

# STRONGER

## *Lord, Give me a Stronger Influence*

**Matthew 5:13-16 (NLT)** <sup>13</sup> “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. <sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

1. The statements of blessings that launch the sermon on the mount describes essential Christian character. (Matthew 5:3-12)
2. The next 3 verses describes the impact of the Christians influence in the world. Note the vastness of our assignment.
3. Jesus uses two domestic metaphors to define the nature of a Christian’s influence, salt and sunshine.
4. The basic truth behind these metaphors is that the church and the world are distinct communities.

THE CHRISTIAN'S (AND CONSEQUENTLY CHURCH'S) INFLUENCE CAN ONLY BE EFFECTIVE WHEN THERE IS A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD.

5. The world is a deteriorating and dark place. Christians are placed in the world with a double role:
- a. as salt to prevent or at least hinder the social decay
  - b. as light to dispel the darkness
- (these can only be done by allowing the Spirit of God to control you)

## 1. How salty are you?

1. Jesus states this truth as an positive reality, "You are the salt of the earth."
2. This is an outflow of our assignment, our mission, our purpose—by glorifying God we have a positive influence in our society.
3. Salt is a very common but important commodity. It was so essential during the time of Jesus that it was provided to soldiers as a part of their compensation. This is the root for the word salary.
4. Salt has many possible applications—salt is used in part to flavor, preserve, and purify.
5. Salt's effectiveness can be lost if its saltiness is lost through being mixed with other components or diluted by a liquid.
6. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Johns states, "*The glory of the gospel is that when the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first.*"

7. If Christians are indistinguishable from non-Christians we are ineffective and useless.

8. YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

## 2. HOW BRIGHT ARE YOU?

1. Jesus makes a second positive assertion regarding the Christian's role in society. YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

2. Light is used universally in scripture as a symbol of truth.

3. Jesus says you are to shine. He declares it is impossible for your light to be hidden if you have light.

4. The light we possess is not self-initiated. We shine as we are in Him.

5. We shine as our good works are on display. Not mere human good works—but works that embrace divine provision.

6. These good works are not only the big events of life but especially the daily mundane, routine aspect of life.

**Colossians 3:17 (NLT)** *And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.*

There are two devices that are used regarding temperature, a thermometer and a thermostat. One states the temperature and one regulates it.

A thermostat calls for hot or cold air to maintain the desired temperature. **BUT** a thermostat must be connected to a system and power to work.