Sermon on the Mount
Salt and Light – Matthew 5:13-16

Background

- Salt is good for many things; it is a preservative; seasoning; necessary for life; useful for many things
- Salt was very valuable, especially long ago; at times even more so than gold
- When Jesus says, "You are the salt of the earth," he is saying his disciples are to be salt for the world, seasoning the world with God's kingdom.
- When does salt lose its saltiness? When it becomes diluted, like with the cares of the world, or when we become drawn in by lesser gods (money, power, fame)
- Too much salt can also be bad (hypernatremia); being too salty can mean too focused on the self – look at me!
- We are not LIKE salt; "You ARE the salt of the earth" – already transformed and ready to "season" the world
- Parallel to salt, you are light – also necessary; powerful (sun); source of warmth; helps us to see clearly
- Like salt, light can be "diluted" – think of shade; In John 1:5, Jesus says the darkness tries to overcome light
- Like salt, too much light can be bad – blind, burn
- Light "enlightens" what is around it; light up the way
- In Matthew – Jesus says, "You are the light of the world"; In John he says "I am the light of the world"; disciples will become the light after Jesus is gone
- A city on a hill cannot be hid, but it can be defended – disciples are to become a place of refuge; don't hide the light under a basket – shine!
- Be salt and light not for your own glory but for the glory of God (5:16)

Reflection

- What can we do, both big and small acts, to "season" the world around us in a positive way? How can we "be light"?
- Have you ever been a "refuge" for someone? Have you received "refuge" from another?

Summary

In this "Beginners Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven," Jesus is asking his disciples to go out and make a difference in the world by being salt and light. Throughout his ministry, disciples can see what this means as Jesus feeds, heals, and teaches.