

Serm. Series: "Christian Life-Skills for Every Age"—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—5/20/2001

Title: "Flick your Bic!"

Text: Matthew 5: 13-16

Introduction: *Illus.: 70's Concert goers witness—flick your Bic!*

Theme: Everyone wants to having a meaningful impact on their world. As believers in Jesus we can have a redeemed purposefulness and impact through our lives by constantly thinking in terms of being salt and light for Jesus

How to be a 'salty Christian'

- You can't give what you don't have
 1. *"You are salt for the earth. But if salt loses its taste, how will it be made salty again? verse 13*
 2. The surest way to lose your Christian "saltiness" is to stop letting Christ season you life with his life changing word
 3. **ILLUS.: Salt of the Earth**
 4. Christ will change your life through his word so that you can be a change agent for him in your world
- Seasoning your world around you
 1. Put yourself in situations **BY YOUR ACTIONS** where you will be asked **TO SPEAK UP FOR** your faith
 2. *"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." 1 Peter 3:15*

How to shine a little light on your world

- Always choose to walk in the light
 1. *Let your light shine in front of people. Then they will see the good that you do and praise your Father in heaven 16*
 2. Too many Christians want to be "007 Believers" (undercover agents)
 - a. **ILLUS.: THE PROBLEM WITH AMERICAN CHRISTIANS**
 - b. Covering up because of the past—we are not perfect people but forgiven people
 - c. Covering up because of fear-- *"Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 1 Peter 3: 13*
 3. Asking the simple question, "Am I walking in the light or the darkness?"
 - a. *"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:5-7*
- Practice Contagious Christianity
 1. An attitude and life-style that has been lit up by the Son
 - a. **ILLUS.: TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER**
 - b. Why wouldn't others want to hear and receive a witness from you about your life in Jesus, if they see its impact
 2. Characteristics of contagious Christian conduct
 - a. What a child of God does
 - *This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 1Jn 5:2*
 - **ILLUS.: THE POWER OF EXAMPLE**
 - Instead of trying to emulate the world— **IMITATE JESUS**
 - b. Done in faith and by faith in Jesus
 - *"And without faith it is impossible to please God." Hebrews 11:6*
 - Done with a knowledge of Jesus—knowing all he has done for us causes us to die to ourselves and live for him
 - Done out of a trust in Jesus—willing to do the impossible, servant tasks under his power and trust
 - Done from acceptance of Jesus as my Lord—not asking why but how far when given opportunities to love
 - c. Lined up with God's will
 - **ILLUS.: ALIGNING MY HP PRINTER**
 - Jesus -- *"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. John 4: 34*
 - Review and reflects on God's Ten Commandments not as a club but as a ruler (measurement of growth)
 - Grace-filled living rather than law-driven living will always attract the world to ask, "why do you do this?"
 - **QUOTE: SHOW AND TELL CHRISTIANS** Madeleine L'Engle
 - d. Undertaken and accomplished for God's glory
 - *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31*

Salt of the Earth

A man walked into a little mom-and-pop grocery store and asked, "Do you sell salt?" "Ha!" said Pop the proprietor. "Do we sell salt! Just look!" And Pop showed the customer one entire wall of shelves stocked with nothing but salt—Morton salt, iodized salt, kosher salt, sea salt, rock salt, garlic salt, seasoning salt, Epsom salts—every kind of salt imaginable. "Wow!" said the customer. "You think that's something?" said Pop with a wave of his hand. "That's nothing! Come look." And Pop led the customer to a back room filled with shelves and bins and cartons and barrels and boxes of salt. "Do we sell salt!" he said. "Unbelievable!" said the customer. "You think that's something?" said Pop. "Come! I'll show you salt!" And Pop led the customer down some steps into a huge basement, five times as large as the previous room, filled wall, floor, to ceiling, with every imaginable form and size and shape of salt—even huge ten-pound salt licks for the cow pasture. "Incredible!" said the customer. "You really do sell salt!" "No!" said Pop. "That's just the problem! We never sell salt! But that salt salesman—Hoo-boy! Does *he* sell salt!" Salt that stays on the shelf doesn't do any good at all.

The Problems with American Christians

The main problem with American Christians is not that they aren't where they should be but that they are not what they should be right where they are as doctors, housewives, lawyers, computer salesmen, or nurses.

Citation: Os Guinness

Talk about the Weather

I have a friend who radiates joy, not because his life is easy, but because he habitually recognizes God's presence in the midst of all human suffering, his own as well as others'. ... My friend's joy is contagious. The more I am with him, the more I catch glimpses of the sun shining through the clouds. Yes, I know there is a sun, even though the skies are covered with clouds. While my friend always spoke about the sun, I kept speaking about the clouds, until one day I realized that it was the sun that allowed me to see the clouds. Those who keep speaking about the sun while walking under a cloudy sky are messengers of hope, the true saints of our day.

Citation: Henri J. Nouwen

The Power of Example

A cross-country bus made a scheduled stop at a depot which was located on a corner with four different restaurants. The driver announced, "Folks, we'll be laid over for a lunch break for about 30 minutes. The busline has a strict policy never to recommend an establishment. However, if anyone wants me while we are here, 'I'll be at Tony's diner directly across the street. Most of the passengers joined him there for a meal.

Show and Tell Christians

Evangelism is not what we tell people, unless what we tell is totally consistent with who we are. It is who we are that is going to make the difference. If we do not truly enjoy our faith, nobody is going to catch the fire of enjoyment from us. If our lives are not totally centered on Christ, we will not be Christ-bearers for others, no matter how pious our words. *Citation:* Madeleine L'Engle

Matthew 5:13-16

"You are salt for the earth. But if salt loses its taste, how will it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled on by people. ¹⁴"You are light for the world. A city cannot be hidden when it is located on a hill. ¹⁵No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket. Instead, everyone who lights a lamp puts it on a lamp stand. Then its light shines on everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way let your light shine in front of people. Then they will see the good that you do and praise your Father in heaven.[GW]