Salt and Light?

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Preacher: Cory Brock

[0:00] Our scripture reading tonight is from Matthew chapter 5 in the New Testament, verses 13-16.! A very brief, very famous part of the Bible.

This is God's holy word. You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.
You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.
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. This is God's holy word.
On Sunday nights, we're working our way through a series called Questions Jesus Asked. There are about 300 of them. So we've just got one or two left, so we won't get to all of them. But it's really a free pass for every preacher to pick a gospel story and to look at one of the many questions Jesus asked in the summertime.
[1:11] So tonight we've got this very famous passage about salt and light, and it opens with a question in verse 13, the second clause. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

And then in the second part of the passage, there's an implied question. So you're the light of the world is a light, a lamp to be hidden and then placed under a basket. So that gets put in question form in Mark 4, the parallel version of this passage where Jesus says, is a lamp meant to be lit and then put underneath a basket.
So we've got two questions here that Jesus asked. It's a short passage. It's a very famous passage. I think it's got four really clear ideas, either explicitly or implicitly, that come out.
So number one, you are salt and you are light. Number two, you are a pinch of salt and you are a lamp, not the sun.
And number three, salt's not to be wasted and thrown on the ground. Don't hide your light. Don't put it under a basket. And then lastly, instead, let your light shine.
[2:13] So those four ideas, that's what Jesus says here. There's not much text. It's almost exactly what he says. So let's think about it together. First, he tells us in verse 13 and then just after that, in verse 14, you are salt, you are light.

So in the first century, you are salt. In the first century, salt was primarily used as a preserving agent more than something that you flavor your food with. It wasn't that easy to get.
And so that means that most of the time, salt was there to keep things from decaying. So you would put it on meat. You would put it on fish. And as the people who know more than me about science say, by osmosis, the salt is absorbed into the meat, the fish, and it dehydrates it so that bacteria cannot grow.
And so it preserves. So salt, for the ancient person, the first century mind, for Jesus' mind, is an arresting agent. It arrests decay. It slows down the process of decay. And that was the main way it was used.
But he doesn't just say you are a preservative. He says you are a preservative. You arrest decay. And you are of the earth. So he says salt of the earth. Why does he add that little prepositional phrase, of the earth?
[3:22] And I think it's because the word earth in the Old Testament had such importance. And it shows up very early in Genesis 1, and then in Genesis 2, and then in Genesis 3.

And it's the same word as the word ground in the Old Testament. So earth and ground are the same word. And so God made the ground or the earth, and Adam, humans, came from the earth or

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from the ground.
And then as soon as Adam sinned against the ground, against the earth, we learn in Genesis 3 that what the ground or the earth was cursed. And so I think Jesus says you are salt of the earth because he's trying to call his followers to think about the curse.
You are the preserving agent that arrests decay amid a world that is cursed. Amid a world that is decaying, in other words. It's so you've got to be, we're called to be, you are, it is your identity to be an arresting agent amidst the decay because there is decay.
There is a cursed earth all around us, and we are existing in a place like that. So the world is decaying. That's what he's really saying. The world is decaying. Things are falling apart.
[4:28] And that's very important to say, for the church to say that in 2026, because for the past couple centuries, it has been a norm to talk about progress in a place like Edinburgh.

And to say that we are a city of progress, and the modern world is an age of progress, and we are constantly making progress as human people. And so that was preached very loudly on the Royal Mile during the Scottish Enlightenment in the 18th century, that human beings, the modern person, is learning enough, is studying enough, is doing enough scientific experimentation that we can really arrest decay ourselves and make progress and get past all the problems of this life and this world.
And we know today that the progress narrative is still very much with us, is transhumanism and technology, technocracy grows and grows, and people hope that we can arrest the decay maximally.
And there's a thousand examples of how that works. But now philosophers and sociologists and theologians and so many who write in these areas, what do they call this narrative?
They don't say, we're making progress. Most people now today say, that have really looked at it, they say, we have lived through the myth of progress. That the idea that humanity is making progress is actually just a myth.
[5:39] There's a writer, Joseph LeConte, who writes about the Inklings, about Tolkien and Lewis and all these folks, and I like some of his work. And he writes about especially how the Great War and World War II affected Tolkien and Lewis.

But he writes about this question of, is history progress? Or is humanity getting better and better? Are we making this world better and better? And this is just a summary of what he says.
He says, is history progressing in the sense of becoming better and better? And he says, well, progress means getting nearer to where you actually want to be and should be. So if you take a wrong road, the one who turns back to go the other way, retracing their footsteps, is actually the most progressive person.
Because they are returning to where one should be. In other words, progress is directional. It's not automatic. It's not automatic. Mere motion. Just making things. Isn't progress if it is motion, if it is movement away from the true, the good, and the beautiful.
And so the myth of progress is really the failure to think that just because our technology is getting better, just because we can live a little bit longer than we used to, that we can talk about an age of progress.
[6:52] But for Lacan studying Tolkien and Lewis in the Great War, he said the Great War shattered that enlightenment myth of progress. Why? Because it was the bloodiest, the 20th century was the bloodiest century in world history.

Are we making moral progress? Every culture, every century, in other words, without a clear sense of what is true, what is good, and therefore what is beautiful.
What is the beautiful life? Can't progress. Can't move forward. We can only regress. And so listen to what Tom Wright says about this. The myth of progress doesn't work because it misunderstands the nature of evil, and it underestimates the power of evil.
Well, I think of Yates' poetry, what he wrote in 1919, things fall apart, the center cannot hold. And if you think about what Jesus is saying here, you are the salt of the cursed ground.
That is exactly right. Things are always falling apart. They can't hold together. The center is not holding together. So physically, we're falling apart, right? Physically, we're falling apart.
[7:55] And relationally, it's very hard for a couple to stay together. We know that you've got to be pulling the weeds up of relationships or they're going in the wrong direction. And scientifically, I read that disorder is always increasing.

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I don't know all that that means as a non-scientist, but I do know one example people talk about is that if you leave a car, it's going to rust. It's always going to go towards disaster and chaos eventually.
Coffee, when I leave my coffee on the countertop in the mornings, it always goes cold. And if you plant a garden and you don't go out and tend to it, it's going to grow weeds.
Things are always moving towards decay. They're always moving in that direction. Things fall apart. I experienced this this past week, week and a half ago. We came back from a holiday in France, and somebody had very kindly come to our house and cleaned, and the kids' bedrooms were spotless.
I've never seen it before. In fact, it was a new site. And, you know, if you come to my house today, as many of you actually did, and you went into those rooms, you know that a child's bedroom is a microcosmic scientific—it could be an experiment of exactly what the cosmos is doing.
[9:08] It's naturally ordered to decay. It is always moving to chaos. It is always moving—it's entropy, I think, as they call it, right? And so what? What is it? Let me make it concrete.

Jesus is saying, when he says, you are salt in the midst of a cursed, decaying world, I think he's asking us to read that metaphor in the light of what he had just said, which is the Beatitudes.
What does this mean for me? What does this mean for you? If you're a Christian tonight, what does this mean? And he has just told humanity what it is to live the beautiful life and the Beatitudes, the blessed life, the life of truth and goodness and beauty.
And this is what he said. He said, here's the great virtues. It's to hunger and thirst for righteousness. It's to be poor in spirit. It's to be meek in the midst of selfish ambition.
It's to be merciful. It's to be a peacemaker. It's to have public faith that's willing to be persecuted and stand unashamed of the gospel. And he said, that is the blessed life.
[10:09] That's the beautiful life. And then he turns and says, and you are the preserving agent of the cursed world. What does it look like? It looks like a life that lives out the Beatitudes. I think that's what he means.

And so notice that it's indicative, not imperative. Meaning he doesn't say you should be salt of the earth or I command you to be salt of the earth. He says the indicative, you are salt of the earth.
It is the Christian identity. It is who you are. You, as a follower of Jesus, are arresting the decay of the cursed ground in the world. It's a statement of fact.
All right, so secondly, we learn here, I think, by implicitly a caveat. And that's that, yet, you are a pinch of salt.
And you are more like a little small table lamp than the sun itself. Or you're more like the moon than the sun. So we've got a big problem here. And if you think about this metaphor of salt, salt arrests decay.
[11:09] It preserves. But salt only preserves for a time. It only arrests decay. It only pushes back the darkness for a moment. But the meat is going to go bad.

And the fish is going to go bad. And it's going to smell. And so we're left here asking the question, I think, by this metaphor. Is the story of the church, the followers of Jesus, you, is it a story where we have to say what Galadriel said in the Fellowship of the Ring?
That we're all just here living the long defeat. That, yeah, you can push back the darkness for a little while. You can arrest the decay for a moment. But eventually the story is the story of loss. It's the defeat.
It's that you will never win. It will always be Babylon. Babylon will always overwhelm. And that's why I think he adds, verse 14, you, he gives you two metaphors side by side.
Same grammar, same claim, but a different angle. It's not just that you're salt. He says you are the light of the world. So think about how different salt and light are. Yet he's using them to effectively say the same thing with slightly different angles and nuances.
[12:11] So when you take salt in the ancient world, you put it on something to preserve it. It blends in by osmosis. You can't see it anymore. It's gone. It's doing the work of slowing down the problem. But how different is the nature of light?

Light, you turn light on and it advances against the darkness. You know, salt arrests and slows down a problem. But light gets rid of the problem.
Light enters a room and the darkness can't stay anymore. It has to go away. Light accomplishes exactly the mission that it's been set out to accomplish. It's not just a preservative.

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It's an advance. And so he uses this metaphor of light, I think, in the context of the Old Testament again, where in Isaiah 42 and Isaiah 49 and Isaiah 60, he had said to his people in the Old Testament, God did to Israel, you are light.
You are the light of the nations. You are the light of the world. And here he's picking back up on that and saying it again. But if you read the Old Testament, you may be thinking the same thing as the Israelites were in the Old Testament.
[13:16] That we can't do this job. We can't be the light of the nations. We have failed at every step of the way to push back the problems of Babylon.

The world, the flesh, and the devil are always getting into us. The temptations are overwhelming us. And you come to a passage like this and it says, it's not an imperative, it's an indicative. It says, you are salt.
You are light. You are the light. What does he say? Of the world. And you think, how am I supposed to be the light of the world? A city set on a hill for the nations. That's what he said to Israel and they failed.
That's what he then comes to say here at the Sermon on the Mount. And you've got to first read it and realize that he's talking to the whole church, the Gentiles, and the Jews all together. The new Israel. And we've got to look and say, I also have failed at this.
I could never do this. I could never be the light of the world. A city set on a hill. And that's why you've got to remember that we read this passage in the light of the gospel redemption accomplished and therefore applied.
[14:17] So, think about it like this. Matthew 5 comes right before Matthew 4. And if you read Matthew 5 and him say to you, you are the light of the world.

You are, it sounds a lot like he's saying, you are the hope. But in Matthew 4, just one chapter back, verse 16, he says, we read, quoting Isaiah 9, Jesus reads from the scroll in the synagogue.
He says, the people living in darkness have now seen a great light. So, Jesus has just identified himself as the light. And then he explains what it's like to live the beautiful life.
And then he turns and says, and now you also are the light. Or you can think about what he says in John's gospel. He says, I am the light of the world. And that means that when you read a metaphor like this, such an important passage in the New Testament for what a Christian is, what our identity is.
What he's saying to us is, you are the light of the world. But it's more like you're the moon and you don't produce the light yourself. You simply reflect the light of the sun.
[15:18] Or you're a lamp. You're not the sun, S-U-N itself, because you're not the sun, S-O-N. Or you're just a little bit of pinch of salt in whatever little place God has put you. But you are not the preserving agent of all of history.

And so your mission in life, Christian friends, is to reflect the sun, to be the moon, to be a lamp. And whatever little place God has put you, to be a preserving agent, a pinch of salt sprinkled on whatever place God has directed you.
Because he is the salt and the light of the world. And so think about some passages in the New Testament. In Christ, all things hold together. You know, if the world, if the myth of progress is a myth and the world is in decay, this cursed ground.
We learn in Colossians 1 that Jesus Christ is the gravity that is holding everything together. Without which it would all just disintegrate and fly apart.
In that metaphor, we are little magnets trying to act like the great gravity that is Jesus Christ holding all things together. But listen to what he says. I think Paul puts it all together so helpfully in Ephesians.
[16:24] When he says in Ephesians 5, You are a light to the nations. You're a light to the world. How? He says because you are in the light. And so what he's saying there is if you have been united to Jesus Christ, if you say tonight, I am a follower of Jesus Christ, your public identity is to be a little lamp and a little pinch of salt in wherever God has put you.

In other words, the way that we're to read this passage is to read it in the light of everything that's going to happen after. Jesus is at the beginning of his ministry here. But what did happen?
The light of the world came into the world to become the ultimate subject of decay. Jesus Christ, the light of the world, what did he do? He came to enter into the fullness of darkness itself at the cross.

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So that light could be shed unto us. That he could go right into the heart of darkness and bring the light from the inside out. He, we know, experienced physical decay. The God of creation, the light of the world, he experienced physical decay.
He experienced relational decay in this life, in his body. He experienced relational decay. His friends abandoned him. He experienced political decay. Because the great rulers of Jerusalem tried him and executed him in a completely unjust court.
[17:37] He experienced the decay and the disintegration in his earthly life that our sin brought to the ground. That we did when we cursed the ground. So that we could sit here today and be saying, now all of it is being preserved.

Because the light of the nations is going to enter into the darkness. And until he does, fully and finally and forever, it is our mission in the light of the cross and the resurrection to be a little pinch of salt and a table lamp.
And wherever God has put you in your life today. So let me get practical with this. Thirdly, that means that we're told here, I think Jesus anticipates a problem when he turns and he asks this question.
In verse 13b, he's telling us, salt needs to be used. Light shouldn't be hidden. And so here's how he gets us there to think about how this looks practically in our lives.
He says, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? Now that has been a tricky verse for people, for interpreters. Because salt can't lose its chemical makeup.
[18:43] It can't lose its taste. So what exactly does he mean by this? And I think there's a couple possibilities, but they both come together. The Greek word that he uses for losing taste here is a word that only slightly changed means to play the fool.

And so in Greek, it sounds like a play on words where it would read something like, he would be saying effectively that if you use salt in a foolish way, then why are you using?
Why do you have it? In other words, let me make it more concrete. Sometimes at my house with toddlers, they want so much salt on their food.
And our two-year-old has started to understand the salt, the pepper, and can beckon the salt consistently throughout a meal and want more salt and more salt. And so Heather and I, we either put the cap on top of the salt and shake it over her food to make her think that salt is coming out so she'll be satisfied.
Or, you know, you'll just, if there's no cap, you just throw it on the ground. And technically speaking, that is a dumb use of salt. Salt is not meant to be used that way. It's not meant to be. It's meant to flavor the food and to preserve things.
[19:58] But in order to protect her, we just throw it on the ground and we trample upon it, just like Jesus says right here. So he's saying, if you are salt of the earth, but you're not living a life of public faith, you're not providing preservative and flavor to the world that God has put you in.

There's another way to read it too, and it's something like this. Pure salt was unattainable in the first century. So I think one of the ways people have found this tricky is probably because we think of salt as, you know, Himalayan table salt that you bought at Costco last week.
But pure Himalayan salt, pink salt, rock salt, none of these things were around. Of course, they existed, but you couldn't get them some pure, unadulterated form.
Nobody was processing them and bottling them and shipping them out to the world through Amazon. You couldn't get table salt in the way we think about it. No, salt for the ancient person was mixed with all sorts of minerals like gypsum.
And sometimes it came from the Dead Sea and other mines and places like that. But it was never pure. And so it was very possible that you could use a compound that was called salt that was full of all sorts of other minerals.
[21:10] But eventually you would taste it and say it doesn't taste like salt, but it looks like salt. And it's probably because it's just gypsum or it's some other mineral. And so Jesus is probably pulling from that and saying you can look like salt.

You can appear to be salt. But if you're not going out into the city and living a life of public faith, then you don't have saltiness. There's no actual sodium chloride deep down in the chemical compounds of your life.
And we know what he means because the light metaphor helps us so much to make it even clearer. In verse 14 he says, A city set on a hill can't be hidden. People don't light lamps and put them under

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baskets, but they put them on a stand to give light.
Because in the first century, light, a lamp is very expensive, the oil for it. And so you would only light your lamp right at dusk and right at dawn because you lived a life where you went to bed when the sun went down.
You got up before the sun came up. And so you would only use a lamp very rarely or if you had to leave your home in the night. So how silly would it be? How foolish would it be? In a culture where light is so expensive to light a lamp in the middle of the night and put it under a basket.
[22:20] In other words, are you being who you are? Are you living a life of public faith? In the very last of the Beatitudes he said, Blessed are you when you go out into the city, wherever God has put you in, and you are persecuted even, reviled for what you believe, and yet you stand with faithfulness amid that revulsion, amid that persecution.

And then he turns and says, You are salt, you are light. Meaning, are you living a life of public faith? The big idea that he's offering us to hear, offering us in this passage is that as Christians, we are people of public faith, not private faith.
So not only do we live in the age of the myth of progress, we also live in the age of the myth that faith is just to be privatized. And that your faith is okay as long as you don't share it with anybody, as long as you don't live it out, as long as you don't try to convert anyone.
But Jesus is saying the exact opposite about both. Progress is a myth. The world is in a state of decay. And only Christ is the gravity that holds it together. And that you are to live as a Christian, a life of public faith.
So James Davidson Hunter has written very helpfully on this topic. And he talks, as so many have, about what Jesus is giving us here is, I think, the right thing amid some bad options for how to live the Christian life.
[23:36] You know, there is a road to walk down, and there are several types of ditches all around us when it comes to the calling to be salt and light. And the earth. One of those is to go out into the city and compromise.

So you can be a Christian, you can be made up of sodium chloride, but you're struggling with going out into the city and compromising. Just in order to fit in, adopting the values, the patterns, that the moral order of the city is moving towards in decay.
That's the problem of compromise. That's one of the great ditches. But on the other side, there's a complicated ditch, and that's the ditch of isolation. So he says, when you're salt, you're light. A lamp can't be hidden.
It should brighten up the whole city. He's very clearly calling out this problem of isolation that was present in his time through groups like the Essenes or the Zealots who lived in communities far away from everyone else.
And what is the problem of isolation? The problem of isolation is really twofold. It's that you can say the world is in such a state of decay. It's so Babylon out there that the best thing we can all do is say the good guys are in here, the bad guys are out there.
[24:43] And so in order to keep ourselves pure, we're going to stay away from the culture, stay away from the city. We're going to have Christian friends. We're going to eat with only Christians. We're going to worship with Christians. We're going to live our lives as much as we can in Christian community.

but never go and extend ourselves into the city and make friends of all kinds and pursue people of all kinds. That's a type of isolationism that I think Jesus is attacking because, boy, that does not look like the ministry of Jesus Christ.
On the other hand, there's another type of isolationism. And that's the isolationism where we do go out and we do pursue our vocations in the city and we live in our neighborhoods and we get to know people, but we stay hidden in plain light.
So we're in public context. We know so many people outside of the Christian community, but nobody ever knows that we're followers of Jesus. So we're staying hidden in the midst of the city. And that's another type of isolationism that I think Jesus is probably attacking here or trying to draw us away from. And here's how James Davidson Hunter puts it. He says, the calling here is to be faithfully present within the city and the culture.
[25:51] And so we've got classic language. This language informs this passage like this informs the vision of St. Columbus so much that we are called to be in the world, but not of it.

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That we are to hold what's good in our culture together with the antithesis toward what is idolatrous. To look out at our city and say, I want to go and celebrate what's good, be a part of what's good, because all that's good is actually the gift of God's common grace to the city.
But I want to hold in antithesis, stand against what is idolatrous. And that's how to go out and to be in the world, but not of it to be salt and light in the midst of the city. In other words, Christians are not called to hate Babylon, just like Jonah was not called to hate Nineveh.
Jonah was called to love that city and to plead on behalf of that city and to pursue that city and to want Babylon and want Nineveh and want every other human city that's ever been built, the city of man, to see hope in the light of the nations themselves, to be little lamps and a pinch of salt wherever we might be.
And so I'll summarize it like this and wrap up. You are not called, you are being called here, you're being invited here not to compromise in your public life, not to relativize your faith to fit in, but at the same time you're not being invited to be a cultural warrior activist trying to take over the culture and reestablish Christendom 2.0 in the modern world.
[27:14] You're not being asked here, you're being compelled away from separatism, where you just wait for the world to pass by until the rapture comes, nor are we being asked here to think of ourselves as the light of the world ourselves, like we're going to go fix the whole city and bring everybody that we could do this, that this is our big mission and we can fully accomplish that.

No, what is our job? Our job is to be a pinch of salt and a little lamp, a little moon, that is spotlighting Jesus Christ as often as we can in whatever place God has put us.
That's our mission. And the Holy Spirit has to decide what to do with that and how to make that powerful in people's lives. You know, how could you live the Beatitudes? How can we live the Beatitudes if we're not amongst the people of the world?
How could you ever be a peacemaker if we're not stepping into conflict? How can we be persecuted if we're never in relationships outside these walls? How can we be merciful if we never go where people need mercy?
How can we be meek if we never put ourselves in a position where pride can be turned away with a gentle word? So lastly, let me briefly finish with this.
[28:25] Let your light shine before others. That's the last thing he tells us here. So, let your light shine before others so that they would see your good works or being clearly called to good works and to give glory, that others would give glory to the Father who is in heaven.

All right, so let me wrap up with a couple ideas, pithy ideas of how to work this out in practice. Number one, the light exposes darkness. That means that you go out into the world, and as a Christian, your presence is meant to show things for what they really are.
You're meant to be light in the midst of darkness. So that means that by being present in a place with people, you can reveal the darkness of gossip by refuting it, by refusing to participate in it. You can reveal corrupt practices in business by declining to participate in them. That's what it means to let your light shine out into the darkness. R.T. France puts it like this.
Disciples must function in society as an alternative and challenging community to the cultural norms around them that are dark. Secondly, salt also preserves and flavors.
[29:36] And I think by this, what I'm thinking of here is that salt extends the length of life of things. It makes things good for longer, and it adds something that tastes good to wherever it is.

So you go out into the world, and you let your light shine in darkness, but you also flavor the context God has put you in, meaning you're not the office morality police.
You go out into the world, and you let your light shine amidst darkness, and yet you don't, at the same time, be the one who scolds everybody in the break room for a crude joke. You're not the office morality police, because you flavor a space.
You extend its life. You know in wisdom what to say, when to say it, and you know how to operate in the midst of the world that God has put you in.
No one wants to be that person, and no one wants to listen to that person. And so instead, we've got to go out into the world, and know we're also flavoring agents. We give life to spaces. We draw things back to the good in subtle and wise ways.
[30:36] The third thing we learn here is salt is also an agent of healing. So if you put salt, salt was used sometimes for healing in the ancient world. If you put salt on a wound, as we sometimes still do, we know that it can help, and it burns.

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It hurts. It bites. And so in the same way, Elisha in the Old Testament threw salt into the bad water at Jericho and said, I have healed this water miraculously by God's power.
And D.A. Carson says, Christians have the effect of delaying moral and spiritual decay in whatever place they've been put. And so salt has a bite to it.
Salt, you put it in a wound, it helps, but it also hurts. And that means that sometimes it is right to call out injustice, to come with a bite, and to stand against injustice in the midst of the world.
One German theologian, Helmut Tillich, he says this, a Christian might make their ambition to be the honeypot of the world. So Helmut says, it would have been a lot nicer if Jesus would have said, you are the honeypot of the world.
[31:39] You know, just go out and make everything sweeter. Only sweetening the bitterness of life. Only talking about the ever-loving God that you serve. But we all know that the God of love is also the God of justice.

And so Jesus picks salt. And sometimes salt bites and stings a little bit. And so he says, we are not only people who preserve and bring light and bring levity and clarity, but we also call out the problems of injustice in our city.
And then lastly, salt only works in contact. It has to touch something to work. And in the same way, light only works when it's actually pushed into the darkness, opened into the darkness.
And in the same way, to be effective, we've got to be involved with where we work, where we live. We've got to go into the places God has sent us. So this is an invitation tonight, as we finish, to live with a definite purpose this semester, to pursue God's glory by thinking very intentionally how has God called me and is calling me to be a pinch of salt and a lamp, spotlighting Jesus Christ in the very specific neighborhood, vocation, and relationships that God has given to me so far in life.
What are you being asked to do here? Another way to say it is this. As one writer puts it, to love the city like Jesus loves you. Because Jesus pursued us when we were Babylon.
[33:07] And so you're being asked to go out and pursue the city, whatever little bit of it God has given you, in the same way that Jesus loves you and has pursued you.

That's what it means to be salt and light. Let us pray. Father, we ask that you would teach us this, that we would be preservatives, agents arresting decay, and little lamps, little moons, spotlighting Jesus.
And so we ask, Lord, for courageous witness and wisdom and intentionality this week, that we would repent of the ways we've compromised, that we would reject the ways we've isolated, and instead that we would be faithful witnesses, faithfully present in wherever you put us.
And we pray that in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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