

Disciples of Jesus Rest in The Identity Jesus Gives

In the 1950's the *National Post* wrote an article about the effects of light pollution (when artificial light makes the night sky 10x brighter than normal). They commented on a situation in Los Angeles where an earthquake caused power to go out across the city. The local authorities were flooded with anxious phone calls about "a white cloud" in the night sky. Because of the electric lights of the city, the citizens of L.A. had never seen the Milky Way before!

Are we like that? Jesus claims in **John 8:12** to be the "light of the world." But how many of us lose sight of Him because of other lights? Lesser lights that give us pictures of hope and life, but leave us wanting more? Lights from our TVs, phones, and computers that reveal a dark world yet no real answers to deal with it.

In **Matthew 5:13-16**, Jesus calls His disciples, "the salt of the earth...the light of the world." In short, they are His answer to dealing with all the world's brokenness and darkness.

"Salt and light" are identities we live out not things we do. But in order to understand what it means to live as salt and light, we first must see how Jesus fulfills those very identities Himself. What does Jesus mean when He says, "I am the light of the world?" 3 things:

1. Jesus is attractive.

In **Matthew 2**, we see Jesus attract wise men as a little child. In **Luke 6**, we see Jesus attract the teachers of the law as a young man. In **Luke 15**, we see Jesus attract the sinners and the outcasts as a grown teacher. Throughout His life, Jesus drew people to Himself. He healed the lives of those He loved and He shone brightly in the darkness around Him. His disciples will do the same.

2. Jesus is an experience.

Salt is useless if it's not salty and light is useless if it's hidden. In the same way, Jesus is useless to us if He remains only a thought in our minds or a belief we spout. We must experience His goodness. His disciples will be the way the world experiences Him.

3. Jesus preserves our future and pushes away our darkness.

Salt preserves food by not giving bacteria a place to flourish. Light pushes away the darkness so we can see and be safe. In the same way, Jesus destroys sin in our heart and lights our way back to God. And according to Jesus, when the world comes into contact with His disciples, they come into contact with the same power. The church is a place where life flourishes and darkness is overcome.

In focusing on Jesus' words, we must ask ourselves: What does this mean for me? What now? 4 things:

1. **Focus on Being not Doing:** Jesus says His disciples are salt and light. Their identity precedes their activity. Resting in Jesus is your first and foremost goal everyday.
2. **Stay Salty:** What would happen if you began and ended your day with the words of God? "His words, the first words and His words, the last words" is a simple way to remember to start and end your day with Scripture.
3. **Desire to be Different:** When salt and light are present, you know it. They are distinct. Are you? Does your goal, your pursuit, your want, your aim in life look different than your neighbors? Why or why not? Rest in Jesus and ask Him to change your desires.
4. **Live for an audience of One:** Your good deeds glorify your Father in heaven. So, live intentionally with eyes wide open, seeking to honor the God who loved you enough to call you His child.

This intentional life, lived within the identity Jesus gives us, has great impact. Little things with great care and love go a long way. So, rest in who Jesus says you are and live a life of tremendous meaning.