

# Salt and Light

Rev. Cheryl Farr February 8, 2026

## Matthew 5:13–20

### Big Idea

Christ is revealed in His followers. We shine His light and preserve His goodness in the world, pointing others to God's glory through faithful presence.

### The World Behind the Text

Jesus speaks these words to people who live on the margins. They are under Roman occupation, burdened by heavy taxes, limited power, and constant uncertainty. Faith, instead of offering freedom, has become complicated and often discouraging. The Law feels distant, controlled by experts and religious leaders who set standards most people cannot meet.

Many in the crowd have learned to keep their expectations low. They don't expect to be trusted with responsibility or meaning. Their lives feel small in the larger story. Into this world, Jesus speaks not with demands, but with identity.

### What Jesus Does First

Before giving instructions, Jesus names who His followers already are. He does not say they might become salt and light someday. He says they are salt and light now. Identity comes before effort. Grace comes before responsibility.

This reverses the way most people understand faith. Instead of earning worth, Jesus gives it. Instead of waiting for perfection, Jesus trusts ordinary people with meaningful purpose.

### Salt: Preserving What Is Good

Salt assumes something fragile. It assumes the world is prone to decay if left unattended. Jesus is honest about the world's brokenness and about how easily goodness can erode.

Salt works quietly. It does not draw attention to itself. Its presence is often unnoticed until it is missing. In the same way, faithfulness often works beneath the surface. It shows up in consistency, integrity, and quiet care.

Being salt means staying present in a world that is tempted to harden. It means preserving goodness through honesty, compassion, and perseverance, especially when walking away would feel easier.

### Light: Revealing What Is True

Light assumes darkness, not as evil alone, but as confusion, fear, and disorientation. Jesus does not deny darkness exists. He simply refuses to let it have the final word.

Light does not argue with darkness. It reveals. It creates safety, clarity, and direction. Jesus does not tell His followers to try to shine. He assumes that light will naturally be visible when people live close to Him.

Faith, then, is not performance. It is presence. It becomes visible through patience, humility, and love lived out in everyday life.

## **Righteousness That Goes Deeper**

When Jesus speaks about the Law, He is not rejecting it. He is fulfilling it by restoring its purpose. The Law was meant to guide people into life with God, not to rank or exclude.

Jesus calls for righteousness that goes deeper than appearances. Surface-level righteousness focuses on how things look. Deeper righteousness focuses on alignment with God's heart. This kind of righteousness grows from relationship, not fear.

Grace does not remove responsibility, but it reshapes it. Faithfulness becomes less about performance and more about living honestly before God.

## **The World in Front of the Text**

Our world still feels fragile. Trust erodes quickly. Conversations harden easily. Faith often carries baggage shaped by judgment rather than grace.

Jesus' words invite us to ask not how loud our faith is, but what kind of presence we are. Salt preserves without dominating. Light reveals without shaming. Righteousness reflects relationship, not perfection.

Christ is revealed when ordinary lives are shaped by grace, lived with integrity, and offered faithfully in everyday places.

## **Questions for Reflection**

Where do I feel tempted to withdraw instead of staying present?

What small acts of faithfulness might God be using to preserve goodness?

How does my daily life reflect the light of Christ to others?

In what ways is God inviting me to live with deeper alignment rather than appearance?

## **Takeaway**

You do not have to fix the world.

You do not have to be everywhere.

You are called to be faithful where God has placed you.

Salt works where it is scattered.

Light shines where it is set.

Christ is still being revealed through ordinary people who live shaped by grace.