

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

Live Anew: As Radical Disciples

Matthew 5:13-16

Rev Adrian Ng

SERMON SYNOPSIS

The sermon focuses on the metaphors of salt and light from Matthew 5:13–16 to describe a Christian disciple.

- **Disciples as Salt**

- ✓ **Preservation and Enhancement** – Historically, salt was used as a *preservative* to prevent meat and fish from decaying and as a *flavour enhancer* to make food palatable. In the same way, as disciples, we are positioned in the world to slow down societal decay and make the community more "flavourful" and "colourful" through our unique gifts and talents.
- ✓ **A Necessary Agent for Societal Growth** – Beyond preservation, salt was used in ancient times as a *fertilizer* to supplement and strengthen plant growth. Hence, as disciples, we are intended to be an "everyday vital necessity" who help society *to be* the people God intended us to be like being kind, loving, just, etc ... by reflecting who God is in our words, deeds, thoughts, character and attitude. And through our faithful obedience, God would sustain & improve conditions in society.
- ✓ **The Standard of Purity and Integrity** – Salt symbolized the "gold standard" of purity to the Romans. A real disciple's "saltiness" is intrinsic. Hence, it is impossible for a true disciple to be useless to society unless his/her faith is "fake" to begin with. Like salt, we as disciples of Jesus, are called to be the "gold standard" for honesty, morality, and justice in our speech and conduct.

- **Disciples as Light**

- ✓ **Visibility and Guidance** – Light is a source of life that reveals and guides. Just as a "city built on a hill cannot be hidden," a disciple's lifestyle and behaviour must be visible and attractive, showing the world the difference between right and wrong and helping others experience God, His love & life eternal.

- **Conclusion**

- ✓ **Being radical disciples** is to be *intentional* in our own transformation, that is, to be MORE like Jesus in our character, values, perspectives, attitude, behaviour and speech – and to be *intentional* to move beyond "holy huddles" or "holy cliques." Upon our own transformation, God makes us *His change agents* like salt and light. God then through us, transforms our society – in our homes, schools and workplaces.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RELATE

1. Have you ever noticed the value of something only after it was missing e.g. electricity, salt or someone's presence / action / guidance etc? Share with the group what happened and how you felt.

REFLECT

2. As disciples of Jesus, we are to live out godly lives to bring about positive transformation in our communities, enabling those around us to experience God's love and goodness. Using the Bible verses below, discuss the specific characteristics and values that Christians should demonstrate so that we can be salt and light for Christ in this fallen world.

[Verses to help us go deeper: Galatians 5:22-23 (character), Colossians 3:23 (work), Colossians 4:6 or Ephesians 4:29 (speech).]

RESPOND

3. Think about a specific situation in your life now (at work, family, school etc) where you have had difficulties in being salt and light for Jesus. What changes do you need to make so that you can reflect Jesus well the next time you encounter a similar situation?

PRAYER POINTERS

- Praise God for His loving kindness and for giving us His Holy Spirit so that we are empowered to work hand-in-hand with God to become the salt and light of the earth – to bear the image of God!
- Thank God for the gracious privilege to be salt and light as Jesus' disciples.
- Pray for yourself, CG members & church members to *intentionally choose each day to be MORE like Christ* so that God will be able to transform our society and our world through us, His agents of salt & light.

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." [Matthew 5:16]