

What are some of the things we do differently which demonstrate that we are living as citizens of God's kingdom? Where do you catch glimpses of God's Kingdom here on earth? Was there someone in your life whose "salt and light" drew you to Jesus?

Each of us has a light to shine. But the power of that light is magnified when we gather our lights together. God didn't call us to be spiritual Lone Rangers. Without the community of believers and the body of Christ, our light will grow dim.

May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. - Matthew 6:10 NLT

He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." - Matthew 26:39 NLT

Prayer is the means by which we bring the reign of God to earth (Mat 6:10). But when we pray for God's will to be done on earth, we must set aside our own will just as Jesus modeled for us in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Pause for a moment of silent surrender, once again allowing God to do His will in your life.

WRAP-UP

Our lives are on display to the world and if we are following Jesus' way then the difference will be noticed. We can be salt and light to those around us. But we can't be salt and light if we live in fear. We have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, and if we surrender our will and get out of His way, anything is possible.

MEMORY VERSE

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. - Matthew 5:16 NLT

Challenge – Setting aside our own will means dying to ourselves and living for Christ. The public declaration of that is Baptism. If you haven't been baptized, you have the opportunity on Feb. 4th. If you have, then join us in the celebration of others who are declaring their faith.

Live Now Like You Will Later

Known For It #3

INTRODUCTION

In our current sermon series, we are focusing on the things Christians should be known for, the ways in which we stand out from the crowd and live differently because of Jesus. We've seen that Christians are called to serve not be served, and to love God, our neighbors and even our enemies. We are called to be different but not divisive. We must live with an eternal perspective because we are citizens of a Kingdom that is "now" but "not yet". Is Jesus our king now? Yes. Have we seen the fullness of God's Kingdom on this planet? Not yet. How do we live into this reality?

Ice Breaker

What is one thing you did when you were younger but no longer find important or satisfying?

Key Passage

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. 14 "You are the light of the world--like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. - Matthew 5:13-16 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Living like Jesus is King

From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." - Matthew 4:17 NLT

When Jesus called people to repent because the Kingdom was near, He was telling them to stop going in the direction they were heading and make a change. It's tempting to live like everyone around us, but we have seen in our studies that Jesus calls us to be different.

There are other kingdoms competing with Jesus that promise power or significance apart from God. What other social, economic, political, or religious "kingdoms", are competing for our allegiance? What do they offer their followers and how is that opposed to what Jesus offers us and how He calls us to live?

The "Jesus way" may appear upside-down compared to the world's standards, but we are called to believe with boldness that what feels upside-down is actually right-side up to God.

2. What Happens in "The Last Days"?

16 No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: 17 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. 18 In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants--men and women alike--and they will prophesy. - Acts 2:16-18 NLT

In Acts chapter 2 Peter declares that what was witnessed at Pentecost was evidence of Joel's prediction of God moving "in the last days". So, Peter lived in the last days. And when the bible refers to the last days, it can be any time between the resurrection of Jesus and His return. And so, we are also living "in the last days".

If you knew with certainty that Jesus was returning during your lifetime how would that change the way you live today? Why would you not choose to live that way now?

1 You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. - 2 Timothy 3:1 NLT

Paul warned Timothy about difficult times in the last days. Knowing this may cause you to feel fearful. The biblical accounts of the last days are filled with descriptions of evil in the world. But evil is not unique to the modern world, although we have an expansive view of it through technology. In fact, we are a part of the greatest Jesus movement in history. Across the globe we see the church continues to grow and flourish despite resistance and persecution.

What action or lack of action would we expect from people whose perspective is focused on the doom and gloom of the difficulties accompanying the last days? (wars, earthquakes, famine....) Compare that to people whose focus is on the resurrected Jesus and power of the Holy Spirit to move, heal and restore.

*The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.
- Romans 8:11 NLT*

Romans 8:11 reminds us that we have the Spirit of God dwelling in each of us and in the power of the Spirit, anything is possible!

3. Don't Grow Weary

As for the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good. - 2 Thessalonians 3:13 NLT

Jesus taught his disciples to love God and love others, caring for the poor and marginalize. The early church lived this out to the amazement of their culture. At a time when women, the disabled, widows and orphans held little or no value, the early church took them in and loved them.

Has there been a time, perhaps even now, that you felt discouraged in doing what you know is the right thing when everyone around you is going in the opposite direction? How did that affect you and how do you feel about it now? If you are still feeling discouraged pause to pray with your group for a fresh revival and renewed perspective on what God calls you to do.

4. Salt and Light

In the ancient world salt was valuable in two ways. It seasoned the foods and protected it from putrefaction. In our key verse (Mat 5:13) Jesus calls us salt. One way we can bring "flavor" to the world around us is to spread the flavor of Jesus and His kingdom, not only in our words but in our actions.