

# Being Salt & Light

## Week 1 - One Purpose / Many Facets (4/13)

God has selected us to be his ambassadors for His message of reconciliation. He loves the world he created and he wants as many people as possible to join His original design. As ambassadors we are sent into the world carrying a personal story of our life with God: how he has changed us, how we have survived in life, how we struggle with doubts. The message we carry is about God, His love for all creation and His offer of reconciliation. How we carry the message and to whom will differ from person to person. The vehicle for God's message is as varied as the people it has changed. We have one purpose but there are many facets to accomplishing that purpose. Think of a diamond cut to perfection. The purpose of that diamond and the cutting is to create a brilliant sparkle, but that brilliant sparkle is the result of light reflecting off many different facets of the diamond sending light in all directions. An uncut diamond has no sparkle.

### ***Different Who's***

There are lots of different kinds of people in the world and no individual can be effective forming relationships and reaching them for Christ alone. It is important that we realize that God doesn't expect everyone to reach everyone, what he asks is that we carry the message to the places where we have opportunity.

- ❖ Gal 2:1-10 "entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews."
- ❖ Acts 8-Philip precedes Peter and John in preaching to Samaritans, Ethiopians, Caesarea
- ❖ Cultural differences – We generally understand the complexities of culture when we think about missionaries, but sometimes we forget that there are different cultural dimensions within our own country.

### ***Move Forward***

People's response to God is not controlled by God, it is controlled by their choices. It is important that we remember that our goal is not baptism but turning hearts toward God. Sometimes our influence will turn their hearts only slightly making them reconsider Christ. Other times our influence will result in them coming to faith in God and surrendering their lives. Being Salt & Light is not measured by "success rates," conversions, Bible studies or baptisms. It is measured by meaningful conversations, opportunities to share life, and anything that makes following God attractive to them. Our job is to move them forward, just a little closer to God. It doesn't happen with one conversation, one advertising moment or one invitation. It takes a long-term investment in their lives that we may never see the impact of...but it is still worth the investment, at least Christ thought so.

- ❖ 1 Cor 3:1-15 – In this passage Paul addresses the idea that we are all fellow workers in Christ although we may play different roles in the process. Paul planted the church, Apollos "watered" the church. In all of this Paul is clear about two things. First, we are all working for the same purpose. Second, it is God who causes the growth.

### ***Play to your strengths***

Having different facets means that we all contribute a different aspect of God's reflection to the purposes of God. When stepping out to form relationships with people, do it in areas that you enjoy that will give the relationship many reasons to continue. Look at the places and activities where you already have contact with people and form deep and meaningful relationships with them outside of work or your business relationships. You may discover that your hobby or recreation activities provide opportunities to meet people. Perhaps you love serving, bring a friend along on a service project. Perhaps you simply love to grill out in the summer, invite a neighbor or two over on a regular basis and enjoy the friendship.

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## ***Topics to Discuss***

### **❖ No such thing as evangelism**

All of our life is dedicated to serving God's purposes, being transformed into the likeness of His Son, bringing glory and praise to our Father. It's all spreading the word. Sometimes when we reduce sharing our faith to a specific set of activities and conversations they become tasks on a to-do list appeasing our own guilt. The Great Commission which generally reads "Go and make disciples..." but a better rendering of the passage would "In your going, make disciples...." Sharing our life with Christ is as natural as talking on the cell phone.

### **❖ Think God, not Church**

In our culture our relationship to God has become equated to our participation in a local congregation. The two are very closely tied, but when we ponder being Salt and Light it is useful to remember that our aim is to orient people to God, not necessarily fill our church building.

### **❖ The Healthy don't need a Physician**

In Matthew 9:12 Jesus defended his habit of hanging around bad people by saying "it is not the healthy who need a physician." Salt and Light are needed where things are close to decay and where there is darkness. We must take the Salt and Light out of the building, beyond our social comfort zone, to the places and people who need a physician.

### **❖ Have a nose for opportunities**

Most of our days are scheduled and filled from the moment we are awake to the moment we go to sleep. There is a tension between being intentional and being opportunistic. We need both. We need to be intentional about forming relationships, studying our Bible, engaging in a healthy devotional life, conquering sin, etc. But we also need eyes that notice the women by the well, that hear the cries for help, and that notice the stress, the tears, the loneliness, the opportunities.

### **❖ Don't do it all**

Sharing our life with Christ is something that takes patience and time. Don't be in a hurry, form the relationship first. Wait for them to ask and be ready to share from your heart.

## ***Watch your language***

Paul told Timothy to "watch your life and doctrine closely" (1 Tim 4:16). How we speak about our own lives will reveal the core of our faith. Note the following passages related to language of the faithful

### ***Boasting in the Lord***

- Rom 15:8 – boasting about what God has accomplished through us.

### ***Talking about our troubles –***

- 2 Cor 4:13-18 – momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory..;
- James 1 – consider it all joy when we encounter various trials...

### ***Being Critical of Others –***

- James 2:12 – speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

### ***Complaining About Politicians / CEOs / Mangers / Leaders –***

- Titus 3:1 – remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one. See also Eph 4:31; Col 3:8

### ***Acknowledge the Source –***

- 1 Thes 5:16 – Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. See also Eph 5:4; Phil 4:6; Col 3:16.