

TRUE STORY

JAMES CHOUNG

BIBLE  STUDY

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5 STUDIES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS



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SESSION ONE

A CRISIS OF FAITH

MATTHEW 5:13-16

“**WHAT GOOD IS CHRISTIANITY** if it makes people like that?” Anna said. “What good is any religion if it just makes them angry, critical, and narrow-minded?”

“Christianity’s just another screwed-up religion! Seriously, what has Christianity done for us—or the world for that matter? They’re just a bunch of hypocrites. That’s what I think! Are they good for anything?” At the word *good*, her hands hit the table with a thud that drew the glance of the other customers.

She glared at Caleb while wiping away tears, waiting for a reply. Long seconds ticked away. He exhaled hard and shrugged his shoulders, saying the only truthful thing he could at the time.

“I don’t know,” Caleb said. “I just don’t know.”

SESSION GOAL

Understand the need for a broader gospel.

READ

Prologue of *True Story*

 REFLECT 

- ✱ Think of something *great* that happened to you in the past month. What was it? Who did you tell about it?

- ✱ How do you think your friends who are not Christian would respond to the gospel? Why?

 STUDY 

READ MATTHEW 5:13-16.

¹³You 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.

¹⁴You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

“Various scholars have emphasized different uses of salt in antiquity, such as a preservative or an agent regularly added to manure; but the use of salt here is as a flavoring agent: ‘if salt has become tasteless’ (the Greek word can also mean ‘become foolish,’ so it may include a play on words).”*

1. What does it mean to be the “salt of the earth”?
2. What kind of “flavor” could Christians bring to the world?
3. How do irreligious people you interact with view Christians today?

4. In what ways have Christians become “tasteless”?

5. What does it mean to be the “light of the world”?

“Jewish tradition considered Israel (Is 42:6; 49:6)
and Jerusalem (as well as God and the law)
the light of the world.”[†]

6. If wicker oil lamps were common in Jesus’ day, what would happen if you put a light under a bowl? Why might we put our light “under a bowl” today?

7. In what ways can we let our light shine so that others will glorify God?

The phrase “light of the world” also appears in John 8:12 and 9:5, where Jesus applies it to himself.

8. What makes it difficult to let our light shine today?

RESPOND

* What kind of “flavor” do you feel led to bring to the world?

* How would you like to let your light shine before others?

PRAY

Ask God to help us keep our saltiness and brightness, particularly in our witness to the world.

*Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 57.

†Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 57.

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