

DJ Sermon

The difference is you

Hello my name is DJ Gottlieb. You might not know me too well as the last two years I have just done the offering. This year I wanted to escape the revolving door of doing the same thing again, so when Sam asked who wanted to lead the Sermon I decided it was my greenlight to go.

First a little bit about myself before we dive into the scripture analysis. I am an 11th grader who goes to Battle Ground Academy. I play baseball for BGA as well and have been playing the sport for many years now. Similarly I've been attending church here since we moved here in 3rd grade. I have enjoyed being part of the youth group and going on mission trips. After this sermon I'm positive y'all will be taken aback by my sermon and will gladly open your wallet to support the youth fundraiser. I also am part of the Young Men's Service League where my mom and I will do service projects in the community.

Now that y'all have gotten to know me better I will begin my analysis on the scripture, but I would like y'all to know I worked very hard on this sermon, probably some of the best work I've ever done so y'all are in for a great treat.

The Salt and Light passage resonates with me very well because Jesus explains faith in a way that I understand a lot better. I don't know much about predestination or the differences between Pharisees and Sadducees, if y'all want explanations on those topics Frankie can explain to y'all later, but today I will try my best to explain to y'all salt and light so just keep watching.

Jesus compares us to salt and light in this passage which is a very big compliment to us. Especially salt because back in his days salt was very valuable and necessary for many things. Light as well is very important for any type of life and it is supposed to be seen and shown for all. Jesus compares us to these items as both can be great things if used correctly.

Salt - During this time salt was super valuable because of what it could do. Jesus is saying that people are very valuable as we are capable of doing his work by living through faith. Salt is used to add flavor, for cleansing, preservations, and so much more. Jesus is telling us that like salt we obtain value, but just like salt we are supposed to be useful. Salt is not meant to overpower anything at all, but to silently change to bring out the better parts of things. In comparison living faithfully everyday can have a bigger impact than words can ever be as if we all live faithfully together then we are working for something bigger than ourselves.

In the same way salt can impact things positively it also can impact things negatively. Salt can lose its saltiness and become corrupted which makes it less valuable or valueless. In the same way people when become greedy and selfish we lose our saltiness, causing us to be ineffective to fulfill God's plan. Just like the impurities salt can develop that make it deemed less or unuseful this can happen to us as well. Even if we are spreading the word of God, our impurities like aggression or hate can make us less useful. We also lose our saltiness when we stay silent, join in gossip, or only live in faith when it is convenient for us. We have a job to be the light and salt to represent God as his modern disciples and when we fail to do so the world suffers.

An example of the powers of salt in my life is when I cook steaks. As during the snow storm we cooked a few steaks and experimented with different ways to cook it. By far the best way to cook it was when I would sprinkle and rub salt in the steak, letting it sit for an hour, before cooking. The steak with salt compared to the steak without salt was drastically different. The salt helps protect and preserve the steaks' juices, helping the taste and texture of the steak. In comparison to us we add salt by showing up to church events like youth groups, sunday school, mission trips, and other things because that allows our faith to bake in changing us and correcting us slowly over time.

Now that I've talked about salt I will talk about light.

In the Sunday school lesson this morning a part of the lesson says "In order for the light to be seen, we must be willing to go where the darkness exists, to engage and walk through it, so that, in time, the light can overcome the darkness."

There is a children's song called "This Little Light of Mine" which talks about letting your light shine and it encourages us to let our light shine to everyone even when it's dark or hard. Let me remind you of some of the words:

You all know the words, feel free to join me in reading it. Also just an fyi there's a lot of different versions so mine may be a little different from what y'all know as well as I edited the song a bit by taking out some of the repetition.

I learned it as

This little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

The next verse goes

All around the world
I'm going to let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

And the final verse goes

Don't let Satan [blow] it out!
I'm going to let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

This song encourages me because I interpret this song as talking about how you should let your light shine for all no matter how difficult or easy it can be. The part where it says not to let Satan blow out the light means there will always be challenges in life and to me it means that these challenges are just opportunities to let my light shine in those dark places. Light is always stronger than darkness and even when dark things happen light outshines darkness, if we choose to shine it, but we must be willing to put in the effort, hiding your light doesn't just hurt you, but everyone around you as well.

Another example is how a light house guides boats and lights up safe paths, in comparison people can guide others away from danger and spread light on safe paths. Light is meant to shine and be shown to everyone just as we God's people should not hide his trueness and light. Imagine you have a cool fancy sports car, you're not going to hide it in your garage forever. You're going to want to show it off to everyone. But this doesn't mean you should shine your light just to get the attention of others. Going back to the bible reading in verse 16 Jesus says "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." Meaning that you should shine your light so others may see it and give glory to God not for your own praise and attention.

Going back to the bible reading again Jesus says

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid." Jesus is explaining that our light is not an option, but is our identity as Christians, our job as his modern disciples is to not just blend in with the crowd. Shining our light does not mean we have to do something grand all the time. Jesus means that we can shine our light whenever no matter the circumstances.

A saying my dad says is “It’s hard sometimes to do the difficult things right, but make sure to do the easy things correctly,” this means that you should always do the small things and the thing in your control the right way like make your bed in the morning which ironically I don’t do or brushing your teeth in the morning which fortunately I do so don’t worry guys. What Jesus is saying is that we need to be good people and do the right thing whether it’s forgiving someone instead of holding a grudge or standing up for the right thing even when it is not a popular decision. Jesus doesn’t just want us to blend in when times are hard and be a follower, it is our job as his modern disciples to stand up for what is right because it is our identity as Christians.

To wrap things up I have experienced salt and light in our summer mission trips through helping build homes for the less fortunate. Last summer we were putting siding on a home. Each one of us had equally important jobs from the people on the ladders nailing in the siding to the people merely holding the ladders up. We all had a job. Each one of our jobs brings a little bit of light to brighten up the home and the siding adding protection, preservation, and the flavor of hope to a desperate situation. An example of this is the Christmas Eve services when we are in a dark room and we light each other's candles. When we all shine out together we can illuminate and overcome the darkness.

If any of y'all haven't been listening or maybe took a snooze during this sermon up to this point you've made a grave mistake, but if you remember nothing else listen here to this main take away.

Before I conclude I would like to express gratitude for all of y'all and everything y'all do to add the light and salt to the youth and me.

Faith without action is like salt that never gets used or light that is hidden under a bushel. We shine God's light and share God's salt by how we live, not just by what we say. So go now, run for the hills and shine God's light and spread God's salt. The difference is you.

Benediction

Listen to the words of the prophet Micah who encourages us to be the salt and light. He says “And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with you God.”

May the grace of our lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.