

# CONVERSION: A study of the Sermon on the Mount

Jesus changes everything for the one who believes to live in Him.

**INTRO** In this series we are walking through the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel. **CONVERSION** means we look and listen to the One who is our Lord, remember His righteousness He has put on us in salvation, and convert our lives by faith to walk in obedience with Him. Today's topic is no exception. I implore you to listen today to all that will be said.

## CONVERSION: Salt and Light – The Christian Purpose in Life

Matthew 5:13-16

**MPS:** Christians glorify God and honor King Jesus when we live as salt and light in the world.

**OBJ:** Every person can understand how Christians live out God's purpose for life by three understandings.

**READ** Matthew 5:13-16

*"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. <sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>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. **Matt 5:13-16***

**INTRO** We don't think much about picture frames any more as we capture a picture only to store it in digital-oblivion. But the most important pictures of our life are framed for display in the best frames. The more important the picture the better quality the frame the frame because we want to connect our love for those in the picture with our relationship or experience in life.

The Sermon on the Mount is a critically important passage for Christians. The **CONVERSION** series covered a portion of scripture to teach us how to align all of life under the Lordship of Christ as we "convert" our whole life to Him. Now we return to the preceding passage and consider its relationship to the previous portion of Scripture, the Beatitudes.

**TRANS** Today's passage "frames" our understanding between the Beatitudes and how we apply the rest of the Sermon on the Mount so that our Christian identity leads us to live with Jesus as the center of all things.

Matthew begins the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes, 5:1-12, that describes the state of a Christian's life when by faith God's blessing rests on them. The Beatitudes establish the Christ-follower's identity in Jesus. Then, in Matthew 5:17 Jesus' teaches how all of God's Word centers in Him. The remainder of the Sermon, 5:21-7:27, applies the principle of centering life on Jesus by demonstrating an appropriate application of the Law's teaching.

Jesus as the central figure of the Christian life has formed our **CONVERSION** series, learning how to live out God's commands as we walk by faith in Jesus. Jesus centers all understanding and application of God's Law and Prophets to live out the life-transforming power of the gospel. **The Christian life is not dependent on one's own strength but the power of Christ in their place and working through their life.**

**TRANS** So as we move to today's passage, I want to connect the Beatitudes with the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount to show God's purpose for every Christian. Understanding God's purpose for your life is neither a guessing game NOR a self-determined act to live on your own. **Our new identity in Christ and living in obedience to God's commands FORMS our understanding of God's purpose for the Christian life.**

**Matthew 5:13-16 frames God's purpose for the Christian's life.** Salt and light are not a Christian identity. Salt and light are not a command to obey. The Christian's purpose for life is formed when living from our identity in Christ as our source we walk by faith in obedience to His commands in the world. When we live for any other purpose, we live counter to our identity in Christ by drawing from or depending on some source other than Jesus. When we walk in disobedience to His



commands, we reject God's purpose for our life by substituting it with our own. [Salt and light from faith-fueled obedience to Jesus forms God's purpose for Christians in the world.](#)

**TRANS** I've taken this time to talk about WHY this passage is important because understanding what salt and light do is easy. Living in light of what it means for your life is the challenge. I've taken all this time to talk ABOUT this passage because what Jesus talks about IN this passage is about the Christian's life.

[Christians glorify God and honor King Jesus when we live as salt and light in the world.](#)

The question we must ask ourselves is this; ["Is my life displaying God's glory in all things when I show up / speak up?"](#)

**OBJ** [Three Understandings enable Christians to live out God's purpose for our life as salt and light.](#)

**TRANS** First, I want you to understand the impact of the Christian life on the world.

### 1. [Salt and light show the impact of a Christian's life on the world.](#)

**Salt makes things 'salty'.** If things don't get salty when salt is applied, that salt gets thrown out because it no longer has any good purpose.

**Salt has a wide range of beneficial qualities.** The quality most commonly used is likely it's least potent, seasoning and flavoring. In this application, salt enriches what it touches. Salt was most widely used to preserve prior to modern refrigeration. Salt purifies in a couple of ways. First, it draws out infection to boost the body's healing process. Second, and maybe my personal favorite, salt intensifies heat and light when used in a fire. Survival techniques teach that salt applied to dung create an excellent fuel for fire because the salt causes it to burn hotter and brighter. (You are welcome.)

**Salt flavors, preserves, purifies, heals, and intensifies heat and light.** These qualities are good to know but only useful when applied. Jesus' point is not WHAT salt does but that in who you are and what you do, you ARE salt in the world. It is astounding to consider the impact a Christian can have on the world when they walk by faith in obedience to Jesus. And, it is impossible to fully know exactly all the effect one is having at any given moment. ANY of salt's qualities can be working at any given moment through a Christian's life. [Obedience by faith to Jesus' Word IS the activity or application of the Christian as salt in the world.](#)

**Light dispels darkness.** This is true in so many ways. Outwardly, light illumines so the eyes can see. But light works inwardly too, where it dispels darkness of spirit. Having a flashlight in the woods at night does far more than only light the path, it comforts the heart and clarifies the mind for thinking. Light is never lit to be covered or hidden. Light does its work in many ways, to many degrees and levels of life. And light not only helps those for whom it shines but also those in proximity to where it shines. [The Christian who walks by faith in obedience to Jesus lives as the light of the world by shining His light into the world.](#)

Whether by model for others to encounter, by example for others to see and apply, or by witness for others to hear and understand, by God's design, Christians as salt and light are ALL qualities of both working at all times because of the gospel, flavoring and savoring, preserving, healing, heating and lighting up, illuminating, comforting and clarifying, warming and dispelling to impact others in the world. [Christian, you have NO idea in all the ways or how BIG God wants to use your life. But you do know THIS, that in Jesus, God has purposed to use your life to make an eternal impact in the world!](#)

**TRANS** When you understand the impact of Christians living as salt and light, THEN we are now ready to understand our purpose.

### 2. [Salt and light form the purpose of the Christian's life in the world.](#)

The impact God makes in the world by Christians living as 'salt & light' reveals God's purpose for every Christian.



**ILLUS** Mary J Blige Quote Famed cultural icon / Diva, Mary J Blige, captured the sentiment of so many who claim Christianity today when she stated, “My God wants me to wear bling.” This sentiment grievously and wrongly frames many people’s understanding of Christianity and God’s purpose for our life. “Show the world how successful I am with worldly values and measurement and that will glorify God” is NOT God’s purpose for your life.

God never purposed the Christian life as a display for self, human or worldly glory. The purpose of your life, Christian, is not to use God for your benefit to show the world how great He can make you. The purpose of a Christian’s life in all things, at all times, and with all people is to demonstrate the greatness and glory of God through our life. **Christians are purposed by God to display divine glory that works IN this world by the power and wisdom of Jesus Christ in the gospel.**

**Jesus doesn’t bother to explain WHAT salt and light do.** This is obvious in the metaphor, and he teaches this before and after these verses in the Sermon. Jesus applies “salt and light” to teach Christians how WHO they are (Identity in 5:1-12) matters for HOW they live (obedience in 5:17-7:27). **The purpose for your life, Christian, is found in understanding the relationship between your identity in Christ and your obedience to God’s commands.** When you walk with God by faith you display the glory of His redeeming love that makes you WHO you are, His child. When you walk in obedience to His commands you display the glory of His Truth against the false wisdom and power of this world. **Obedience to God’s Word by faith in Jesus Christ makes you salt and light.**

**Salt and light is what you ARE as you walk by faith in obedience to Jesus.** In every instance, every relationship, every situation or circumstance, it’s not a matter of you figuring out what to do or say. Jesus’ point is NOT for Christians to “go live salty”. He is teaching that when Christians live by faith to walk in humble obedience to Jesus’ commands, THAT IS the salty and the light God has purposed for your life to produce HIS good and glory in this world. Christians produce the effects of salt and light on the world when we walk by faith in obedience to King Jesus. **The Christian purpose for life is formed when our new identity in Christ fuels our obedience to God’s commands to live as salt and light in the world.**

**TRANS** Finally, we need to understand how to apply Jesus’ teaching.

### **3. Christians live as salt and light through evangelism.**

One practice connects the Christian’s identity with the Christian’s obedience, Evangelism. Salt and light are useless if they never touch their object. Salt on the shelf and light covered is useless. Jesus makes one point here; salt and light must touch people to impact their lives. Touch is required for impact. **Evangelism is the one action that spreads gospel salt and shines gospel light in the world.**

Peter instructs Christians, “*but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect*”. (1 Peter 3:15) Obedience by faith honors Christ as holy in our hearts and prepares us to give a reason or make a defense for our hope. Our defense or reason for our hope is the good news of Jesus Christ in the gospel. **Evangelism is the proclamation (in “reason” or “defense”) Christians make for the hope we have in Christ.**

Without evangelism we cannot be salt and light because there is no “touch” or “engage”. Without evangelism we are salt on the shelf, light under a basket. Evangelism connects the Christian’s identity with our obedience; the One to whose name we bear with His truth that orders our steps. Evangelism shares the hope we have in forgiveness and cleansing, and the righteousness we receive to walk with God daily. Evangelism proclaims the Christian’s hope in Jesus, the love of God come out of us and the glory of His truth in us. **Evangelism is the gospel engagement for every Christian to live as salt and light.**

**ILLUS** Barna released a study not long ago showing how little we regard evangelism today.<sup>1</sup> The article begins by recognizing evangelism as a mandate from Jesus. It even highlights some supposed beliefs of Christians, citing that 95%-

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/>. Last viewed August 22, 2019.



97% cite being a faithful witness as part of what it means to follow Jesus. The same percentage acknowledge that being a Christian is the best thing that could happen to a person. 73% of Millennials even say they know how to respond to questions about their faith. However, it quickly falls from there. Almost half of Millennials (47%), more than a fourth (27%) of Gen-Xers and a fifth (19%) of older generations say that it is “wrong to share one’s personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Imagine if God decided not to offend us in our sin. [The Christian life is purposed to share the gospel persuasively to see others come to faith in Jesus Christ.](#)

Proverbs captures the Christian’s life purpose when it states,

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.* Prov 11:30

I won’t take time to try and convince you of the necessity for evangelism. It is as much an act of obedience to Jesus as any other command. And our generation could not be more wrong in thinking it is not something we should do. Evangelism is the most loving act a Christian could perform. [Evangelism is wise living as salt and light in the world.](#)

**TRANS** You’ve heard us talk about P.I.E. And maybe you attend P.I.E.fest this past Spring.

### **APPL** P.I.E. Strategy

P.I.E. is an acronym that captures a simple evangelism strategy that we want every LifePointer to embrace and practice, to touch the world for impact as Jesus’ salt and light.

**“P” stands for PRAY.** Pray is the first act of love, the first labor of mission. Prayer prepares our heart for action and directs our aim. Prayer is the Christian’s first point of connection between God’s will for our life and walking in God’s will with our life. Prayer is the Christian’s first point of touch to engage the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I want to challenge every LifePointer to identify three people to pray for, and ask God to use you to touch their life in some meaningful, gospel way.

**“I” stands for INVEST.** Invest is the intentionality of presence that you bring wherever you go and with whomever you are with. Every day at work, with your neighbors, whomever you are around, whoever is in your sphere of influence, INVEST is your intentional actions to love others in Jesus name. Invest means we live as servants to show God’s love in WHAT we do and HOW we do all that we do. Invest means we build relationships by sharing our own personal story of how Jesus has changes our life, how Jesus is leading our life through His Word, or how Jesus is impacting our life through His church. INVEST is a simple act of faithfulness that forces nothing on no one, but offers love in unassuming ways and prepares for greater gospel conversations when the opportunity arises.

**“E” stands for Engage.** ENGAGE brings the point of “touch” to be salt and light. Salt and Light are useless if they don’t touch anything. You must intentionally ENGAGE people with the gospel. You might invite them to church or Community Group with you. You might share how God has changed your life and because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God wants a personal relationship with them as well. ENGAGE culminates our life in that connecting point between WHO we are and HOW we live, forgiven by God in Jesus Christ to walk with Him every day.

It is my intent for LifePoint to consume A LOT of P.I.E. moving forward. The ONLY way for us to pursue our mantra of “MORE Jesus” is to practice more P.I.E.

No matter where you go or who you are with, salt and light are always actively working. God sends Christians IN the world not to become OF the world but to fill it up with true glory and labor for true goodness by the impact of our Christian witness and influence. [Christian, live wise as salt and light and share the good news of Jesus Christ.](#)

[Christians glorify God and honor King Jesus when we live as salt and light in the world.](#)

