

## A STRATEGY FOR IMPACTING YOUR WORLD

Matthew 5:13-16

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### INTRODUCTION:

The Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew is part of Jesus' training of the twelve disciples. He was instructing them about kingdom life. As citizens of the kingdom of God they were expected to behave differently. He was preparing them to make an impact in the world for the kingdom of God's sake. He was teaching them a strategy for evangelizing the world.

Evangelizing the world is important to God. It is so important that God sent his son into the world to die for the sins of every lost person. It is also important enough that it ought to be at the heart of what every church does. I spend a great deal of time thinking about church work and areas that can be improved.

Let me share some of my observations with you.

When it comes to soul winning we do better in reaching people through programs. Program evangelism is using the bus ministry, the Sunday school, summer camp, VBS, or a big event to try and reach people. This is programs reaching people. Most churches tend to be weak in the matter of personal evangelism. This is people reaching people.

We forget that programs are only effective when people that have a heart for souls staff them. You can put a "non soul winner" on a Sunday school bus and there will be little or no soul winning taking place.

This sermon is intended to address the issue of personal soul winning. I am going to develop a way to involve you and equip you in reaching people.

### **ILL: Soul winning -**

In every church there are classifications of people. On the outer edge there are people that attend and are unequipped to witness. On the next layer there are members that are active and yet not equipped. In the third circle there are members that are equipped to witness but inconsistent. Finally, there are members that are equipped and consistent in witnessing.

My goal is to convince you that you can make the next step in your Christian life and be effective in reaching people for Christ.

You may wonder why I should be a witness for the Lord.

### ***First, soul winning is important because of the command of God***

The Great Commission is not the Great Suggestion. God commands all believers to be witnesses for him in the world.

## *Second, soul winning is important because of the condition of lost people*

To be lost means that you are separated from God, doomed to spend eternity in the lake of fire, unforgiven, dead in your trespasses and sins, and missing out on the abundant life that is found only in salvation through Jesus Christ. It ought to bother us that people are lost and without Christ. Remember, lost people matter to God and they should also matter to us. In this passage of scripture Jesus talks about the influence of his people on the world for God and for good.

### 15. THEREFORE, WE MUST DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR EVANGELIZING LOST PEOPLE

#### HOW?

#### I. BY EMBRACING GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WORLD V. 13

Our strategy for evangelizing must be a commitment to the strategy that God has already given to us.

We are the salt of the earth. The personal appeal is to "ye" in both verses 13 and 14. The emphasis is on the fact that you are the only salt of the earth and you are the only light in the world. The world's corruption cannot be stopped and its darkness will not be illuminated unless God's people are salt and light." - John MacArthur

G. Campbell Morgan said, "Jesus, looking over the multitudes of his day saw the corruption, the disintegration of life at every point, its breakup, its spoliation; and because of His love of the multitudes, he knew that the thing that they needed most was salt in order that the corruption should be arrested. He saw them also wrapped in gloom, sitting in darkness, groping amid mists and fogs. He knew that they needed above all else...light."

Let's look at what salt can do when it comes to the influence we can have over those that are lost.

#### *First, the purpose of salt v. 13*

Salt primarily does three things. It preserves, makes thirsty, and spices things up.

The biblical world-view is that the world is corrupted and decayed. It is our presence that should be the preserving influence in the earth. As we preserve we will add spice and cause people to thirst for the living water.

2 Timothy 3:13 "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

Salt is aseptic. It cannot change corruption into incorruption, but it does prevent incorruption from spreading. Before refrigeration it was the most commonly used preservative.

The earth refers to that which is distinct from heaven. It speaks to the material side of life, that part that is divorced from the eternal and spiritual. People all around us are occupied with material things and earthly considerations and we are to be salt. We should have an arresting effect upon the corruption of society.

### *Second, the potency of salt v. 13*

Salt does not have any value if it loses its potency.  
The word "savor" speaks to the strength and seasoning of salt.

Salt does not have any value if it does not make contact or if it loses its influence and testimony. The greatest influence we have is when our lives are distinct from the life that the material world lives. We must live distinct from that world.

#### **ILL: Salt -**

Salt is a miracle. It is chemically composed of sodium and chloride. Pour a little hydrochloric acid on your hand and it will be burned away in half a minute. Drink hydrochloric acid and you will die in agony in a few minutes. Add sodium to hydrochloride and you will have salt, one of the most common and useful substances on the earth. Similarly, when God pours his grace into the hydrochloride acid of our lives, the result is a miracle: a regenerated person that is placed in the world for the blessing of all man-kind. (John Phillips)

## **II. BY EXPRESSING GOD'S TRUTH IN THE WORLD V. 14-15**

While salt deals with what happens when we make contact with the world, light touches on our communication with the world. Salt deals with the moral and light deals with the spiritual. Salt speaks to our character, but light refers to our conduct.

If we are going to have maximum impact than we must have both contact (moral character) and communication (spiritual conduct)

There are two illustrations that are used to teach the light principle, a lamp and a city.

### *First, we are to express God's truth individually v. 14-15a*

As individual candles, we exert our influence on what goes on around us. We are witnesses all by ourselves wherever the Lord has placed us to have influence. There are times when a candle does not seem like much until you have no light at all. That is when you are glad for the individual light.

You are a steward of your influence and you must let your little light shine. For light to have its intended effect it must not be obscured in anyway. Our lives can not cover or hide the truth of the gospel. See: 2 Corinthians 4:2-6

### *Second, we are to express God's love corporately v. 15*

The you in both verses is also plural. It is His whole body, the church that is called to be the world's salt and light. The city speaks to the influence that we have on what is going on in the world around us. We have "little influence" on our own, but potentially great influence with all our lights lit. Each grain of salt has its limited influence, but it is only as the church collectively is scattered in the world that change will come. One ray of light will accomplish little, but when joined with other rays a great light is created.

Revelation 1:20 “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

### **ILL: Power of corporate Evangelism –**

Some years ago a magazine carried a series of pictures that graphically depicted a tragic story. The first picture was of a vast wheat field in western Kansas. The second showed a distressed mother sitting in a farmhouse in the center of the field of wheat. The accompanying story explained that her four-year-old son had wandered away from the house and into the field when she was not looking. The mother and father looked and looked all day but the little fellow was too short to see or be seen over the wheat. The third picture showed dozens of friends and neighbors who had heard of the boy’s plight and who had joined hands the next morning to make a long human chain as they walked through the field searching. The final picture was of the heartbroken father holding his lifeless son who had been found too late and had died of exposure. The caption underneath read, “O God, if only we had joined hands sooner.”

The world is full of lost souls who cannot see their way above the distractions and barriers of the world and cannot find their way to the Father’s house until Christians join together as salt and light and sweep through the world in search of them. Our work is not simply as individual grains of salt, or as individual rays of light, but as the whole church of Jesus Christ.

### **III. BY EXHIBITING GOD'S GLORY IN THE WORLD V. 16**

God is glorified when we are bearing fruit in the world.

John 15:8 “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Soul winning is the one thing that causes a cosmic celebration in heaven.

Luke 15:10 “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

If our lives are to give God glory and if this church is to express His glory to the world let me share with you a couple of quick applications.

#### ***First, you must let your light shine personally v. 16***

It is your light that needs to be shining. You are the one that can make the light shine in a way that it touches those around you. In the active mode this verb teaches that we are responsible for shining the light. You are responsible for letting your light shine. Every Christian should be personally involved in witnessing.

#### ***Second, you must let your light shine continually v. 16***

Once you turn this light on you must never turn it off. It is to burn bright until it burns out for the Lord.

### ***Third, you must let your light shine powerfully v. 16***

Men need to be able to see your good works and in seeing them they need to be able to get a glimpse of God at work in your life. Your life should bring glory to God. Your good works is anything that you do that is honorable or beautiful in the eyes of people and points them to God. It could be an act of kindness or a simple spoken word. It is caring enough to make God appear a little larger to them than ever before.

**CONCLUSION:** Let me quickly make an application, demonstration, and a closing illustration for you.

**Maximum impact** (Getting people saved) is the result of high potency (a dynamic Christian life), plus close proximity (living close in contact with lost people so that you influence their lives), plus clear communication (presenting the gospel clearly and articulately).

The formula is this: **MI=HP+CP+CC.**

**Maximum Impact** - "To have the greatest spiritual influence possible on people around us."

**High Potency** - "A strong enough concentration of Christ's influence on our lives that His power and presence will be undeniable to others." High potency is the result of age-old spiritual disciplines.

**Close proximity** is contact with lost people. "For any impact to take place, salt has to get close to whatever it is supposed to affect." "Unless salt gets poured out of the shaker, it remains a table ornament."

**Clear communication** occurs when we know the plan of salvation and the word of God and are bold to speak it. "We must know the gospel message cold and be ready to communicate it concisely and clearly."

#### **ILL:**

When I was a missionary to our American single military men and women in Germany, we had a vibrant singles ministry there. One of our faithful singles, Todd Kirby, had been sharing Christ with Carl, a man in his military police unit, when he decided that perhaps I could help and brought Carl to my office one evening. After talking with him for awhile, I had the joy of leading Carl to Christ.

Afterwards he told me, "I have watched many people at work who 'profess' to be Christians, but I could tell something was different about Todd. He truly had the peace of God. He could tell I was hurting, and he was the only one to come to me to try and help. He just asked me if I would have lunch with him, and after eating I began to tell him everything. Then he called you, and we spoke this evening. I am glad Todd called you."

What Todd had was Close Proximity (CP) and high potency (HP). When he began to share the Gospel with Carl he realized that he needed some help and he brought him to me and introduced us so that I could counsel with him and share the gospel through clear communication (CC).

That is New Testament evangelism the way that Jesus planned it. When we do what Jesus commands we will have maximum impact in the world for Him. Remember, **MI=HP+CP+CC.**

By the way, Todd was honorably discharged from the Air Force and attended Bible College where he graduated with a degree in Church Ministries. Carl went on to become a deacon at Rheinland Baptist Church in Germany where he was baptized. Carl and his wife, Julie, are both still faithfully serving the Lord telling lost people about Jesus Christ. And so is Todd!