

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – December 18, 2022

Theme: The World Earnestly Awaits Your Manifestation Topic: Manifesting as Salt and Light.

Main Texts: Matthew 5:13-14

Key verse: Matthew 5:13-14 – *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.” (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION: We explored *The Beatitudes* in our 2022 first quarter series. In that series, we saw that the Beatitudes are the elements of the Christian life which *describe the attitudes expected from citizens of God’s kingdom, and of persons who have the full blessings of the kingdom to look forward to*. The hope then was that we would see their relevance in our lives so that our characters will be shaped to reflect Jesus Christ. In today’s text, Jesus begins to highlight some of that relevance, starting with our being the salt of the earth. As we all know, salt has diverse applications: as a preservative, it is used for curing meat and other perishable foods; as a disinfectant, salt is used to purify water (2 Kings 2:20) and to wash vegetables and fruits to kill bacteria. Salt also has a unique flavoring property; it brings out the flavor in food. Salt also has healing properties. It can be applied to open wounds to hasten healing. Salt left by itself does not easily decay or degrade and does not attract agents of decay like mold or ants. It only takes a little salt to flavor a pot of soup. In this regard, it is instructive to note that Jesus said, *‘you are the salt of the earth...’* He said we are, not are becoming, or will become!

1. **Read Leviticus 2: 13; 2 Kings 2:20; Colossians 4:6: (a) Someone said, ‘salt which does not leave the saltshaker is of no use, but is only a decoration to the kitchen table’ In what way does this apply to Jesus’ declaration in Matthew 5:13? (b) What do you understand by Jesus’ statement about salt losing its saltiness? And in what ways are believers losing our saltiness in the society today? (c) Let participants give practical examples of what it looks like when believers ‘salt’ the earth around them?**

As the salt of the earth, we undermine our salt-effect when we fail to intentionally mingle with non-Christians, or fail to be kind, merciful or be agents of peace in our homes and neighborhoods. The result is the increasing rejection of the Church by the society. But salt is not all that we are. We are also *‘the light of the world.’* When, in the beginning, *“darkness was upon the face of the deep”* (Gen 1:2), God’s response was to command for there to be light. Light has been a symbol of God’s presence (John 8:12; Revelation 22:5). Physically, darkness makes life difficult -a blind man cannot navigate through physical space without help. Light can also be seen as spiritual illumination. Therefore, light (spiritual understanding, insight) is required to navigate the spiritual landscape (Matthew 6:23). Light can also mean uncovering or revealing what was hitherto hidden; therefore light (understanding) is required to acquire knowledge. We find that until today, darkness fills the earth, *“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.”* (Isaiah 60:2a). The presence of darkness underscores the need for and presence of light.

2. **(a) Read John 8:12; 9:5. In what sense are we the light of the world, since Jesus is the Light of the world? (b) According to Ephesians 5:8-9, which light are believers expected to shine into the world? (c) From Matthew 5:43-47; Philippians 2:14-15, in which places and in what ways are we expected to be the light of the world?**

Jesus is the true Source of light (John 1:6-9; 8:12). Believers can be light of the world only because Jesus lives in us by His Spirit. We only reflect the Light (Jesus) in us. Just as with other commands and expectations of God, the expectation for believers to be the light of the world is not an end in itself, but a means to an end (Matthew 5:16). Our lives must carry the Light who is Christ. And once we carry that Light, we must not hide it.

3. **Read Isaiah 43:7,21; Matthew 5:15-16; 1 Peter 2:9 (a) If believers are to reflect Christ’s light in them, why do you think there is still such a prevalence of darkness in the world? (b) In what ways do you believe the world will be different if every believer were to be the light wherever they are in the world? (c) What practical steps can VFC take today to promote more of this light?**

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, You have made me to be salt and light. Help me to go out there to salt the earth and to shine Your light in every square inch of the world You lead me to. Amen.*