



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Live a Life of Influence

MATTHEW 5.13-16

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It is inspiring to reflect upon the lives of so many who influenced the world in their own way. Luminary figures populate the development of every sphere of human endeavor. Science, medicine, music, business, government, technology, sports—each has its notable people whose influence is undeniable. Their lives challenge us to leave our mark upon the world, to live a life of significance. As your life progresses you may find yourself reflecting more and more upon the legacy you will leave behind, the impact your life will have made. *You seek to live a life of influence.*

Jesus' inauguration speech began with a description of the character produced in those submitted to His spiritual governance. He immediately follows this description of such character with an assessment of its influence.

Matthew 5.13-16—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 set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

In this passage, you are presented with the influence you will exert as a willing subject of His heavenly kingdom. We are exhorted by Jesus' words to season the bland existence of others in the world, illuminate the dark places of the world, and to live virtuously.

SEASON A DULL EXISTENCE

The first word picture used to describe the influence of a citizen of the kingdom is that the believer is the salt of the earth. Salt has always been significant because of its properties as a seasoning and a preservative. For the Jew, salt was representative of the enduring nature of a covenant and held a significant place in worship. While salt is familiar to our frame of reference, it was much more so to those originally listening to the speech.

Salt adds flavor to that which might be found undesirable without it. Likewise, those who live under the reign of Christ are to add flavor to what can be a dull existence. As a citizen of the kingdom of heaven your character enhances the lives of others. As a preservative, you will restrain corruption in the lives of those with whom you have contact.

But if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

On the other hand, if a professing Christian loses their saltiness, their lives are rendered good for nothing as far as influence is concerned. That Christian has become unprofitable that has lost his savor. Being thrown out and trampled underfoot is no reference to a believer being cast out of the kingdom. It is simply a commentary on the loss of influence of a Christian who has lost his flavor.

ILLUMINATE A DARK PLACE

Next, Jesus likens the citizen of His kingdom to lights in the world. He does not say you will reflect light but rather that you are light. A Christian's life will shine forth into the darkness of a world that is given over to sin and self-will. This light will penetrate the darkness hanging over the understanding of those around you who have bought into a frame of reference for life that excludes God. This darkened worldview promises freedom but always enslaves, promises life but produces death, and promises peace but produces strife. As light you will illuminate the path to God for others. You will be a city set on a hill—a beacon of hope.

You are the light of the world.

That light must not be obscured. No one would light a lamp in their home and then cover it with a basket. The lamp belonged on the lampstand so that its light might illuminate the entire

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS ONLY: WEDNESDAY LUNCH AT THE AUSTIN CLUB (11:30AM OR UPON ADJOURNMENT, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER)

CAPITOL STAFF STUDY: THURSDAY LUNCH @ NOON IN CAP 4S.5

Texas

Being Salt and Light

house. As a city on a hillside is visible from great distances, so is the light of a Christian's life, it cannot be hidden.

As state leaders you know well what it is like to live your lives under the scrutiny of the public. It can be onerous at times, but you accept it as coming with the territory. As citizens of a heavenly kingdom, your life ought to provide light to others. Your light has been set on the lampstand of Texas.

EXERT SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE

Echoing every person's desire to live a life of consequence, Peter O'Toole was quoted as saying, "I will not be a common man. I will stir the smooth sands of monotony." This desire is especially strong among political leaders. State leaders are characterized by a burning to have their lives count for something—to influence others. While a desire to influence others is common, the desire to influence eternity is something God drops into the heart of those who have become subjects in His kingdom.

...that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven.

You are exhorted here to let your light shine among the people God places in your life. The words you speak, the attitudes you display, the decisions you make, the actions you take should expose the darkness of this world. Your life should offer the light necessary for those around you to see things clearly and as they really are.

CONCLUSION

It is one thing to influence music or government or technology. It is another thing to influence the hearts and minds of those around you for all eternity. Being salt and light calls you to be a seasoning, a preservative, and an illuminating force among those in your circle of influence. Will your

influence be limited to temporal matters or will your influence have eternal significance?