



Small Groups

Small Group Discussion Guide

The Sermon on the Mount
Part 4: A Difference of the Heart
(Discussion Guide by Lisa Smith)
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After opening his Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes, Jesus shares how his followers should be “salt” and “light” to the world. What do these metaphors mean for daily life as a Christian today? Let’s examine Jesus’ ideas about being “salt” and “light” for his kingdom.

Opening Question: Which metaphor appeals to you more—salt or light—and why?

I. How We Relate to Others

Isaiah 1:11a, 17 (NIV) “The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?’ says the LORD. ‘I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals. . . . Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.’”

Lev. 2:13 (NIV) “Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.”

John 1:5 (NIV) “[Jesus:] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

1. According to Pastor Shawn, as those who love and follow Jesus, we must experience *heart* change before we can impact the world with our *lives*.
 - a. Can you share a recent experience when God changed your heart?
 - b. What Christian practice helps you to place your heart in a position and posture where God can change it?
 - c. What part of your heart are you currently bringing before the Lord to change?
2. Salt was important in the ancient world as both a *preservative* that prolonged freshness and *purifier* that could heal wounds.
 - a. How can we help *preserve* or prolong the strength and hope of those in our circles—family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc.?
 - b. How can we help *purify* or bring healing and health to those in our circles of influence?

3. Light is in contrast to darkness, which overcomes it and reveals reality.

- a. Have you responded differently to the current global pandemic than those around you who do not follow Jesus? If yes, in what ways?
- b. Can you share a time you were able to clarify a teaching of Jesus to someone who did not know Him or was seeking to understand Him?
- c. What was the most recent time the Holy Spirit clarified a teaching of the Bible for you? How did He do it?

II. How We Relate to God

Psalms 40:6-8 (NLT) "You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings. Now that you have made me listen, I finally understand—you don't require burnt offerings or sin offerings. Then I said, 'Look, I have come. As is written about me in the Scriptures: I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart.'"

John 21:25 (NIV) "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

Rev. 5:13 (NIV) "Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!'"

1. **Jesus lived the perfect life on earth so that his righteousness could be imputed (or credited) to us and thus fulfill God's moral requirements.**
 - a. What aspect of Jesus' life intrigues you the most? Why?
 - b. What aspect of Jesus' life challenges you the most? Why?
 - c. What aspect of Jesus' life confuses you the most? Why?
2. **Jesus was the perfect example of salt and life to others while on earth.**
 - a. How did Jesus act like salt, *preserving* and prolonging the strength and hope of others? Share an example from His life.
 - b. How did Jesus act like salt, *purifying* others and bringing healing and wholeness? Share an example from His life.
 - c. How did Jesus act like light, acting in *contrast* to the world?
 - d. How did Jesus act like light, *revealing* God's truth to others?
3. **Share ways you have found during this pandemic to connect with God and others instead of isolating from them.**