

“The Cost of Discipleship” Part 5
Mount of Olives | March 22, 2026 | Matthew 5:13-16
Pastor John Steward

Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, we need Your forgiveness today for the many times when we have set a poor example of what a true Christ follower really is: a gracious, loving, generous, and humble person who lives a life reflecting an acknowledgment of the cost of the grace poured out upon us. Help us to become those shining examples. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture Reading

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. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. 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.”

Message Notes

Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. 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.”

Matthew 6:1-4

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Matthew 6:5-6

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Matthew 6:6-18 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may

not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Study Questions – Read Matthew 5:13-16

ICEBREAKER – Getting started:

1. When bingeing a Netflix series, what is your go-to-snack? Do you prefer sweet or salty flavors?
2. What’s a food you love that absolutely needs salt to taste right?
3. When have you seen someone’s kindness or integrity “light up” a room?
4. What’s a small action someone did that made a big difference in your day?
5. If your life had a “light setting,” what would it be right now—dim, steady, bright, or flickering?

Based on Matthew 5:13-16, answer the following questions:

OBSERVATION – What does the text say?

1. As you read **Matthew 5:13-16**, what comes to mind? What stands out? What is interesting to you and why?
2. In one sentence, how would you summarize this text?
3. What lesson or message do you think the author is trying to convey?

INTERPRETATION – What does the text mean?

1. What does Jesus mean when He calls His followers “the salt of the earth”?
2. In the ancient world, what were the primary uses of salt, and how might those shape Jesus’ metaphor?
3. What does it mean for salt to “lose its saltiness,” and why is that a warning?
4. How does the idea of being “thrown out and trampled” connect to spiritual usefulness or faithfulness?
5. What does Jesus communicate by calling His followers “the light of the world”?
6. Why does Jesus emphasize that a city on a hill cannot be hidden?
7. What is the significance of placing a lamp on a stand rather than hiding it under a bowl?
8. How does Jesus connect good works with letting our light shine?
9. What does it mean for others to “see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven”?
10. How do salt and light function differently, and what does that teach us about the Christian life?
11. How do these metaphors connect to the larger context of the Sermon on the Mount?
12. What do these verses reveal about the identity and mission of Jesus’ followers?

APPLICATION – How can you apply the text?

1. In what areas of your life do you feel you’re currently acting as “salt”—preserving, influencing, or adding goodness?
2. Where might you be hiding your light, and what would it look like to place it “on a stand” instead?
3. What is one specific “good work” you can do this week that would point someone toward God?
4. How can you maintain your “saltiness” when you feel worn down, discouraged, or spiritually dull?
5. Who in your life needs the kind of light that comes from encouragement, truth, or compassion—and how can you offer it?