

Ice Breaker Question:

Do you crave salty or sweet foods more? What is your favorite crave?

Read and discuss this week's scripture [Matthew 5:13-20].

1. On Sunday in worship at ZPC, those in attendance filled out a survey on missions. In light of that survey and these words from Jesus, are you engaged in a ministry outside of ZPC? In that ministry, how are you salt and light? If not, what is a "salty" passion of yours that might draw you in to ministry?
2. You are the salt of the earth. Don't lose your saltiness. What does a Christian, who is salty, look like? What does a Christian, who is bland, look like? How can you maintain your saltiness?
3. The "you" in "you are the salt of the earth" and "you are the light of the world" actually means "you all." Knowing that Christ's teaching is for a group of Christian disciples, what does a community of Christians look like that is being salt and light?
4. You are the light of the world. Let your light shine. Do you find your light comes from your inner self or from God? How can you be light and reflect Jesus, who is the light and the life of the world (John 1:4, 9)?
5. Jesus says he came to fulfill the law, not to abolish it. Reflecting on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12, and being salt and light, how does Jesus interpret and fulfill the law in his ministry? Read Luke 6:6-11 for an example of Jesus interacting with the law. How does Jesus interpreting the law in a new way in that story help us to understand the role of the law?
6. What does it mean to do your works in a public way so that others will see them for God's glory [Matthew 5:16]? How do we do that?
7. The Pharisees and teachers of the law could be very legalistic. As Jesus' followers, how can our righteousness surpass the Pharisees (5:20)? What does this type of righteousness look like?

Prayer:

Keep the following prayer requests from our church family in mind as you close:

- > Prayers of healing for Bob Bankert, Harry Milli, Carolyn Maddox, Don Armstrong, Karen Cunningham, Regina Franks, Hadley Lehr, and Bryan Dysert.

[Leader's Notes] As we begin our home groups again this January, we take a look at Jesus's Sermon on the Mount through Sunday, March 13. Jesus words fill three chapters in Matthew – chapters 5, 6 and 7. Crowds were following Jesus and so he sat down on a hillside near Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee, to teach those in the crowds. Jesus' teaching here has been described as close to a manifesto, saying to live for God is very different from the way the world lives, and even very different from a legalistic understanding of the law. Let's discuss - and try to follow the teachings of - the Sermon on the Mount.

[Question 1] Whether or not you were at worship, you can discuss if you are engaged in a ministry outside of ZPC. Why are you engaged in it? What excites you about it? If not, what would get you excited about serving somewhere?

[Question 2] To remain salt-like is to remain Christ-like. A Christian who is salty continues to wrestle with what it means to follow Jesus in a real way. One who has lost saltiness would be one who is bland, maybe defeated or jaded, and lost passion to be different than the world. Jesus says he is the vine and we are the branches – so to remain salty we need to stay connected to the vine at all times (John 15).

[Question 3] A community that is salt and light has grace and exhibits grace. That community exists for more than itself, it exists for others to know God's love through Christ.

[Question 4] Light comes from God. We can't manufacture our own light. The light of Christ must be in us through the Holy Spirit, and work through us, and then be reflected – or shine out of us. Let your light shine as Christ shines through you. An example is the moon, which has no light of its own, but reflects the light of the sun on dark nights.

[Question 5] John Chrysostom said that Jesus fulfilling the law was "the filling up" of God's commands. Jesus, in his teaching here, is filling the gaps of God's law – explaining the law and how it is to be lived – not abolishing the law because some have made the law too complicated.

[Question 6] Being a shining light is very public, but we are called to do that for God to get the glory. We can act publicly in a generous way, or good way, for others to see – if our purpose and intent is to have others see Christ, and not really to lift ourselves up. We should examine our motivation: Am I doing this for God or for me and my reputation?

[Question 7] Righteousness is not a kind of moral high ground, but in Jesus' eyes, a seeking after what he calls us to do and be. We are called to be disciples, understanding and living out his call, through the scripture on how to live.

Next Week:

The focus for next week's sermon is anger and lust [Matthew 5:21-30]. As we learned at our Leader's Gathering, groups with men and women may have difficulties opening up, especially about these topics. If you are a mixed group, next week consider splitting into two groups—one for men and one for women—during discussion time.