

Turn On the Light

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Preacher: Graham Smith

[0 : 00] All right, anyway, Happy Chinese New Year.

I have no idea what I just said to you. But anyway, I have to give special thanks for Kelvin for training me. He was very patient. I love Chinese New Year.

I think it's one of my favorite times of year. I love the colors, the festivities, the family time. And when I first moved to Hong Kong, one of my local colleagues was teaching me about Chinese culture and all the different things that we do.

And Chinese New Year came along and he said, well, how about you come over to my house for the Chinese New Year meal? Now, what a great privilege, right? So I love food and he said Chinese New Year is all about the food.

So come along, which I did. And when I entered his house, one of the first things I noticed as we came in was something like this.

[1 : 19] I don't know if you can all get a look at that. And he said, this is the tray of togetherness, right? In Chinese, it's called...

Whatever. But in English, the tray of togetherness. And anyway, he opened it up and it was fantastic.

My eyes lit up because it was full of what I thought were snacks, right? And what a great way to start a party. You start with snacks. And he said, well, it's not quite like that. They all represent different things.

And so he said, for example, the lotus roots, this represents abundance. So, of course, I tried the lotus root. And then he said, and the dried coconut, that represents togetherness.

You know, the family, everyone coming together. And then there were a whole lot of seeds. And he said, this is the red watermelon seed. This represents fertility, that you may have lots of offspring.

[2 : 18] So I thought, oh, one day. So I tried a watermelon seed. And then the black watermelon seed, what's this one for? And he said, oh, it's also fertility, right? That you're going to have lots of offspring. So I tried that too.

And then there was a candied lotus seed, right? So I like anything that's candy. I tried that. And I said, what does that represent? And he said, fertility, that you may have lots of offspring.

So at this point, after eating all those seeds, I must be the most fertile man in Hong Kong, right? And then he says, but don't worry. Don't worry. There's one more here.

Try the candied winter melon. This represents growth and health. And considering how fertile you are right now, you're going to need this.

And anyway, so these are, they're all good things, right? That we aspire to be or we aspire to get in the coming year.

[3 : 20] And a question I kind of ask myself is why? Why would we desire these things? And I guess part of the answer is that we want to feel secure.

We want to feel successful. But I think there's a little part of us that wants it to be our influence on the world.

But is it how Jesus wants us to be an influence on the world? If we are to be abundant, if we are to be prosperous, if we are to be fertile and have lots of kids, is that the kind of influence Jesus says that's going to make the world stand up and go, wow, you guys really have got it together?

And Jesus actually said, no, there's just two things that you need to be to be a real influence on this world.

So as we enter the year of the monkey, I propose a new tray of togetherness. But it's only going to have two elements in it.

[4 : 28] So if we look here, it would just have... I just hope I don't set myself on fire here. Salt and a candle which represents light.

Because that's what Jesus said, right? If you want to be a real influence on this world, you need to be salt and light. And the content Jesus gave us for a salty life was the Gospel of Matthew.

We just read the Sermon on the Mount. And when I became a believer, I thought that... And I started reading my Bible. I just thought the four Gospels was the same story told four times that we wouldn't forget it.

And I've come to realize that actually it's not, right? Each Gospel has a certain emphasis on Jesus. It brings out certain elements of His ministry.

But more than that, each Gospel has a certain audience, a particular people that they're aiming at. And the Gospel of Matthew is written primarily for believers.

[5 : 45] To remind them how to live in the kingdom. If you were to give the Gospel of Matthew to an unbeliever, they could easily come to the conclusion that Christianity is about do-gooding.

You know, be nice to grandmother and the cat. But it's not, right? We know that the Gospel is about knowing God, right? So here it is.

It's people who have already repented of their bad deeds. They've believed in Jesus. They've received the Holy Spirit. They've been baptized. In other words, they've decided to follow the king.

And now they get to the Gospel of Matthew. And Jesus says, this is how you are to live. This is the lifestyle of the kingdom. It's not how to get into the kingdom.

You're already in the kingdom. But this is how we live in the kingdom. Now, if I had to say salt to you, and I'll show you some here, what is the first thing you think of?

[6 : 52] Somebody said salty chips. That's what I think of, right? French fries, right? Has to be dipped in salt. But we kind of associate salt with the kitchen, right?

No? Okay, good. We're thinking of salt in the kitchen. And what's the purpose of salt? See, adding a little bit of flavor, right?

So is that what Jesus said? I want you to be salt. I want you to add a little bit of flavor to this world. It's a little bit dull. I mean, that's how your office might look at Christians. There's Chris the Christian.

Oh, we just love Chris the Christian in our office. He just adds so much flavor. Without Chris the Christian, you know, we would be quite bland. Is that probably how our office talks about us?

No. No, right? We're not really there to add flavor. So what did Jesus mean when he said salt? It actually tells us in Luke's gospel.

[7 : 55] So listen carefully. I'll read it for you. It says, Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? Now listen carefully. It is fit neither for the soil nor the manure pile.

It is thrown out. Whoever is ears to hear, let them hear. Jesus was always using pictures from everyday life that people would understand what he was talking about.

He was using farming analogies, real stories, right, that people could relate to. And when he spoke about salt, he said the soil or the manure pile.

Two things. So think of ground, dirt, or you're thinking of the toilet. Now, in Israel, they got all their salt from a place called the Dead Sea.

Have any of you been to the Dead Sea? Can I? Okay, a few of you, right? So the Dead Sea is this amazing place where you can literally, you can float in it because it's so dense with salt.

[9 : 00] You float in it and you can read a book. And I actually, I was in Israel 20 years ago in 1996 as an 18-year-old. So there you guys are doing the maths. And I thought it would be a great idea to, because there's a picture of me reading a book on the Dead Sea.

And I went searching for the photo and I found it. And unfortunately, it was me without a t-shirt on. So I thought, what a terrible way to start the new year if I had to show that picture to you.

So I'm going to spare you that scene, right? But at the Dead Sea, what they would do is they would gather the salt. And the salt at the Dead Sea was filled with something called potassium chloride, potash.

Okay, now everyone in Hong Kong, most of us are not gardeners. But gardeners would light up when I said that. Because potash is an essential ingredient in fertilizers.

So any good fertilizer you buy today, you've got to look out for potash. And potash will make the flowers and the fruit grow.

[10 : 06] So when Jesus said salt will be good for the soil, of course they all understood it. They used salt in fertilizers. Salt made good things grow.

And then he said it was also good for the manure pile. Now this might be a surprise to us, but in first century Israel, they didn't have flushing toilets.

Okay, breathe a sigh of relief. That's good, right? Not for us. We have flushing toilets. And when I was, I'd been a believer for about six months.

I did a mission trip up from South Africa to Zimbabwe and Mozambique. And literally we just jumped in a van, put a trail on the back, and we went out to all these little rural churches.

And they also didn't have flushing toilets. And they had, what they use is something called a long drop. And there's nothing elegant about a long drop. And even less so trying to use one, especially in the dark.

[11 : 10] And anyway, we arrived in one little village, and they were busy making a long drop. And they said, come have a look, right? This is village excitement. Who needs late night TV when you can watch a long drop being built?

So we all gathered, and we're looking at this thing. And he says, okay, we dig a big hole. And then what we do is we kill a chicken. And we leave the chicken outside in the African sun to rot.

And once it starts smelling and it gets full of maggots, they then throw it down the hole. And of course later when everyone starts using the long drop, those maggots begin to act as a disinfectant and break down.

You know what they break down, right? So it's the exact same with salt here. First century Israel, you would go and you would do your business at the manure pile. And there would be a big box of salt.

You would take a handful of the salt and you would put it on your business, right? You know what you're putting on. And it would act as a disinfectant. In other words, it would stop bad things from spreading.

[12 : 17] So salt had a positive and a negative quality. One, it made good things grow. And two, it stopped bad things from spreading. I hope you see where we're going here.

You might not guess it, right? But I like to play squash. And I took up the game sort of the end of high school, the beginning of university years.

And I wasn't a Christian at the time. And whenever you see people playing squash, especially men, when we make a mistake, and for me it was quite regular to make a mistake, we tend to swear a lot.

And then I became a Christian. And I find when you become a Christian, one of the first things Jesus gets hold of is your mouth. And no one told me to stop swearing.

I just, something changed, right? Jesus got hold of the way we speak. And I stopped swearing. And a very weird thing began happening. The people I played against, I never told them I'm a Christian or please don't swear.

[13 : 27] But I stopped swearing. And soon, they stopped swearing too. And then it got even weirder. When they did swear, they would turn to me and apologize for swearing.

Okay, another thing that I did that I'm really not proud of, but because I'm not very good, I used to cheat. Okay, now in squash, it's relatively easy to cheat, right?

Because you're kind of all in a little box together. You can easily claim you were in my way or that ball was in, not out. And I'm sure all the guys I played with, they used to cheat as well.

And being a believer, I thought, well, now I have to be honest, right? My squash game is going to plummet, but I have to be honest and leave my integrity on the court.

And what I found was, my being honest made the guys I was playing against be honest too.

[14 : 26] They started being honest about the game that they were playing as well. And you might think, okay, that's a very silly example. And believe me, I can give you countless examples of where I've been very poor, salt and light.

But it is an example of how salt can cause good things to grow. Good things like honesty can grow because of salt.

And it causes bad things to stop spreading, like the way we speak in a negative way. This has two implications. The one is the distribution of salt, right?

So if you go to the kitchen and you're seasoning your steak, you don't need a lot of salt. Well, maybe some people like a lot of salt, but you don't need that much salt to season a steak.

One thing we have to understand is that salt needs to be in contact with its environment to work. In other words, think of that toilet. It cannot stay in the box to be a disinfectant.

[15 : 33] It has to be in contact with the dirt in order to work. So there was a girl in our home group back in South Africa.

And she was working at a law firm. And she had quite a difficult time. And she was the only believer in the office. And anyway, she shared with us she just got an offer at a Christian firm, right?

And she was really excited about this, right? She had been praying. And suddenly she found that she had an answer and she was going to go and work at a Christian firm. And she went and told our pastor.

She said, you wouldn't believe it, but I now have the job of my dreams. I'm resigning at the end of the week and I'm going to go and work in a Christian firm. And the pastor's face just dropped.

She said, what? I thought you would be happy. There's something wrong. And he said, well, two things. Number one, you will find out that working with Christians is not the promised land.

[16 : 37] There's a lovely little, there's a naughty poem I learned that kind of sums this up. It goes something like this. It says, to dwell above with saints I love, that would be glory.

To dwell below with saints I know, that's a different story. But it kind of sums up. I think anyone who's worked in a Christian community, it's not kind of what we build it up to be because we still have our flawed human nature.

And then he said the second thing to her, which was really full of wisdom. He said to her, you know, you might be the only contact those people have with Jesus.

And now you want to take yourself out of that environment and you want to put yourself in an environment where there's just a big lump of salt. He said, how about rather praying that someone would join you there and you would have more salt and more light in that situation.

And initially she was really disappointed, right? That's not what she was expecting to hear. But she didn't take that job and she stayed in the place which she believed God had called her.

[17 : 49] And I think within a year, another Christian had applied and enjoyed her home. And they were then enjoying being salt and light together in that workplace. And I hope that is an encouragement to some of us who are in a work situation like that, where we feel sometimes we're alone.

For me, that's true. I am the only male Christian in my office as far as I know. And I have to be honest, sometimes it's tough. So I'm praying that the Lord will send more Christian brothers to work with me.

But I hope it's an encouragement to you that if you're in that position, it will be the same thing. Another thing would be the quality of the salt.

Okay, Jesus said something funny, right? So to a chemist, this would be weird. He said, if salt loses its saltiness. Now, a chemist would think, well, salt cannot lose its saltiness.

Salt cannot not be salt. Salt, again, we need to go back to first century Israel. And those sneaky salt dealers, when they were filling bags of salt to get more in, they would take sand and they would mix it with the salt.

[19 : 01] And you'd get home and you'd open your bag and you'd find out, ah, they got us again. Right? But it would be salt mixed with sand. It would be so adulterated that it was useless for nothing.

You couldn't use it for the toilet. You couldn't use it as a fertilizer. They'd throw it outside and everyone who walked past would just trample it. They'd just walk all over it. Salt has to be of a quality that is different from its environment.

If our lives look so much like the world and like everyone else's, we will fail to be salt that we need to be.

Jesus said, if you want to live a life of influence, if you want to live a blessed life, because let's be honest, that's what we're really after, right?

People really want to live a blessed life. And he actually lays it out. He lays out blessings. Now, it's probably very different to how we might think of blessing.

[20 : 16] You know, just think of when you're typing that email and you say blessing or God bless you. What are we really wanting for that person? How do we want them to be blessed, right?

Or even when we're talking about them, oh, God has really blessed them. Usually, what are we referring to? Jesus gives his an example of what it means to live a blessed life, a life that will be salt and light.

And he says this. First thing, he says, blessed are the poor in spirit. Now, to be poor in spirit is essentially to look at something and say, that's way beyond me.

I cannot do that. But it's to kind of lack self-confidence, but it's to be full of God confidence, right? To not really be sure, I can't do this, but wow, I know God can through me.

Now, the world wants tough people. They want aggressive people, people who are full of self-confidence. Believe in yourself, you can do it. And Jesus said, no, be poor in spirit.

[21 : 26] He said, we're also to be a people who mourn, right? In a world that is constantly looking for the next entertainment, we're constantly seeking the next level of entertainment.

We're always seeking to be happy and laughing. And we do that because we don't really want to know about the bad things that are going on in the world, right? We try and put them out that's in a different place, a different country, a different person.

We're not really wanting those things. Give us something to laugh about. In other words, we are to be a people who weep while others are laughing. We're to be a people who care about our world.

When we hear something about an earthquake in Taiwan, we don't scroll down and read something else that's a little bit happier. That kind of breaks your heart, right?

Because we're a people that care. Another thing Jesus said, he said, if you want to be blessed, be meek. Now, there's a nice little translation of meek that I like.

[22 : 32] It means to be patiently humble. Long-suffering, right? We live in a world where we want instant results, right?

Our lives are measured by the courtly prophet. What did we do last year? Are we beating the next previous courtly prophet? To be patiently humble is to rest in God's timing.

Rest in what God has for us. It's not to be driven by the fact that it has to be accomplished by next week. Another thing Jesus said, he said, if you want to be blessed, we are to be a people who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

That means people whose number one ambition in life is to live right, to live for the king. It's not to be rich or famous.

It's not to be the greatest person in your career. It's to live right. Those kind of people are going to be salt and light. He also said, to be blessed, you're going to need to be merciful.

[23 : 42] I don't know if you... We live in a world that thrives on vengeance and payback. You just need to go to any video store or watch Netflix and you will see the number of things.

Payback. Die hard. Everything is about vengeance. You killed my brother and now I'll get you. But we're actually to be a people that forgive.

We're to be a people that gives people a second chance. We're to be a people who don't hold on to grudges. When things go against you in the office or at work or at school, we don't hold on to those grudges.

We're merciful. Another thing he said we're to be is pure in heart. Now, pure in heart doesn't only mean to be clean. It simply means to be motivated by simple motives.

We're not mixed in our motives while we do something. Just simple. Driven by simple motives. To be pure in heart.

[24 : 48] And then he said, blessed are the peacemakers. Now, he didn't say peacekeepers. Peacekeepers, we just keep our mouths shut and we keep the peace. We don't say anything.

A peacemaker gets involved and tries to make peace. Tries to reconcile. Now, if you've ever tried to be a peacemaker and come between two parties who are fighting, like a husband and wife or colleagues or friends, each party will be utterly convinced that you're taking the other person's side.

So, it's not a great thing to try and be a peacemaker. But Jesus said we are to be peacemakers. Now, Jesus was such a realist and he was so honest with us.

He said, you know, if you live a life like this, it's going to lead to persecution. Because ultimately, people do not want to be reminded of holiness or godliness.

They don't want to be reminded of god. And one way to take that out is through persecution. But therefore, Jesus adds one more blessing.

[26 : 03] We look at persecution as a terrible thing, right? Something to be avoided. Jesus says, when it comes, count it as a blessing.

Count it as a blessing. In other words, he's saying, listen, to be salt and light in this world is not going to really pay.

But it will in the next. And that takes faith and trust, right? To get through. Maybe you won't have your reward now. But you will in the next.

What about light? Light has also a positive and a negative quality. The negative quality of light is it exposes bad ways.

And the positive quality is it shows you the good way. So an example would be, have you ever been, you come into your kitchen in the middle of the night, you turn on the light and you see the cockroaches scurry away.

[27 : 09] Okay, it's happened in our kitchen, right? So usually after I've washed the dishes, right? But that's an example of exposing the bad things, right? Or if you've ever been lost and it's late at night and someone comes along and they've got a flashlight and they turn it on and they show you the way.

That's an example of light. Now Jesus said, I am the light of the world. You are the light of the world. Now he said that in the gospel of John in the context of a woman caught in adultery.

So this is the story. A group of Pharisees catch a woman in the very act of adultery. They bring her before Jesus and they say, Jesus, this woman was caught in the very act of adultery.

The law of Moses says she must be stoned. What do you say? Now they were using that as a trap because the law of Moses did say that she should be stoned.

But the Roman law said that Jews were not allowed to execute anyone. So if he said, yes, she should be stoned, then the Romans are going to get Jesus, right?

[28 : 19] Because he's breaking the Roman law. If he says, no, no, don't stone her, then they're going to say, well, you see, he does, he breaks Moses' law. So they think they've got Jesus trapped. Jesus does something, right?

He bends down with his finger. He begins to write in the sand. Now to a Jew, that is a picture of someone claiming to have written the law.

It was a gentle picture of Jesus saying, I'm God, right? Remember the finger of God on the tablets when he wrote the law. You know, people argue and they write about what he wrote.

That's not important. It was a picture showing he was claiming to be the one who wrote that law. And he stands up and he reminds them of another law.

And the other law said that there had to be two witnesses in a case. And you could not be a witness if you were guilty of the same crime.

[29 : 33] Okay? So if you were a thief, you could not be a witness in a case of stealing. So if you've committed adultery, you cannot be a witness in this case.

Now the first thing you'll find is that they catch a woman in the very act of adultery and they bring the woman. There's someone missing in the story, isn't there?

Where's the man? I'm presuming he was around, right? They caught her in the very act of adultery. But the law of Moses said both of them were to be stoned.

Now so, there's a classic case where these guys were breaking the law themselves already. And then Jesus says to them, okay, you who are without sin, you, if you are not guilty of adultery yourself, you throw that stone.

It doesn't mean you have to be morally perfect before you can execute or punish wrong crimes, right? So that would kind of rule out parents punishing their children or policemen or law courts.

[30 : 38] He's saying if you're guilty of the same thing, you can be a witness. And slowly, they all go away. There's none left. You see, because Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because they would tell people, don't commit adultery.

But they themselves did it. They had their prostitutes and they had their mistresses. And they are dismissed. I mean, this is brilliant, right? If you are ever in trouble, make sure you get Jesus as your lawyer.

It's fantastic, right? This is better than any late night lawyer show. He just gets them off the hook. And then he says to the woman, he goes, where are your accusers? And he said, they're all gone.

And he said, well, I'm only one witness. Neither do I accuse you. But don't go and do it again. He offers her mercy.

He shows her a better way. And then he stands up. After everyone has now witnessed what is going on, he says, I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't get into this kind of mess.

[31 : 44] He exposed her accusers, right? His light exposed their hearts. His light exposed the woman's heart. But he didn't just stop there.

His light showed them a better way. Are our lives like that? What are we to do?

How do we practically do this, right? How do we practically live a blessed life, a life of salt and light? Jesus said, if you want to do it, you have to put yourself on a lampstand.

That's what a light is for. You don't hide it away, right? You need it to shine so that people are to see. So he is saying, in a sense, we're to deliberately put ourselves on public view.

Okay? So that makes me feel uncomfortable right there. But I just want to start with the negative. There are certain things that we're not to let shine before the public.

[32 : 51] And Jesus made it quite clear. He said your devotions, right? When you give, when you pray. Those are not to be for the public.

Because if you have to do them with everyone looking at you, you will get mixed motives. So maybe if I had to say to you guys, next week, a TV crew is going to come in.

And they are going to film the service. And they're going to broadcast it live to the whole of Hong Kong. Would we dress the same next week?

Would we worship the same? Would we be on time next week? You know, I know for us, we wouldn't, right? My wife would definitely make me dress differently.

And we'd probably tell our kids that they really need to behave this Sunday. In other words, our motives are changed, right? But Christians are to shine.

[33 : 56] We are to have a light that shines. And we are to have a higher standard of living morally. You see, Jesus came into this world and he hung out with the worst of people.

He hung out with, when the bad people say, those people are really bad, you know that they're bad. Those are the kind of people that Jesus hung out with. But he didn't come down and live like they do and took on their standards.

No, he brought them up to his standard. He lifted them up to what he was. Only he could do that. And people look at that.

They read the Sermon on the Mount and they look at what he did with life and they say, you know what? That's not natural. And they're right. It's not natural. It's supernatural. Only through Christ are you able to live a life of salt and light.

Here's another example. Jesus said, in my kingdom, you are not to worry. I forbid you to worry. And that is why you never see a Christian worried.

[35 : 15] We laugh at that, right? I laugh at that. And when Jesus said it, he didn't mean it as a joke. He meant you're not to worry.

Because when we worry, what we're really doing is we're saying to God, you know, you take better care of your garden and your pets than you do of your child.

I'm your child and I have to worry. You know, the gardens, they all care. The birds of the air, they cared for. But I'm your child. I have to worry. Have you ever driven past a church and sometimes they have a big signboard outside?

You know, so sometimes they have quite clever things. Sometimes they're quite cringeworthy. This was a really good one. It said, why pray when you can worry? Now, that's clever, right?

It says something there. Why pray when you can worry? You know, I think imagine the influence it would be on the world if Christians didn't worry about the things that the world worries about.

[36 : 28] When you're going through difficult times and difficult seasons. And I do think 2016 is going to be a difficult year for some of us.

And it's going to be a difficult year in your workplaces and in your schools and your universities. And your colleagues are going to worry about certain things. But imagine they came and you're not worried.

Well, why? Why are you never worried? Well, because my father's taking care of this. And there's a lovely little story. There's a girl, a little girl on a train.

And anyway, they find her on the train and she's on the train by herself. And they say, aren't you scared to be on the train by yourself? And she said, no. Well, why not?

You're on the train by yourself. And she goes, well, my daddy's the train driver. You know? That's how we should feel. Well, my dad's in heaven. He's got the whole thing under control.

[37 : 28] I don't know if that's a true story, right? It sounds like a preacher story to me, you know? But anyway, it gets the point across. You know, was that story true, daddy, or were you just preaching?

So anyway, it really is supernatural to live that way. But it is possible when we allow Christ to let us live for him and to allow his life to be lived through us.

To summarize and to close, I want to close with three points. Being salt and light is a costly thing.

Living a blessed life is a costly thing. It is essentially by being something. And you need to be in contact with the environment in order to have an effect.

But a very fundamental question that we've missed out on all of this is the question, why? Why would we do all of this?

[38 : 45] Why? I mean, if living in salt and life, it's a difficult thing, it's not going to make us popular, why would we want to do it? Why would we even want to put ourselves out there to shine?

Why would you want to do it? Why would you want to do it? And verse 16 makes it clear. It says this, Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds.

They may see your life and glorify your Father in heaven. They see you. They think that's not natural. The way you are, the peace you have, the joy you have, the forgiveness that you have, the meekness that you have, that is not natural.

Your life reveals who He is. It points people to Him. I want to close with this. A few years ago, I took a trip to Taiwan to visit a friend in Taichung.

And I went to church there. And of course, I didn't. And I still don't speak any go you. So they were translating. And my friend who lives there, he was introducing me to a few people.

[40 : 05] And he introduced me to this one girl. And he said, well, she has an incredible story. And let me tell you about it. So this girl, she just, big smile on her face.

And he said, when she was in high school, one of her friends, her classmates, took her to church. And she went home and she told her parents. She goes, I've gone to church with one of my friends.

And her parents said, you are not to go to church. Those people are bad. They just want your money. Don't go with them. And like a good teenager, she carried on going to church.

She didn't listen to her parents. And anyway, a few months later, she went home. And she said, Mom and Dad, I've become a Christian. I'm now a follower of Jesus.

And they were really angry, right? They ground her. They said, you're not to go out. That's it. You're staying at home. And despite her parents' wishes, she found ways to sneak out and still go to church.

[41 : 05] She came home one day and she said, I need to tell you that I've been going to church and that next week I'm going to be baptized. And they said, if you get baptized, you are getting thrown out of this house.

A week later, she was baptized and she was thrown out of her house. Mom and Dad threw her out. Now, she was taken in by some of the people in church.

She went and stayed with them and lived with them. But she would go back home to her mom and dad and she would just serve them.

She would be salt and light. She didn't preach the gospel to them. She was just in their home, loving them, being salt and light. Six months later, both her mom and dad were baptized.

Because her life pointed to Christ. People looked at her. Her parents, who knew her so well, looked at the change in her life, looked at what she was doing.

[42 : 14] And her life pointed to Christ. That's who we're to be, right? We're to be a people who our joy and our glory comes from pointing people to Christ.

It's the reason that we live the life that we do. Thank you for listening. And preparing this, my heart, and I think a heart for Watermark, is that we really are a church that wants to care about the world that's going on around.

We care about the people who are out there. We care about the people we're sitting next to in church today. How are we doing at being salt and light?

Is it going to be our ambition to be abundant, to be blessed, to be prosperous? Or is it going to be our ambition to be salt and light?

I'd like to pray for us. Father, I begin by asking your forgiveness when I've failed on many occasions to be the salt and light that you've called us all to be.

[43 : 33] And Lord, I thank you that you are a God of mercy and forgiveness and grace. I thank you that you're a God who gives us grace that empowers us to live a life that pleases you.

And Lord, when we stumble and fall, you are still a God who loves us and picks us up and encourages us to go on. Lord, I pray for us as we're just about to enter this year of the monkey.

And Lord, all the uncertainties and insecurities that that might bring, I just pray that our peace and our joy will be found in you. And I pray that our desires and motives will be to live a life for you.

A life that is salt and light to the people around us. Lord, we praise you and we thank you that you've chosen us to be salt and light. We love you in Jesus' name.

Amen.