

Parables

Salt and Light – Better and Brighter

Parables are stories of real-life illustrations that are **com - parable**.

To really know Jesus and to understand His ways we must know and understand His parables.

Last week was our second Better and Brighter Camp for our students this summer.

The name Better and Brighter comes from the famous Parable known as the Salt and Light which Jesus taught on his Sermon on the Mount at the beginning of his 3 year ministry.

Matthew 5:13-16 ESV “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. **14** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** 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. **16** 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.

How you live your life **before others** is a reflection of the goodness and glory of God

You are the Salt – Salt makes things Better

You are the Light – Light makes things Brighter

Let me remind you that in His parables, most of the time **Jesus is revealing some incredible and unrealized truth** about God. And he almost always exposes the raw reality of our **sin sick hearts**. He tells us the truth about man. And then Jesus seems to always challenges us to make the **right decision** or **take the right action** in **light of our new understanding**.

What does this parable say about God?

What does this parable say about us?

What kind of decisions need to be made?

Lets read it again from Message Paraphrased Bible:

Matthew 5:13-16 MSG “**Let me tell you why you are here.** You’re here to be **salt** seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage. **14** “Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be **light**, bringing out the God-colors in the world. **God is not a secret to be kept.** We’re going **public** with this, as **public** as a city on a hill. **15** If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. **16** Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—**shine!** Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By **opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God**, this generous Father in heaven.

What does this parable say about God?

1) **God is Good.**

The secular world does NOT see the God you serve as being good.

I had someone tell me once, I like you but I don’t want anything to do with a God that wants to send people to hell. I said, me either. That’s why I love God, He sent is Son into the world so people would not have to go to hell.

2 Peter 3:9 NIV The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, (He is restraining Himself) **not wanting anyone to perish**, but everyone to come to repentance.

2) **God Wants the People on the Earth to Know that He is Good.**

The secular world does NOT see the God we serve as being good, therefore **our good works** and **good words** in a **world gone bad**, matters so much.

We have to **go public with** His Goodness and not public with **nastiness** of a **condemning attitude**.

John 3:17 ESV For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

v. 14 You're here to be light... *the goodness of God is not a secret to be kept!*

3) **God's Plan is to Illuminate His Goodness on the Earth through His People.**

This is Plan A and there never has been a Plan B. the Church must be the City on the Hill.

This is why Jesus exposed the arrogance and corruption of the Pharisees and told parables about people like the **Good Samaritan**. He **praised the innocence of children** and **elevated the Widows mite**.

What does this parable say about Us?

1) **What does it say about those who don't know God?**

a) **We need a taste of God's goodness.**

Psalm 34:8 NIV Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Why is it that so many people have a bad taste in their mouths about God, Christianity, and the Church?

b) **We need to be enlightened by the goodness of God's people.**

i) The **unsaved world sits alone** in the **darkness of their sin and unbelief**.

ii) There is a **God consciousness deep inside every human**. A God vacuum!

A friend of mine was having an exchange with a proud atheist who said adamantly, **I DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD!** To which my friend said, *"yeah but don't you miss him?"* and *the man was speechless*.

2) **The True Followers of Jesus are Called to Make things both Better and Brighter.**

Matthew 5:13 MSG v13 **"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt..."** v14 **"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light."**

a) **What does it mean to be the Salt of the Earth?**

i) Salt held a place of great importance. **Salt was linked:** ***New slide below**

- Health
- Hospitality
- Purity
- Preservation.

ii) Salt was emblematic of friendship and loyalty.

- (1) There was an idiom or a figure of speech that was used in that day and is still among friends.
“*there is salt between us*”
- (2) In Jewish world it was a reference to what Numbers 18 and 2 Chronicles 13 identifies at the
“Covenant of Salt”.

Most Jewish Covenants were confirmed by sacrificial meals and salt was always present. When it was among people, they would share a meal that was well flavored with Salt. And, since, salt is a preservative which protects against petrification, it became symbolic of an enduring friendship.

Note: Jesus didn't have to do a lot of commentary in that culture... they got it!

iii) And salted fish was a resource for daily food, healthy life.

- (1) Jesus is saying your salty life is a necessary resource for God's work among communities on the earth.
- (2) The goodness of God manifesting the life of God's people must be sprinkled throughout every community on the earth making things better.

Recent study shows that if an unbeliever has a relationship with a real and sincere sold-out, Jesus loving Christian, the percentage of that person experiencing salvation is 88%.

But if they have a primary relationship with a spoiled and unsalted religious person, they are more than 88% likely not to come to Christ.

The greatest factor in someone finding God or not, is the character and of the people of God.

Transformed people! Regenerated people who are full of Joy! These people leave a good taste in the mouth of the unsaved! And at some point their unsaved friends will want to know more.

I know it is an election year and we need to vote. But people need to hear the gospel! Your right-winged conservative political views is not going to meet the needs of a sin sick world!

People don't need your morality that need your Jesus!

John 10:10 (MSG) “I came so that they can have real and eternal life, more and better than they ever dreamed of.”

b) What does it mean to be the Light of the World?

Back to our parable: 14 “Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. 15 If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. 16 Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

- i) NTS – in college... 10 hour drive from BTR to SAT... before google maps or WAZE... as I got closer I was always looking for the lights of the city.
- ii) I heard recently heard someone say, *Before you find Jesus your whole life is about finding Jesus. After you find Jesus, your whole life is about sharing Jesus.*
- iii) We can't just be a church just for church people. We want to be a church where unsaved people can come and be accepted and loved into the kingdom of God. But we cannot mislead them with compromised truth.

What kind of decisions need to be made?

1) Open up your life a little more to those who are lost and lonely.

a) Loneliness is a killer.

2015 researchers looking for the root causes of premature death world-wide.

- i) Living with air pollution increased your odds of dying early by 5%.
- ii) Obesity increased the odds by 20%.
- iii) Excessive drinking increased the odds by 30%.
- iv) Loneliness increased the odds by 45%.

b) To Share your faith, you have to be willing to share your life.

v. 16 "... Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God..."

2) Don't miss the opportunities God has given you.

a) Paul's links wisdom with salt.

Colossians 4:5,6 NIV Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

b) Are you hiding?

You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. 15 If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand.

c) Why are you hiding?

Don't be intimidated by the devil, love is the antidote to Satan's strategy.

3) Be patient, don't be pressuring.

a) What kind of taste are you leaving in the mouths of people all around you?

i) In the four Gospels Jesus asked **307 questions**. He was asked **183 questions** of which he directly answered **only 8**. He listened **40 times** more than he proclaimed.

ii) "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" Make them want more!

(1) One of my specialties is Purple Hull Peas.

(a) Hamhock simmer for about an hour. Add 1 onion, 4 cloves of garlic, some red, pepper and the peas... cook them til tender and then add salt to taste.

The perfect amount of salt is vital. It will determine if they want more or not.

Can't overpower the dish with salt. But it needs a little for flavor.

b) People need the Lord more than you need to win an argument!

2 Timothy 2:23-25 (NLT) Don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. They should gently teach those who oppose the truth.

c) Be patient because you were once lost.

John 3:17-18 (MSG) God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person's failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him.

So what is this parable saying to us? My pastor friend Chris Hodges says it so well.

"I want my life to be so attractive that people who know me but don't know God will want to know God because they know me."

Chris Hodges

Salt and Light! We make things Better... We make things Brighter

On night one we had a shaved ice vendor come in to serve the kids at the after party. A couple of leaders got to talking to the woman working the booth and the lady was so moved sent teen kid to Better and Brighter for the rest of the week. I was told this young person never really had much experience with church... How cool is that!