

# The Salt of the Earth – Messianic Teaching

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## MAIN VERSES

[Matthew 5:13-16](#) · [Matthew 7](#) · [Matthew 23](#) · [Luke 14:34-35](#) · [James 3](#) · [Hebrews 3](#) · [Genesis 1](#)

## Welcome to Founded in Truth

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home.

Well, Shabbat Shalom! I hope everybody is doing all right.

## A Question in Dark Times

I admit this past week has been a bit of a tough week for me because I had to officiate two funerals, and one of them was for my grandmother. During this time, I had the honor to preach a sermon at her funeral as well, which was kind of neat. And this sermon was based on a talk with my grandmother while she was in hospice care. I based the sermon on what we're called to actually do in this world as believers.

She mentioned to me something she struggled with when it comes to God and believers. She asked me a question: Why is the world so dark? And the context to her question is probably one that some of us have struggled with. Her honest, sincere question is, why is the world so dark if there are so many people that claim to actually believe and want to be the witnesses of Yeshua in the world? Why is there so much darkness? And so at her funeral, I asked that question.

It's been a tough week because not only have we officiated two different funerals for people, but I also lost two friends of mine within a week's span to COVID. Took them out very quickly. It was daunting. It's weird because we know the numbers are going down, but we still have deaths happening. And it takes a toll to be exposed to so much death. Anyone ever know what I'm

talking about? It takes a toll. And I really didn't understand the weight that it took on me until about three days ago, until the full blunt of it hit me in the morning hours.

## Being the Jesus in the World

But if there's one thing I feel is most important to talk about during times where death is prevalent or when patterns of life are disrupted—I mean, stocks and crypto have been causing a lot of anxiety for many this past week—doubt and anxiety tend to easily infect the world around us. As believers, what are we supposed to be doing during these times? And the answer is easy. We're supposed to be the Jesus in the world. Paul says that we are the ambassadors of Christ. We're representatives. We are the representatives of the King, hands and feet, right?

And at this sermon, at my grandmother's funeral, I had the honor to remind people that our goal is not to escape this world to simply go to heaven and just sit around waiting patiently for our lives to end so that finally, because of our patience in this life, we enter into heaven. No, that's not what the Bible emphasizes about where your energy is supposed to go. The Bible tells us: no, you're not trying to escape earth to get to heaven. Our job is to bring heaven to earth. That was the same thing that Yeshua taught and lived out. In our daily lives, we are to be the ambassadors of heaven. But just as Jesus said to the Pharisees, we can also very well become the ambassadors of hell on earth. You—not the devil—you can become the source of hell in people's lives on earth. You have the ability to set the fires of hell in the lives of others.

## Hell on Earth Through Our Words

James 3 says that you have the ability to set fires of hell on earth by using your tongue. That's a bit odd. I mean, how would you ever do that? Gossip, talking down to others, just yakking spreads the fires of Satan.

Matthew 23 is an extremely scary example—that's where Yeshua accuses the Pharisees, right? He accuses the Pharisees of giving birth to children of hell when they make disciples. How brutal is that? Think about that. You are a trained religious rabbi, an expert in the Torah and the prophets and the writings. You are the pastoral-level rabbi to the common people of Judea. And you have this Jesus guy saying that you are breeding children of hell on earth because you use your religious resume, your knowledge of Torah and the Bible, your knowledge of God, and you manipulate all of those things in a way that benefits you and is contrary to and against the actual kingdom of God. That's so rough. You child of hell. It's just rough. It's just rough.

## The Sermon on the Mount

And so the past few weeks, Pete spoke on the blind spots we have as believers. Super great message, very edifying. I spoke on the bait of Satan, how saying yes to being offended is the downfall of a believer. We also spoke on the Beatitudes and how when we actually live out what Yeshua commands us to live out, it typically looks like folly to the world around us. It's so upside down. Last week, Jason had a potent message on loving through truth, heavy. How many times do we like to tell the truth in the world? How many times do we enjoy telling the truth at the expense of other people? How many times do we love to tell the truth at the expense of love instead of through love?

This week, I want to continue in the Sermon on the Mount. And if you remember, we have this scene in [Matthew 5](#) where Yeshua goes up to the mount to give the oracles of God. And of course, Matthew is so intentional about how he frames his account of Yeshua. And one of the lenses he uses to portray Yeshua is the greater Moses. And the greater Moses comes and delivers a better application of Torah, a clearer application of Torah. [Hebrews 3](#) says that Yeshua should be honored greater than Moses for this reason.

Yeshua came teaching a way to live out Torah that would actually produce a people of the kingdom of God on earth, where love and relationships and fellowship were the priorities. And that's always been the mission since at least [Genesis 1](#)—God wanted to create a people that were in fellowship with each other and himself, giving them authority to have dominion over creation as his ambassadors, and to go and be fruitful and multiply, overtaking the entire world with his kingdom, his justice and authority. And Yeshua is preaching the greatest sermon ever preached here. And he says some things that are so hard.

## The Hardest Commands

He audaciously says that people who will actually find a state of living that can only be described as blessed are those who are poor in spirit, the meek, those who pursue justice and righteousness. They thirst for it over water. And he says even harder things than this. Don't take offense when someone says stuff about you. I know none of us have ever had that problem before. Not to hate someone in your heart. Oh, I don't ever do that. It's so easy to hide though, isn't it? So easy to kid yourself. Because if you hate someone in your heart, you have excluded yourself from experiencing any essence of the kingdom of God in your life or beyond.

Someone hits you, you don't respond with violence. That's a tough one. The early believers understood the weight of this in the Roman Empire. See, the Romans began to persecute them

early on, which we'll be speaking about soon. And they could have organized a militia. They could have gotten their guns. They could have fought back for their own protection. And the early church chose not to, knowing that that was not the way of Yeshua.

Instead, they did something that is so foolish, so stupid to the world. They prayed, they prayed. And they didn't simply pray for their protection. They prayed that God's will would be done. They even prayed for their enemies that were coming to persecute and kill them. And they forgave the Romans that came and killed them. Why? Why? Because they were taught to love the very people that were coming to persecute them. And when you love someone, you don't want to kill them. You don't want harm to come to them. So tough. So hard. The stuff in the Sermon on the Mount is just hard. That's all I can describe it.

## How Different Traditions Interpret the Sermon

A few weeks back, we spoke about how the early church fathers struggled with how to actually live out the Sermon on the Mount in the world. And some of them taught that the Sermon on the Mount only applies in certain situations. So if you're in the government, the Sermon on the Mount doesn't apply. But if you're not in government, in everyday lay person life, then it applies. You have Christians of the dispensational tradition. They believe that this is a kingdom ethic. Well, the fullness of God's kingdom hasn't fully erupted yet. Therefore, the whole Sermon on the Mount can't be kept and shouldn't be tried until we're in the fullness of the kingdom. You know, end of Revelation stuff. So don't even worry about it now. It's just for later. That's so easy. Isn't that just easy to reach for? It's just some low-hanging fruit right there. Yep, I'll take it.

Many different traditions, but specifically the Anabaptist tradition in Christian history believes wholeheartedly that the Sermon on the Mount applies 1,000% today to everyone. And they were persecuted, they were killed because of that. They taught that this is how the world should be if the love of Yeshua is actually being acted out now. Because when your enemy throws offenses at you or even steals from you or hurts you, as a believer of Yeshua, you are called to take up your cross and represent him. You are called to what's called a cruciform lifestyle in which when people see you, they should see the king, King Yeshua. And if someone offends you, trespasses, hurts you, fill in the blank, you immediately have two choices. Number one, you can respond the same way they did.

You can call them a name back. I know this is foreign to a lot of us here, but some people make this choice and they call someone a name back if they're called a name. Someone steals from you, I'll just go steal something back. Someone hits you, I'll just hit them back, maybe even

harder. And you can allow the very same spirit that caused them to attack you to infect yourself in the same regard to attack them. Whatever anger or hatred or frustration they felt to come against you, you can allow it to engulf yourself with the flames of hell to shoot it back at them. Be like a scene out of Dragon Ball Z. That's what comes to mind. And we always know when you respond to someone in the same manner as this, it always ends well, right? The situation is typically resolved instantly because you both have black eyes now. That's one way to respond. The other way is to be the place on earth where offense is absorbed. Becoming the place where sin and offense stops. You get in the way of it. You get in the way of darkness escalating, darkness becoming stronger. You get in the way of darkness spreading. And not only that, but it gets transformed into a display of grace and mercy that only God can produce.

## **Darkness Dies and Grace Shoots Forth**

The cruciform life where darkness dies and grace shoots forth from. We agitate the abuser and the oppressors, but we don't reciprocate evil in the name of justice. When your life looks like the cross, absorbing offense and shooting out grace, something incredible happens, and it's radical, and the world doesn't like it. We'll be speaking on that in an upcoming message, but that's the calling that is painted across the gospel account, specifically in Mark as well as Paul's letters, taking up a cruciform life. And I tend to agree that the Sermon on the Mount is not something that should be disregarded. To proclaim that this is not for us, I don't agree with that. I believe it's absolutely for you and me today in its fullest extent, whatever we can practice from it. And that's hard, but that is the calling that Yeshua preached on how to live out the kingdom of God. And it's something that looks completely upside down to the world. The world looks at the teachings of Yeshua authentically and says he's crazy, he's out of his mind. Why would you do that? Why would you allow those things to happen to you? Because you love the people doing it so much that you would give your life to show them a glimpse of what God's love looks like. Yeah, but what if they don't see it? Then it's all for nothing. That's how the world would respond. And the follower of Yeshua would say, yeah, but I saw it. So maybe they will too. The least popular teaching in the Bible is the authenticity of how to actually live out The Sermon on the Mount. It's not popular. It's not fun. Because we like to be like the world when it feels good or when it feels right.

## **A Monk from the 9th Century**

So I love some nerdy history. And I especially love Christian nerdy history. I eat it up. So I want to play my nerd card. It's just going to be extended to the rest of the message. And I want to

talk about a monk from the 9th century. And this monk's name was Rabonas Maris. And he was a famous monk and author. He wrote many commentaries in the books of the Bible. But one of his most famous works is known as the veneration of the cross. And what's neat is he included many poems centered around God's grace and God's love and mainly emphasized the cross. And what made his work so unique is he developed what is called pattern poetry, where he used letters and even numbers to develop something like a crossword puzzle where the images were emphasized because of how the words lined up, and some would suggest you could even read it different ways.

## Pattern Poetry

So go ahead, let's throw some of those up. So there's one and you can see like the angels are within and described. So the letters within these areas are more significant than the others, right? Kind of draws to the surface what he's trying to portray through his poems and then keep going through them. I think we have a couple. I just wanted to show you guys examples of what he did, right? Big crossword puzzle there where the blessing or his writings or the praise is emphasized. Oh, keep going. The cruciform text where the letters inside are more significant than the outer. They all work together. Same thing here. And I think there is one.

There it is. So this one is neat. The reason why this one's neat is because what is depicted on the paper? What symbol? The cross, right? It's a cross. And within the vertical, you see how there's four going down, four going across. Within these vertical and horizontal lines, he has put in there, crunched together the first two Beatitudes. And why I think that's so neat. It's so cool because to Morris, the author, this was the way of the cross in his poetry. The beginning of the Beatitudes, which is the intro to the Sermon on the Mount, the first two. And his poems are very complex, but in his final poem, I think all of these build up to his final conclusion, his final pattern point, which is a self-portrait of him through the way of the cross, finding the exalted throne of God or finding the cross, which is where the grace and the love and the mercy of God are poured out.

## How to Walk This Out

And I just thought that was really neat and beautiful in a sense that we still have this artwork from a believer 1,100 years ago, 1,200 years ago, and we still get to reflect and kind of feel the same thought process and emotions that he did and what he thought about how do we walk this out? This is the way of the cross. And so we briefly reviewed the Beatitudes, and we'll continue on the next section where we left off last time, and it's a very familiar section. It's

Matthew 5, verse 11. Everybody good? We're still good? It's not starting out too heavy? Okay. How can you be blessed if you are insulted or persecuted? And the context here is Yeshua knows his disciples and followers are already being talked about. That's a gimme. Already being talked about. These crazy radicals who follow this guy that is just upsetting everything, right? And despite what is going on in the world—all the politics, everything—all this rabbi from Nazareth wants to do, right, is sit down and have dinner and hang out with everybody that was excluded from all the other dinner parties.

## Yeshua's Dinner Parties

You ever notice that? Yeshua just wants to sit down and have a dinner party over and over and over again. Sometimes he'll invite himself over. Who was it? The tax collector. What's his name? The guy who climbed a tree. Zacchaeus. We're going to have a party at your house. I'm coming. That's what he did. Incredible. He always wanted to sit down and have fellowship community, but specifically with the people that were excluded, not the in crowd. You ever notice that? Just wanted to hang out with fellowship. Yeshua was not about exclusion from himself, ever. He went after and targeted those that the rest of society didn't really want to deal with. Tax collectors, nah. Prostitutes, mm-mm. Bunch of poor fishermen. Obviously, they weren't smart enough to make it up under a rabbi, nah. They don't belong at the table with the elite Torah-keeping Pharisees. How about the lame? Those who had diseases, the lepers. Ain't nobody in the first century want to hang out with a woman who had an issue of blood for 12 years. Too many complications around that. In the social structure of the first century, invalids and the blind, they were not seen as acceptable to be in the higher ranks of society. Just didn't end up that way. They were just the poor who begged because of an unfortunate situation. They were discarded, along with the prostitutes and the tax collectors. We always focus on Yeshua going and healing the lame and the sick because they were broken, because they were disabled. But what if—honestly, what if he was healing them so they could be included back into fellowship and society? That woman with that issue of blood had not been in society for 12 years. She had been excluded and discarded. It wasn't simply struggling with something in herself and her own health. It was the repercussions of that—the way the rest of the world responded to her and pushed her away. What if Yeshua's aim was restoration of people and not simply miracles? He wanted to see the whole world brought back together under one kingdom and one crown. What if that was part of his ministry? Even if that was only a small part of why he did the things he did, what does that say about us today? Who do we intentionally turn a blind eye to in society because it's too uncomfortable to be around them or to be beside them or to make small talk

with them or just say, "Hi, how you doing?" because we're scared or uncomfortable because they're so different.

## A Heretic Moment

But Yeshua never would. How many people have we stood beside and ignored because we didn't know how to talk to them, because they were lame or had a sickness or a disability? Did that bring it home? Can I tell you something? Heretic moment. I think, I bet, people who feel isolated because of a disability would rather have you greet them in public with kindness than pray for them. I'm guessing. I'm guessing. We are all about some prayer for healing, and that's great. I believe in healing through prayer. I absolutely do. But when we actually walk out into the world, sometimes we tend to completely ignore people that God would want us to make feel included as his children.

Yeshua was all about inclusion, especially to those who the religious didn't feel they needed to give attention or energy to. In the first century, you got talked about a lot if you hung out with any of the people that were deemed excluded from God's grace and mercy. And here, Yeshua says, if you truly follow me the way that you're supposed to, you will be faced with offenses, people talking about you, people lying about you. Consider it joy because you are a living citizen of the kingdom of God. Your reward is here and yet to come. And I don't know who is going through a time in their life where they feel pressured to respond to others looking down to them or talking down to them for living out their faith authentically. But I want to tell you, if that's you today, God sees you, God's rooting for you. And even today, you are getting a glimpse of your reward that is yet to come for you. Just hold strong. You are joining the ranks of the prophets when you are mocked for walking out the kingdom of God.

## You Are the Salt of the Earth

Matthew 5 verse 13 says this right here. It says, You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the earth. Such a neat section of scripture here. You are the salt of the earth. What does that even mean, salt of the earth? Like, and light of the world? So look how Matthew articulates what Yeshua said. He says, salt of thee—he uses the Greek word for ground, if you will. Salt of the ground. And then he says, you are the light of the? He uses two different words. So he uses the Greek word kosmos for world. And the two words kind of mean the same thing. I mean, you can debate, but it's kind of neat. He chose to use two different words there. And some of it may be about what we're going to

explore next. But hey, if you want, I encourage you, go dive into the Word of God and what has been passed down because of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It's all here and it's ready for us to dig into.

What does Yeshua mean by salt of the earth? Click the expand button on all of the opinions on what this means. One train of thought is Yeshua is speaking about the salt taken from the Dead Sea through the process of a reparation or rock formations that contain deposits of sodium chloride where you could shove some fish or meat to preserve it. Over time, the salt within the rock may leach out, no longer be good. Or if you got salt from the Dead Sea, sometimes it would be contaminated with gypsum, wouldn't be any good. So you'd throw it out. That's the thing.

## Salt Was Essential in the Ancient World

Salt was such an important thing during the first century. So much so that in the intertestament book of Surak, it's mentioned in there that salt is a basic necessity of life. You must have it. It was used as a preservative for food, to keep food for longer. They didn't really have refrigerators. You could just stick the deer in there, fish in there, whatever. Salt helps preserve things.

That's one opinion, and that's one that I've taught in the past, and I don't disagree with it. Maybe salt is a seasoning to help you as believers be more palatable to all the world and all the nations. I like that as well. But another opinion is that salt here is fertilizer. Fertilizer. So I came across a great article by Dr. Anthony Bradley from the King's College in New York City on this topic, and the name of his article was, "You Are the Manure of the Earth." However, I yielded to wisdom, and here we go. So I thought this article was so interesting and it's really great because I've always read that this is a possibility. I mean, lots of commentary say, yeah, fertilizer, but I've never seen someone elaborate so much on the topic. And it turns out salt was used as fertilizer in Judea. Not only was salt used in Judea as fertilizer, but it was also used by the Romans and the Chinese. It was kind of a common thing in the ancient world. And so what's neat, and I appreciate Dr. Bradley bringing this to my attention because I'd never seen it. When we turn to Luke and we see Luke record this version of what Yeshua is saying about salt, we see something that I'd never seen before. Just join me. Luke chapter 14, verse 34, Yeshua is speaking and he's speaking about salt. And here's what he says. He says, salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor the manure pile. It's thrown out.

Guys, do you know what manure is? Everybody good? Okay, we're good. What do you use manure for? Who would store up a big pile of that on their land? What would you use that for?

Your gardens, fertilizer, yes. It's so neat. I'd never noticed that before. It's neither fit for soil or the manure pit. Salt was added to the manure as a mix of fertilizer.

## How Salt Works as Fertilizer

Salt was used in more arid places to help the soil retain moisture, destroy weeds, and make soils that were deemed more stubborn easier to work with. In researching this, I was amazed that salt in some soils keeps disease from coming upon wheat. What's it called? Rust. Wheat and then potatoes as well. It keeps disease away. When applied properly, salt can actually kill surface weeds without killing the deep-rooted plants and even grass for the cattle. Kind of neat. When it rains, the salt activates and breaks out certain nutrients in the soil to make the plants grow. It seems so strange, but it's even used in some parts of the world today.

I find value in each of the possible definitions of salt in the context of Yeshua. And I don't think we should get too hung up on it, but if there's something edifying behind it, I'd love to explore it. So if this is the correct context to Yeshua's words, what would that mean? You are the salt of the soil. You help things grow. You help things spring forth with life. Despite the nutrients not being available there, you break it out, you offer it, you help the things come to life where there is nothing but death. Or if you become savorless—salt which becomes useless if infected with gypsum—you're not even good enough to be mixed in with the manure. How will the gospel of the kingdom be preached throughout the world?

## Being Salt: Preservation and Growth

In the past, I've taught that salt is a preservative and a seasoning, and with that view, this text is saying that Christians and Yeshua are supposed to preserve the world from decay or make it more palatable to all nations. But what I love about the fertilizer interpretation is that the point is so much deeper. The followers of Christ are sent on a mission to stimulate growth in the parts of the world that are barren, and to be mixed into the manure piles of the world so God can use the fertilizer to bring forth new virtuous life that actually thrives within his creation. That's exactly what Yeshua taught by how he lived out the Torah. He went to the most outskirt realms of society and he didn't isolate people like everyone else did. He became what was needed to give nutrients that they needed to bring forth life.

## The Uncomfortable Call to Serve

Yeshua called us to go to places that were uncomfortable, to do things uncomfortable. He called us to go to the places where things are not already bright and full of life, to go to places where the proper nutrients are lacking. That could look like foreign missions, absolutely, but it could also look like stepping into the life of a child by becoming a foster parent. That could be talking to a person in fellowship here at Founded in Truth—though it may be a bit awkward—and genuinely pouring your life out into them. It could be taking the step to volunteer for one of the many outreach ministries we have here.

Guys, you guys know who Ben Cohen is, right? Ben Cohen has made multiple attempts over the past few weeks to get volunteers to minimally be engaged with a foster family who has chosen to sacrifice so much to help these children. And Ben is looking for volunteers to make them a meal once every five or six weeks, or maybe drive a child to a doctor's appointment or therapy appointment. You guys ever seen that Jason Statham movie? There's this old one called The Transporter. Anybody? You could be the transporter for a young child in need. You can wear leather gloves and drive them around in a tuxedo. You have this opportunity here. I'd do it. That's exactly how I'd do it.

## **Open Your Heart Through Service**

Guys, in your handout, Karen added in a volunteer spreadsheet or a volunteer sheet, and on that volunteer sheet are a couple of areas of need. And helping out this foster family is on that sheet. And I would encourage you, if you have the ability to do something in the name of being a light to the world, in the name of being salty in some capacity, mark a box to make a meal once every month and a half. We're called to step out into areas that need Yeshua the most. Guess what? Guess who that is? That's you, buddy. You are called to do this. The call of the salty is to move toward the broken, not away from them.

## **Moving Toward the Broken**

Move toward the broken so they can meet God, feel God's presence with them. Not only that, so they can be set free to be the new creation that God has called them to be. There was a Christian in the Roman Empire named Telemachus, and he was born a Christian. You go ahead, put that slide up. I couldn't find an exact picture of him, but Telemachus, he became a saint later in church tradition. And he was a Christian, and there's a story recorded by the Bishop of Cyreus, Theodoret, I think is how you pronounce his name, in the late 4th century, late 300s. And he was working in the city, in this town. And he saw, I believe it was around a time when Rome was celebrating likely the defeat of the Goths. It was a big celebration. And Rome was

celebrating everybody. And it was Independence Day, 4th of July fireworks, if they could. And then they saw everybody was going down to the center of town. And he thought, what is going on? He heard lots of commotion. And when he went there, there was an arena. And they were launching forth the gladiatorial games in celebration of the might of Rome. And everybody was cheering and saluting the might of Rome. And the gladiators were saluting and ready to bring forth violence towards each other in honor of Rome. And the gladiators began to fight. And from what we know from the readings, some of them are vague, some of them are specific. He began to shout. He said, stop this in the name of God. Stop this in the name of Yeshua. Yeshua. And he ran down the steps. No one was listening in the crowd. And he says, stop this in the name of Yeshua. And he ran down through the corridors. Stop this in the name of Yeshua. And nobody was listening. They were cheering on the gladiators below. So he jumped the fence. And he ran out into the middle of the arena and he separated the gladiators and he said, stop this in the name of Yeshua. In the name of God, stop this. This is murder. This is violence. This is darkness. This is not of the peace and the love and the mercy that our God represents. Stop killing each other. Stop promoting violence as entertainment. Stop this darkness now.

## Jumping Into the Arena

Now, Theodoret, when he was writing, he didn't say how he died. He just said he died in that arena. Two traditions have come down to us. They say that the audience stopped. Everybody stopped and looked at him, and they were so enraged that he would stop their fleshly entertainment and craving and lust for violence and darkness that they picked up rocks and they stoned him right there in the arena. Another tradition says that one of the gladiators, hearing the crowd roar, "Get on with the games!" turned his sword upside down and slammed it with force through the chest of Telemachus, leaving him there in the middle of the arena. But that's not the end of the story. When the emperor at the time, Hanaras, when he heard about what had happened, history says that his heart was moved. And at that moment, he banned the gladiatorial games from Rome once and for all. No more gladiator arena-style violence would be hosted in Rome. Now, this is after Constantine. Constantine abolished the violent arena games, but they didn't really stop. He was just kind of like, we're putting a ban on it, but do what you want. This is what it took for it to stop generations later. Just what an incredible story. To literally jump into the place where nothing but death abounds to be salt, to get in the way of the darkness, be the fertilizer for new life and an evolution that would cease violence for entertainment in the Roman world.

There's also another story of a man by the name of Chiune Sugihara. I think I'll put his picture up there. He became a Christian as a young man when he was from Manchuria, when it was kind of part of the Japanese occupation, if you will. He worked for the Japanese foreign ministry there, but resigned after witnessing just how badly the Japanese were treating the native Chinese residents. And in 1939, he converted to Christianity in a Russian Orthodox church, which is kind of neat, like in China. Okay, it's cool. But he converted there. He stepped down from his position in the foreign ministry in Manchuria, but he was sent to Lithuania next. And while he was representing Japan there, he was shopping at a gourmet food store run by a Jewish woman. And the woman's nephew, named Sali, I believe, he came in and he was wanting to see a movie that was playing in town. So he went to his aunt and said, hey, can I have some money? And this was after the German invasion of Poland. There were many Jewish refugees fleeing and this young man had already given all of his allowance to the refugees. So he's, hey, aunt, you got some money? I wanna go see this movie. Can you give me some? And so Sugihara, he saw the young boy there. He pulled out his money and gave it to him. And the young boy said, I can't take this from you. I don't even know you. So what does this man say, Sugihara? He says, well, you can consider me your uncle. And since we're family, you can take it from me. So he said, well, if you're my family, then you need to come over for Hanukkah dinner tonight. He looked at his aunt, he shrugged. I will be there. I will come. When and where? So him and his wife went to Hanukkah dinner, right? This little Christian couple that's trying to figure out how to navigate what's going on in the politics of the world today. And they end up at Hanukkah dinner in Lithuania. While at dinner, he met a Jewish refugee whose home was bombed by the Germans and his wife and children were killed. Very intimate setting for such a discussion. He knew the Germans were not gonna stop in Poland. So he had a sense of urgency about it. He immediately went back and he telegraphed Japan. He said, hey, I need permission to start giving out transit visas to Jews so they can travel from Lithuania to Japan and then onto another location afterwards. Just let's get them out of here. And the Japanese refused for a similar reason why the US refused to allow Jewish refugees in as well during this time. They might stay, and we wouldn't want that. Japan did not want these refugees coming in and then not leaving. Heaven forbid that refugees and people that need help would stay.

## A Christian's Conscience

So things got worse. In the summer of 1940, Hitler was on the move. Things were getting a lot worse, and Jews were flooding into Lithuania, desperately seeking some way out, literally pounding on the doors of the Japanese embassy. So he telegraphed three more times asking Japan for help, but they refused. And at this point, it is recorded of him saying to his wife, and I

believe I have a slide of this. "I may have to disobey." Nope, not that one. He says, "I may have to disobey my government, but if I do not, I will be disobeying God." Let me say that quote again. "I may have to disobey my government, but if I do not, I will be disobeying God, and I know I should follow my conscience."

Wow. At what point is your patriotism expendable to your allegiance to God and his kingdom? At what point? He began to handwrite exit visas. Somewhere around 10,000 visas were filled out in the space of a few months until he was pulled out, ordered to leave. He got on a train and he said, I did everything I could. And the Jews that were there at his departure said, we will never forget you. On the train, he was captured by the Russians. And when he finally made it home, he was fired from his job instantly because of the incident in Lithuania. No—you disobeyed direct orders. He spent the rest of his life selling light bulbs going door to door.

## Being Witnesses in the World

What is so incredible is he did this because he was a follower of the Jesus that we follow, a follower of the Yeshua that we know. He was a follower of Yeshua and he was told, he was commissioned to be the salt, the fertilizer that brings life wherever it goes. And if persecution comes, you smile because you know you're doing it right. Be the light that shines into the world. Do not find excuses to hide your light. His words. Sometimes we get so comfortable with being saved by grace that we forget this was the actual mandate of the king to do something. What good is a citizen of the kingdom if they don't do anything, if they just sit there? What good? I made it in. Sit down. Yeshua did not simply command that you sit down and you read your Bible and you pray. Those are great things. These are things we were commanded to do. I love these things. I'm not fazed this morning praying for every single person here today. But Yeshua calls us to be more than simply prayer warriors or scholars. We need prayer warriors. Gosh, we need prayer warriors. We need scholars. We need teachers and preachers. But if we're just going to pray about something and then just talk about the Bible and not actually do anything that Yeshua commands, then why would we ever think that we're anything more than trash salt that is not even good enough to be shoved in manure? We are the witness of Yeshua in the world. Do we represent him well? Do we represent him well? Yeshua says in [Matthew 7](#), hey, you're in the kingdom? Yeah, I'm in the kingdom. He's like, it's funny. I don't even know who you are. I don't even know. I don't know. I don't recognize you. You worker of lawlessness. I wonder if a worker of lawlessness could be almost a synonym for someone who refused to get in the way. Those moments when we represent him don't always seem huge, do they? They can be small. When Telemachus, when he jumped into the arena with

the gladiators, he had no idea his display was gonna end the gladiator games once and for all in the entire Roman empire.

Like the entire history of that tradition is gonna end with him. He had no idea. When Shaiun started filling out exit visas, he didn't know he was going to save six to 10,000 people, paving the road for 40 to 67,000 descendants to come into this world. He had no idea. He was called to do something right in that moment, and he made the decision to do it.

When a people group cries out that they are oppressed, Christ followers run to them, skipping the politics or whatever sides people and media want to divide. No, they run to the people. Forget the sides, forget the politics. When someone needs help, it is the Yeshua followers that run to them, not caring what kind of war is going on between nations, not caring about earthly allegiance. Yeshua followers stand up. They do not fight back like the rest of the world. They subvert it in the most powerful way. And they do it boldly. They show love that makes people mad. And they get in the way of evil and darkness. Get in the way of it. And they offer the invitation to Yeshua to everyone without judgment or looking down on them or their past. They offer the invitation of Yeshua through love and mercy and grace that the world doesn't understand because it's just too radical.

## The Way of Salt and Light

Guys, Yeshua invites us to follow him so that we can change the world. I'm a firm believer of that, to be the salt, to be the light. Pliny the Elder, a Roman author and contemporary of Yeshua and the early believers, he wrote this right here. This is interesting, neat little line here. Nothing is more useful than salt or sunshine. It's neat. No one else, I thought that was neat. Salt and light changed the world. The essence that brings forth change, evolution, and moving forward in life.

Being around death takes its toll on you. The reality of simply how frail we are takes its toll. Growing older, gosh, it feels like I blink and the clock is out of control. I blink and it's five years later. When did my son become five? When did this happen?

Another thing that's so fascinating to me, and I was speaking to Pete Jason about this just the other day, when I was a child, I didn't really know death. I wasn't exposed to death. Maybe a grandparent, funerals, spars. But then you get into your 20s, and then you get in your 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and it becomes more familiar, doesn't it? You're introduced to it more frequently. You're exposed to the draining way that death takes on our human bodies.

We can wait to die here or we can do something or you can do something. And Yeshua, the greatest rabbi ever to live, preaching the greatest sermon ever told, being exalted up as king in a way that the world thought was foolish. This King Yeshua invites you to not waste your life. He invites you into a relationship with him and he invites you to give all of your allegiance to him and only him. And he invites you to follow him in being an ambassador of heaven on earth and to get in the way of darkness, no matter how significant or insignificant it may be. Get in the way of it, to be salt, to be fertilizer that would bring forth life in the most broken places that you would find.

## Finding Your Opportunity

That's why we're so focused on continuing to support foster families here. We see that as a great need. And also it's something important. It's a darkness that is prevailing that we need to get in front of. We're so excited to partner with a ministry to use this building to host GED classes for young ladies who have recently gotten out of jail. Get in the way of what darkness wants to happen. Get in the way of it. Do something. It's why we're so excited to be a ministry planted here in Rock Hill, to walk through the doors that God would open, no matter how daunting, difficult, or uncomfortable they may be, because we know that we're called to do something, to be salt, to be the fertilizer that would bring forth life.

And worship team, you guys can come up. We're going to conclude with this. The question is, what is your something? How do you shine your light forward so men will see your good works and glorify God? They glorify God because of the works that you do. What is your something? Or a better question is, how do you find your something? How do you find something?

The opportunities to get in the way of darkness. Telemachus jumping into the arena, Gaz. How did he find that opportunity? Shaiun saving 10,000 or more Jews in Lithuania and beyond. How did he find that opportunity? How do we find that opportunity? And the answer is the way of the cross, by following the way of the cross, by starting with the Beatitudes and living out the Sermon on the Mount.

Because if you're walking out the way of the cross as Yeshua taught it, you don't have to find these opportunities. These opportunities will find you. Will you be willing to be useful salt when those opportunities arise?

And not every opportunity is to risk persecution, or at least your job, or at minimum the welfare of your entire family, by disobeying your government because you know they're just part of the beast system anyway. It could be a small opportunity that you miss every single day. That

one person who has been excluded from society for whatever reason, include them. Show the kindness and the mercy and the grace that Yeshua teaches us to. Live a cruciform life that whatever would hit us would reflect that, not the world. That's the calling. That's how we find these opportunities. We live out the way of the cross and they find us.

## Standing for Prayer

And so guys, if you would stand as we conclude services in worship. And guys, we have a prayer team. If you need prayer today for anything that is going on in your life, I invite you to take advantage of these prayer warriors that will stand beside you and lift you up. Huge asset that God has given to us and blessed us with.

And I don't know where you're at today, but I'm sure you're at a place where, maybe, you too are going through a time of intense weight, confusion and doubt like I have this past week. Maybe you're going through an opportunity or you're missing an opportunity to be salt into the world and God is pulling you towards it. You're just not sure you want to walk that way. No matter where you're at today, I invite you to come up for prayer and have someone pray with you and encourage you in that regard.

Alvina Malkinu, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this time. We thank you for this community of all sorts of people with all sorts of backgrounds, with all sorts of experiences that you have brought together to this place for one reason and one reason only, that we would worship you, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Father, I ask that your spirit, your Holy Spirit that you've promised us would be inside of us and that it would convict us of the things in our life that we need to change. But Father, also the things that we need to grab hold onto. We thank you, Father, again for this opportunity to come before you on the Sabbath day. In the name of King Yeshua, we pray. Amen.

If this message impacted you or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we invite you to take part in making sure the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach others. To make sure this happens, you can donate through our online giving portal at [foundinatruth.com](http://foundinatruth.com) slash give or by texting any amount to 704-275-0752. Don't forget to like and subscribe for new content every single week. And we thank you for your continued support. And we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom.

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