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He had bought his last computer in 2004, and now it finally gave up the ghost. He couldn't find parts for it and he couldn't fix the motherboard that finally shorted out. So, he had to buy a new one. He walks into BestBuy and starts talking to a salesman. Do you want a laptop, desktop or a tablet? How many gigs do you want on the motherboard? How big a hard drive? What kind of display? Do you want a solid state drive or a regular hard drive? Touch screen, touch pad or just a cordless mouse? What kind of software do you want on it? Warranty or not? So many options, so many choices!

Here in America we are overwhelmed with options. Not just computers, but also cars, houses, careers, diets, foods, drinks, vacations... oh, the list is endless. We are used to having multiple choices in our lives, aren't we?

This way of thinking can easily spill into our spiritual lives as well. When it comes to being a Christian, we often are tempted to think we have options. There are all sorts of denominations to choose from, so why wouldn't it be the same for our Christian lives? We get to choose. We have options, right? Well, when it comes to living for Christ, living out our faith, **“WE HAVE NO OPTIONS.”** Jesus tells us very plainly today that we are salt and light and that we are to season and shine. Come with me to God's Word today and hear the voice of Jesus.

### ***Part One: We are salt and light***

So, where do we meet with Jesus today? Jesus had just finished an extended journey through Galilee, teaching and healing many. As you can imagine, this caused lots of people to follow Him. They wanted their sick loved ones healed. They were hoping to be blessed by the Lord. But if Jesus were to heal all of the people that were coming to Him, He would have no time to do anything else. So when He saw how large the crowd had become, He took His disciples to a solitary place where they could be alone. It was time for Jesus to properly instruct His disciples on how to live their faith.

First, He had to correct them on a few points. They had grown up with the idea that you had to work to please God, to live a life that was acceptable to Him. The Pharisees had hammered into their brains the idea that you could earn your way to heaven. Just follow all the commandments and all of the rules and regulations that the Pharisees had set up. Then you were acceptable to God. Then you could be confident of your eternal destination. And, their sinful human nature told them the same thing. You earned everything you had. There's no such thing as a free lunch. You get what you pay for.

Jesus flips this idea. Notice that He starts this section of Scripture by stating most emphatically **“you are.”** Not “you can become salt and light.” You are salt and light! This is an accomplished fact. Being the salt and light of the world is part of your identity as believers. Your faith and your way of life go hand in hand. You will salt, you will shine because you are a believer in Jesus. You can't be a believer and not live for the Lord. That's like salt-less salt or invisible light. Useless to you and others.

Oh, there are times we are tempted to not live our faith. There are times when we are salt-less salt or invisible light, times when we hide our faith under a bowl. There are times when we are like a young man who went off to college for the first time.

He had been raised to know and follow Jesus. His parents always reminded him that he was a child of God and encouraged him to let his faith shine by how he lived. They told him that his faith would be attacked and said they would pray for him to continue to glorify God with his life. He came home from college for Thanksgiving, and his dad asked him how things were going. His son told him about the parties he attended. He told him about the new friends he had made. He then said something that caused his parents great pain. “Dad, they don't even know I'm a Christian.” He hid his light. He thought he had that option in life.

We don't. We are salt. We are light. Who made us salty? Who made us light? God. God has called you by the Gospel and given you a saving faith. The Holy Spirit has caused you to believe that Jesus died for your sins and covered your imperfect life with His perfect life. He has opened your eyes to see that you now have free access to the Father and a guaranteed spot in heaven for all time. Today Jesus reminds us

that when it comes to living our faith, we have no options. We live as Christians because we are Christians. God has a purpose for our Christian lives. We are to live as believers to bring glory, honor and God's news of eternal life to this world. God gave us faith so that we might season and shine in this world of ours.

### ***Part Two: We season and shine***

We sometimes think we have options as to how we will season and shine. We sometimes think we can follow some commandments and ignore others. I mean, after all, trying to follow all the commands of God is so hard to do. Why not just focus on a few of them. Certainly, God has to be content with that, right?

Jesus doesn't give us a break from the Law. ***"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."*** We can't live perfect lives, but Jesus did for us. But that doesn't mean we can ignore any of the commandments God has given us in our lives. We are to strive to live for Christ.

Maybe I can put it this way. We shine, we live God-pleasing lives because Christ lived a perfect life for us. We follow God's commands to show our thanks for God's gifts. We do them to fulfill God's purpose for us here on earth. We do God's will because that's what believers do. God's will is our will. God's ways are our ways.

So, how are you doing? Do people know you are a believer? Do people see Christ in action in your life? As we take a look at our own lives, we see some examples of being salt and light that are rather easy to do. Perhaps you've helped someone through a rough patch in life. Perhaps you are honest, hard-working and a dependable friend. Oh, there are unbelievers who fit this description, but if you are acting this way because you are a Christian and saying thanks to God by your life, you are shining.

Sometimes, seasoning and shining are hard to do, especially when you stand up for God's will in this sinful world. Have you ever told your co-worker that his divorce was a sin? Have you spoken up against abortion? Or living together before marriage? Have you shut down the gossip mill at work by reciting the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment? Have you stood up for a classmate who was being bullied? If you have, you probably experienced the sinful blowback of ridicule and hate. No, it's not easy being salt and light in this world of ours, but we have no option. That's what we are. That's what God has caused us to be.

Not all of us will have the same opportunities to season and shine. Some of us are parents, some are grandparents. Some live next to unbelievers, some live next to fellow Christians. Some of us are working. Some of us are retired. When it comes to seasoning and shining in this world of ours, we have options. But when it comes to being salt and light, we have no options. We are the salt and light of the world.

We are God's instruments, His salt shaker and flashlight. He uses us to season this world with our words and actions. He uses us to shine the light of His Gospel into the lives of others. That's what you are here for. That's why God keeps you in this sinful world. You see, your neighbor might not read the Bible, but he listens to your words. He might not see Christ and His love in his life, but he can see your lifestyle. Your children can't feel Christ's loving arms wrapped around them, but they can feel yours.

So, go ahead and season and shine! Remember who you are. You are God's dearly and deeply loved child. He has given you the time, the gifts and the urge to live a life that glorifies Him. He also is continuing to give you the strength to live for Him in this sinful world. Go back again and again to the Word and be refreshed. Remember your forgiveness. Remember your purpose. Season and shine.

All of us have options in this world. Cars, gadgets, clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home - all options for us. But when it comes to our purpose in life, **"WE HAVE NO OPTIONS."** We are salt and light, meant to season and shine in this world for the glory of our God.

AMEN