

Home Group Leader's Notes
Week of September 26, 2021
The Church is Salt, Light and a City

Sermon Series: *Four Metaphors for the Church*

LOOKING BACK

Take some time to share your high and lows from this week (low points & high points)

As your Home Group members are getting to know each other and/or further the depth of your relationship with one another, take time to hear what your group member's highs and lows were this week. Keep these in mind as you pray for each other and perhaps reach out to members throughout the week.

Of the four metaphors we've taken a look at in this series (the Lord's body, the temple of God, citizens of Heaven, and salt, light, and city), which has meant to the most to you personally?

This is an opportunity for your group to reflect on what they've been hearing and what has been taught the past month. Hopefully, there is a metaphor that has impacted a few members powerfully and have really meant a lot to them and their place, purpose, and value as the people of God.

Is there anything in our series on the church that has really gotten you attention? Either encouraging, challenging, or convicting you?

My hope with this question is that it elicits some great conversation on how this sermon series has spoken directly to your group in various ways.

READ & DISCUSS SCRIPTURE TOGETHER

Matthew 5:1-12 is often referred to as the "Beatitudes." Read this passage and underline the various ways Jesus describes those who are His followers. What "beatitude" would you like to see the Lord grow and transform in you?

This is a deeply personal question that will allow your group members to reflect on those areas of the heart, attitude, and actions, where they'd like to see growth in. Listen carefully and intently on what "beatitude" people are sharing and don't be afraid to ask a follow up question to draw out more on the reasoning or purpose of wanting to grow in that area. Hopefully this will draw out meaningful and authentic conversations with one another and where your group members are at spiritually and even areas where they are struggling.

Read Matthew 5:13-16 and circle the three descriptors Jesus uses for His followers. What do these descriptions tell us about the world we live in?

The three descriptors are salt, light, city on a hill and they teach us that the world is dark and in a state of decay.

In his message, Pastor Todd said, *“We’re either living intentionally, effectively as salt and light and a city or we’re not living out who we are.”* How do you practically seek to live intentionally and effectively as an ambassador of Jesus in your spheres of influence (family, work, community, church, etc.)? What challenges do you have in doing this?

Give group members an opportunity to share how they seek to live out being a Christian in their homes, work, school, church, and other areas of life. There are various examples I was thinking of in asking this question when it came to the area of work. For example: arriving and leaving on time, no participating in gossip or complaining, praying for those who I don’t get along with, being honest in dealings with money, on the computer, etc. In the areas of family: seeking to serve my spouse, speak well of them, praying for them, listening more than finger pointing, etc. These are just a few examples of ways we can seek to live intentionally in our spheres of influence. There are also a ton of challenges, such as our flesh, fear of man, not having a job where we are talking much to people, etc. Don’t be afraid to share your challenges, either past or present, when it comes to living as an ambassador for Christ.

Read Matthew 5:13. When you think about being salt for Jesus, what comes to your mind? Why would the world need the church to be the salt of the earth? How concerned are you when it comes to the decay of the world and culture around you?

The metaphor of the church as salt is probably the most confusing of the metaphors in Matthew 5:13-16, so give members an opportunity to share what they understood or were confused by. The world needs us as Christians to be salt to prevent decay as well as to create a thirst in them for Jesus, the living water. The goal of the last question is to give members an opportunity to share their fears, struggles, anger, perhaps even ignorance, or apathy regarding what’s taking place in the world around us.

What are some ways in which we as Christians can have our saltiness diluted and lose our effect and impact on the world and culture around us? How is your “saltiness” level today? What is helping you maintain your salty influence? What is diluting your salty influence?

This should be an interesting conversation. Some may point out how the church can become too liberal, trying to fit in and conform to culture while others will see how the church loses its effectiveness by becoming all about rules and legalistic demands, exchanging the pure gospel of Jesus for man-made religiosity. Give members an opportunity to not just evaluate how the Church can do this, but how we can become diluted ourselves and what are the ways in which we seek to maintain our saltiness, or influence, in the world and culture around us. Share ways and encourage each other on what tools and resources help you maintain your gospel influence.

Read John 8:12, 9:5, and Ephesians 5:8-10. Where do we as the Church get our light? How do you actively seek to shine your light for others to see? What are some ways we as Christians can “hide or dim our witness” Jesus? In this current season of life, where do you want to shine the light of Jesus brightest in (marriage, kids, home, work, community, church, other relationships, etc.)

As lights of the world, we simply reflect “the Light of the world,” Jesus. He is the source and substance of our light. How do we seek to shine this light in our world-through sharing the good news of Jesus, our love, generosity, prayers, acts of compassion, etc. Allow your group members to share ways we can seek to dim our lights (being indifferent or silent, ignoring the spiritual and practical needs of others, our attitude or words, etc.). My hope is we can make it extremely personal and members can share those areas and relationships where they’d like to shine brighter for Jesus in.

Read Matthew 5:16. As Christians, what is our motivation in having the world see our light or good works? How does our motivation for God’s glory differ from others who are doing good works in our community and world?

Trinity family: the motivation for everything we do is the glory of God...we want the spotlight on Him alone! Living for Jesus is not about people noticing us or even Trinity Church, but noticing Him, making Him look great, and Him to be famous. This is radically different than others who do good works in that they have a purpose, but that purpose is disconnected from the Lord and only serves physical and temporary needs but never spiritual and eternal needs.

How would you like to practically and tangibly glorify the Father this week in your life?

Give group members an opportunity to reflect on how they might shine the light even greater on the Father this week. Some tangible examples that came to my mind:

- being more patient with your spouse or kids
- being more prayerful
- sharing Jesus with that friend or coworker
- sending a text with a Scripture for someone you’ve been thinking or concerned about
- listening more, talking less
- being more thankful than complaining
- showing generosity and explaining why you are giving

PRAY FOR:

- the needs of your small group members
- the Hylkema family as they move to Florida and continue the mission of making disciples
- that Trinity Church would shine bright for the glory of God alone