



+ **YOU**

Fall 2024

Thrive: Living on Purpose

Sermon Title: Our Purpose is to Glorify God

To be used with Session 6: Purpose Exemplified

The Point: God is glorified when we live with Christ-centered purpose.

Scripture: Matthew 5:11-15

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study “Purpose Exemplified,” this sermon focuses on a passage from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. It is here that Jesus instructed His disciples to live as salt and light in the world as we work out our faith to the glory of God. Jesus warned that while living in obedience will bring glory to God, it will also bring persecution to those who do it. It is in our nature to avoid pain and persecution, rather than embrace a way of living that encourages it! Yet Jesus gives us full assurance that when persecution comes as a result of obedience to God, not only is He glorified, but our reward will be great because of it. Living for His glory, and knowing the glorious reward that awaits us hereafter, supersedes all the comfort this world provides.

Introduction: Salt has been a precious resource of great value since before the time of Christ. In fact, our modern word “salary” is derived from the Latin word *salarium*, which literally meant salt-money, and represented the amount of money a Roman soldier would need to be paid to buy salt. But why was salt important? Salt had and continues to have great value, not just as a seasoning, but as a preservative. In the same way, there can be no disputing the incredible value of light! Without light we walk in darkness, and there is no ability for anything on the Earth to grow. Salt and light made life possible in the time of Jesus and remain necessities for us today. It is no wonder that Jesus compares His followers to things that culture so desperately needs for survival.

1. **We are called to persecution (Matt. 5:11-12).**

When we accept the call to follow Jesus, we gain so many things: we become a citizen of His Kingdom, experience His love and forgiveness, learn true wisdom through the presence of the Holy Spirit, and have a place in the family of God. Yet Jesus also promised that we will face persecution. This persecution was not just for the apostles, but it is very clearly something that we will experience as well. As we look across our world today, we will see that in many nations Christianity is still illegal, and those who choose Jesus suffer abuse, imprisonment, and death for their decision to follow Christ. Yet they continue to follow, and the faith continues to spread. Why? It is because only in Jesus can we find life,

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meaning, and purpose. Only in Him is there true life, true peace, true joy. No persecution can destroy the glory of God and His purpose for us. Jesus called us to rejoice when we find ourselves persecuted; He said that in persecution we are blessed. As we face persecutions, let us remember the many saints who have gone before us, and remain steadfast in the truth that the blessing we receive far outweighs the pain we face in the present.

2. We are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13).

When Jesus told His followers that we are the salt of the earth, what exactly does that mean, and how do we respond? In the ancient world, salt had many purposes. One of the most obvious is a way in which we still use salt today: to season food and improve its flavor. Perhaps this is what Paul referred to in Colossians 4:6 in saying that our speech should be “gracious, seasoned with salt.” Our actions and speech should be “seasoned” with the love and kindness of Jesus, and everything we do should be known to contain this kind of salt. People today still use the term “salt of the earth” to describe good, kind, and godly people. Salt was also known as a preservative, especially valuable in a time before refrigeration. The high value of salt is one reason why a good soldier was known to be “worth his salt.” In addition, in Leviticus 2:13 Israel was commanded to “present salt with each of your offerings.” All these various meanings teach us that our purpose is to let the “salt” of our faith inhabit all we do, allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us to save and season the world around us.

3. We are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-15).

When we walk into a dark room, the first thing most of us do is reach for the light switch. We modern people generally just assume that any dark room can be quickly and easily lit with the flick of a switch. Yet if there was no switch, and no light, we would all be stumbling around in the dark with no purpose or direction. Jesus calls us to be that light in a dark world. In Philippians 2:15 Paul referred to this as living “blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world.” It is easy to fall into darkness, to dwell without purpose, engaging in the evil that this world has to offer. There is no question that, like Paul’s generation, our generation also continues to be filled with the crooked and perverse. Yet our calling is to shine out as light in the world, and we should not be surprised when the world hates us for it. Yet at the same time, many will be drawn out of darkness to the light of Christ that we shine among them.

Conclusion: Jesus came into a dark world as a bright light. His life showed us exactly how God so dearly loves us and set an example for how we are to live. As we seek our purpose of living the way Jesus lived, we must ask how we are different from culture: how we are being salt and light in the world around us, and how we are impacting this temporary world for the eternal kingdom to which we belong. May we daily live in such a way that our faith in Christ is unquestionable, enduring whatever suffering that may bring and embracing the heavenly

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rewards that lay in store for those who love God and live to serve Him and bring Him glory.

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