's what it is to be light. Now go out and flavor some friends. Go out and turn the light on so they don't stumble into eternity.

Let's pray together as our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed. Last week I asked you, as members of our church here, to list down on a piece of paper—that commitment card—five people. Could you list five? If you could list (maybe) one or two—

- Have you reached out?
- Have you served them?
- Have you gotten involved in their lives?

There may be people in your own house [who] need that.

Chances are, if we can't list out five people—guess what?—we have isolated and insulated ourselves and we've kept the salt in the shaker and we've put a cap on the light. Let me ask you to go before God and say:

God, break my heart for people. God, let me be involved in people's lives. Let me be salt and let me be light. Father, that's our prayer; that more important to us than anything else would be the love that we have for You and the love that we can share with other people. There are people in our lives right now [who] need to see You inside of us. So I pray (and we pray) that You would so work in us that You would just permeate through

us and people can see You inside of us so our words match up with the way we're living and treating people.

If you are here this morning and you don't have Christ in your heart, you need His righteousness, I'm going to ask you to pray this prayer. As I do aloud you can do it silently and it goes like this:

Dear Jesus, take my sin. Put Your righteousness—Your life—inside of me. I'm never going to be good without You. Thank You for saving me, cleansing me of my sin, and giving me a new life. Lord, help our church be the most loving, saltiest, lightest place in our city. In Jesus' name.  
Amen.

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**Even his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"**

*John 6:60*  
(*New Living Translation*)

**Legend:**

**(words in parentheses)** = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

**[words in square brackets]** = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

**{words in curly brackets within indented quote}** = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*