

SALT + LIGHT

THE LESSON: 1 PETER 3-4

Jesus, speaking to his disciples, said this: “You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world... 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 5:13-16).

The world we live in, left to itself, constantly slips towards decay and darkness (although this is not always obvious). But in the same way that salt fends off decay and light pushes back the darkness, *we* are called to be godly “change agents” wherever we find ourselves, preserving what is good and opposing what is evil.

Jesus goes on to say that salt must remain salty, and light must not be hidden. So in order to have the sort of influence we should on a downward-spiral-world, we must remain true to our identity as believers and allow our faith to show.

Renowned Anglican theologian John Stott put it this way:

“Like salt in putrefying meat, Christians are to hinder social decay. Like light in the prevailing darkness, Christians are to illumine society and show it a better way... Salt and light are not just a bit different from their environment. They are to have a powerful influence on their environment. The salt is to be rubbed into the meat in order to stop the rot. The light is to shine into the darkness”.

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St. Peter wrote two letters to early Christians who were scattered throughout areas where persecution was ongoing. Under circumstances like these, who wouldn’t be tempted to drop the whole “salt and light” thing, and just blend in? But St. Peter offers encouragement and advice, writing about the living hope that Christians have no matter what sort of trouble the world sends their way.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

During this unit, we’re going to focus our prayers on specific people – and issues affecting them – in our world.

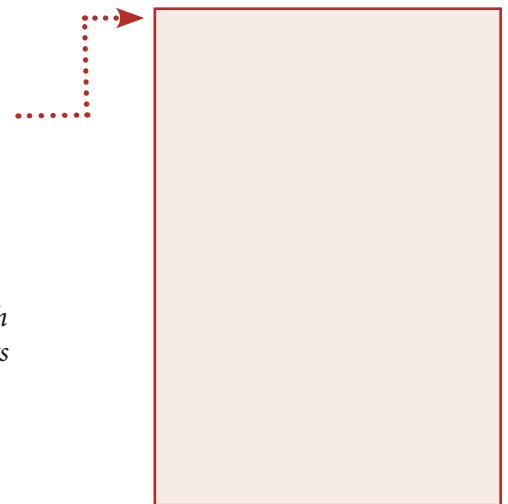
Each day this week, take time to pray for each of the concerns on your group’s list. Ask God to show you, your group, and other believers in the world how to be “salt and light” in order to counter the decay and darkness of these situations.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(THE COLLECT FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, BCP PAGE 123)



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1 PETER 3-4: **SALT AND LIGHT UNDER PRESSURE**

3¹³Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

4⁷The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. ⁸Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.