

YOU ARE THE SALT



MATTHEW 5:13-16 (NIV)

"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 by men.

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither 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.

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

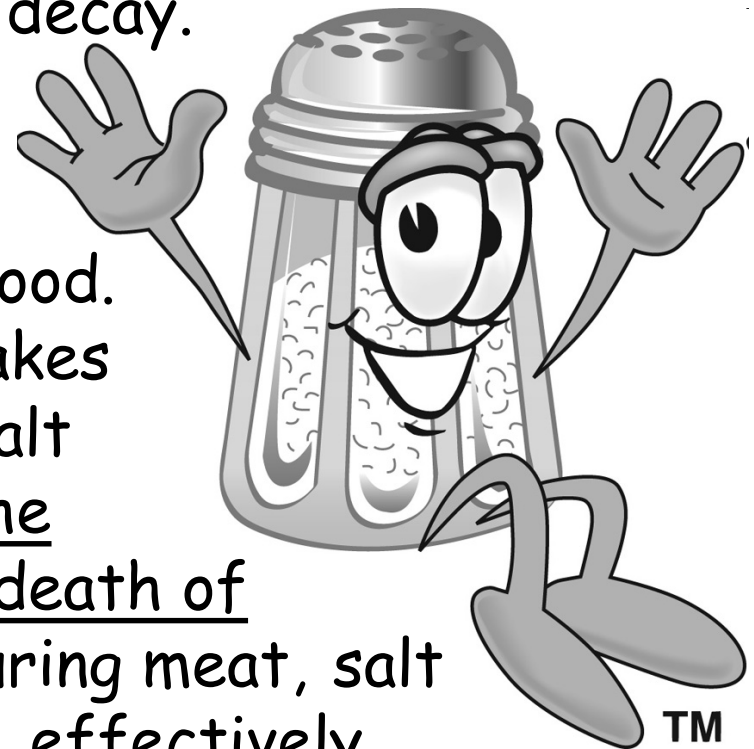
SALT & LIGHT



- ❑ Q: What is our purpose as Christians?
 - A: We are the Salt and Light of the earth.
- ❑ Salt has been and still is used for many purposes including being a seasoning, a preservative, a disinfectant and as a unit of exchange.

PRESERVATIVE

- ❑ Salt hinders decay and acts as a food preservative. In the days before fridges and deep-freezers, perishable food such as meat was salted to prevent decay.
- Salt has antibacterial properties, so it inhibits the growth of bacteria which spoil food. When the food that is salted makes contact with the bacteria, the salt absorbs the moisture through the cell's walls, which results in the death of the bacteria.¹ When used for curing meat, salt also slows the oxidation process, effectively preventing the meat from going rancid.²



¹ SOURCE: www.ehow.com

² SOURCE: Wikipedia: Curing (food preservation)

PRESERVATIVE

□ Application:

- Our world is full of decay and corruption because of sin. As Christians we must act as moral preservatives, preventing and hindering the spiritual decline and moral decay in the world.
- We should speak out against sin.
- Just our very presence should be a hindrance to sin and have a restraining effect on those around us.

**All that is needed for evil to triumph
– is for good men to do nothing**

PRESERVATIVE

- ❑ Salt is a deterrent to molds. Mold must have a moist environment to grow, so the salt's dehydrating properties inhibit this.¹
- ❑ Salt also is an effective deterrent to yeast. In fermentation processes, salt inhibits the yeast from continuing to grow and allows the fermentation time to be regulated.¹
- ❑ Application: Leaven or yeast always has a negative connotation in the Bible, and is used to represent evil, sin and false doctrine (See Ex 13:7, Matt 16:11-12, Luke 12:12, 1 Cor 5:1-8). So as salt, we should be a deterrent to evil, sin and false doctrine.



¹ SOURCE: www.ehow.com

CLEANSING AGENT

- ❑ Besides preservation and enhancing the taste of foods, salt is used in an diverse array of applications. For instance salt is used in the production of detergents, soaps and bath products.
- ❑ Salt is also an excellent non-toxic scouring agent, so you can use it in place of expensive abrasive cleaners.¹
- ❑ Application:
 - Our world is full of sin. Jesus said that sin makes a man unclean: "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'..." (Matt 15:19-20) As Christians we should be the cleansing agents in a morally filthy world.

¹ SOURCE: "Saving Money & Wasting Less" www.suite101.com

HEALING

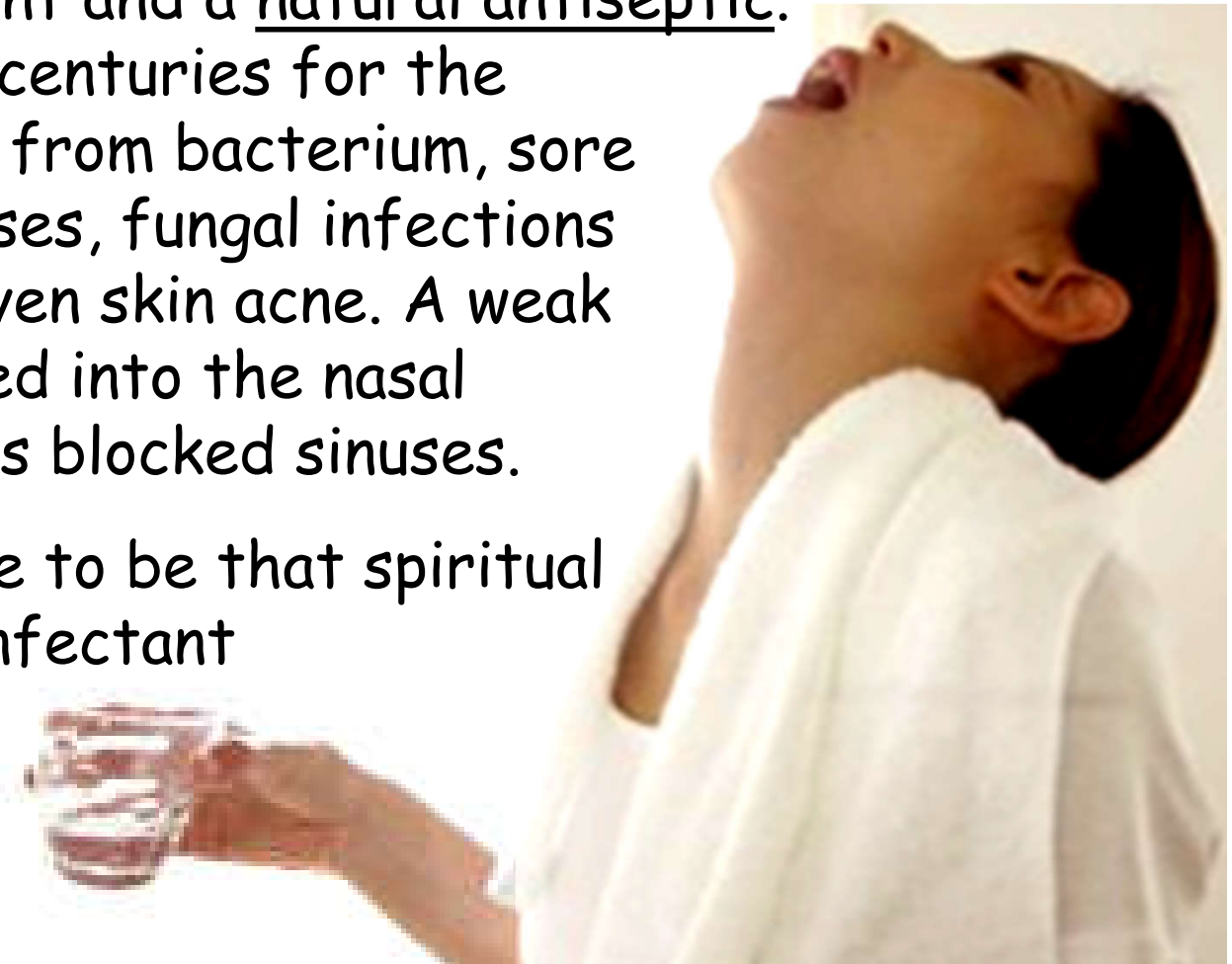
- ❑ The Dead Sea salts have been renowned for their therapeutic effects since antiquity, with the 1st Century historian Josephus writing of the health benefits. Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra was a well-known visitor to the Dead Sea and a great believer in the health benefits of the salt.



- These salts alleviate skin diseases such as psoriasis, dry skin and eczema, as well as joint disorders like osteoarthritis (degenerative arthritis) and tendinitis (inflammation of a tendon). They are also beneficial for relieving muscle tension.

HEALING

- ❑ Inhalation of steam from salt-water has anti-inflammatory effects which provide relief from respiratory symptoms.
- ❑ Salt is a disinfectant and a natural antiseptic. It's been used for centuries for the cleaning of wounds from bacterium, sore throats, gum diseases, fungal infections on your feet and even skin acne. A weak salt solution sprayed into the nasal passages also clears blocked sinuses.
- ❑ Application: We are to be that spiritual antiseptic and disinfectant bringing healing to a broken and sick world.



HEALING

- ❑ But if you've used salt in this way, you'll know that it burns when it disinfects. As true followers of Jesus we might at times be to the world like salt in an open wound. You can't be the salt of the earth without offending at least some people:
 - Luke 6:26 Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.
- ❑ The false prophets were liked because they only prophesied good things (albeit false) and never spoke out against sin. Jesus says that true prophets would have people "insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you" (Matt 5:11).

HEALING

- ❑ In order for a disinfectant to be effective, it has to come into physical contact with the wound or injury. We cannot be the salt of the world if we serve God in isolation. Jesus engaged sinful people so that he could bring healing to their lives.
- Matt 9:10-13 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

TASTE

- ❑ Job 6:6 Is tasteless food eaten without salt...
- Salt adds taste to the food we eat. There are specialized receptor cells on our taste buds that are only activated by salt; seasoning food with salt allows the flavours in the food to be tasted by those receptors.



TASTE

- ❑ Application 1: We don't eat salt by itself - we add it to food to bring out the flavour of the food. So too there should be something about you that brings more meaning into other people's lives.
 - 1 Cor 10:24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.
- ❑ Application 2: Our conversation should reflect the salt. We need to be gracious in our conversation:
 - Col 4:6 "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

TASTE

- ❑ Application 3: Salt makes food taste more interesting and exciting. As Christians we should not be boring but exciting and dynamic people.
- ❑ Application 4: Just a little salt penetrates and permeates the entire plate of food. Even a few Christians can permeate the flavour of Jesus and the gospel into our surrounding community and workplace.
 - Are we impacting our community? If we or our church weren't there, would the community be poorer or more spiritually dark? Do we make a difference?

CREATES THIRST

- ❑ Salt makes you thirsty. This is why bars and some restaurants serve salted peanuts, so that people will get thirsty and order more to drink.
- ❑ Jesus spoke of those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt 5:6).
- ❑ Application: As Christians we should create in the world a thirst for righteousness and the things of God.



PRECIOUS

- ❑ The Roman historian Pliny the Elder stated that, "In Rome... the soldier's pay was originally salt and the word salary derives from it..." ¹ Others contend that the word 'salary' comes from the Latin 'salārium' which was the sum given to Roman soldiers to buy salt. ²
- ❑ This gave rise to such expressions as "being worth one's salt" (i.e. worth your salary) although some say that the trade in ancient Greece involving exchange of salt for slaves gave rise to the expression. The Latin word for 'slave' is 'salvatus' meaning "bought in exchange for salt". If a slave wasn't considered good, they weren't "worth the salt" paid to purchase them.

¹ Plinius Naturalis Historia XXXI

² www.dictionary.reference.com

According to www.en.wiktionary.org/wiki/sale even the word 'sale' is derived from the Latin word for salt ('sal')

PRECIOUS

- ❑ In Jesus' day, salt was a precious commodity and had much more value than our table salt today. In past years men have even gone to war over salt. In Italy, Venice and Genoa fought a war over salt. The San Elizario Salt War was a conflict over control of immense salt lakes in West Texas. In the American Civil War the Confederacy and Union army clashed several times at Saltville Virginia in order to gain control over the saltworks, which were the last prominent source of salt for the eastern Confederate states.
- ❑ Used as money, shipped from coast to interior towns and cities and traded as a commodity, salt has even inspired the emergence of whole empires such as those in West Africa in the 1200s and 1300s. In some areas, such as Timbuktu, salt was even traded ounce for ounce with gold.¹

¹ www.ehow.com

PRECIOUS

- ❑ In the human body salt is also precious. If it's too low you'll get sick and if it's eliminated altogether you'll die.
- ❑ A study conducted in New York City found that those on low-salt diets had more than four times as many heart attacks as those on normal-sodium diets. ¹
- ❑ Application: As salt, followers of Jesus are extremely precious 'commodities' in this world. In Matt 13:45 Jesus referred to us as a "pearl of great price" which he deemed so valuable that he sold everything he had to purchase us. We need to be "worth our salt" for Jesus' sake.
 - 1 Cor 6:20 ... you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

¹ SOURCE: www.shirleys-wellness-cafe.com/salt.htm

COVENANT SIGN

- ❑ In the OT, salt was required on the burnt animal sacrifices:
 - Ezek 43:23-24 When you have finished purifying it, you are to offer a young bull and a ram from the flock, both without defect. You are to offer them before the LORD, and the priests are to sprinkle salt on them and sacrifice them as a burnt offering to the LORD.
- ❑ Salt was also a prerequisite in all the ceremonial grain offerings to God. It represented the fact that there was covenant between God and his people:
 - Lev 2:13 Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.

COVENANT SIGN

- ❑ Salt was also used to seal certain covenants.
 - Num 18:19 Whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the LORD I give to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD for both you and your offspring.
 - 2 Chron 13:5 Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?
- ❑ Application: Being salt also shows that we are God's New Covenant people.





LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ Jesus was the light of the world:
 - John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
 - John 12:46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.
 - John 1:9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.
- ❑ This applied when Jesus walked this earth.
 - John 9:5 "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ Now that Jesus is gone from the earth physically we are the light of the world.
 - Matt 5:14 "You are the light of the world"
- ❑ Jesus called us "sons of light" (John 12:36), "the people of the light" (Luke 16:8) and "children of light" (Eph 5:8).
 - 1 Thess 5:5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ With Jesus no longer present physically we are his ambassadors and representatives on earth.
 - 2 Cor 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.
 - Eph 6:19-20 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.
- ❑ An ambassador doesn't represent their own interests but that of their country. They have to speak and act carefully as representatives of a another nation while residing in a foreign country.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- Jesus has given us both a great compliment and a great responsibility because we need to be the light for an otherwise dark world.

- Phil 2:14-15 Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe...

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ Light overcomes darkness (John 1:4):
 - International Standard Version - And the light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.
 - God's Word Translation - The light shines in the dark, and the dark has never extinguished it.
 - Bible in Basic English - And the light goes on shining in the dark; it is not overcome by the dark.
 - Weymouth New Testament - The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it.
 - World English Bible - The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ Light exposes things that are otherwise unseen in the dark e.g. lift a rock and watch the spiders and bugs scatter when they see the light.
 - Eph 5:13-14 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible.
- ❑ Crime is reduced in well-lit neighbourhoods. As the light of the world, we should be exposing darkness and the evil in the world.
 - Eph 5:11-12 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ We need to be the “whistle-blowers” for the evil in the world.
- Isa 1:13-17 Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations - I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ Again, being the light of the world and exposing what is hidden in the darkness will not make you popular - because the world loves darkness.
- John 3:19-21 "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ Light gives people a sense of direction
 - John 12:35 ... "The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going."
- ❑ We should be giving guidance and direction to the lost.
- ❑ "... that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."
- ❑ The reason we let our light shine by doing good works is to bring glory to God, not ourselves.
 - 1 Pet 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- ❑ How do children of the light live?
 - Eph 5:8-10, 15-20 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord... Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- Rom 13:12-14 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

WORTHLESS SALT

- ❑ Matt 5:13 "... 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 by men."
- ❑ Salt is worthless if it has lost its qualities. If it no longer preserves or adds flavour, it is fit only to be cast out and trodden underfoot.
- ❑ The salt that has "lost its taste" or "become insipid" may refer to a type of salt common in the Dead Sea area that is contaminated with gypsum and other minerals. It has a flat taste and is ineffective as a preservative. Such mineral salts were useful for little more than keeping footpaths free of vegetation. That may be why Jesus said that it is good for nothing but to be "trampled underfoot."¹

¹ "Salt in the Bible" www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Salt_in_the_Bible

WORTHLESS SALT

- ❑ The Message version : "Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be the salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste Godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage."
- ❑ Application: Jesus said that our purpose is to be the salt of the world. If we have lost our purpose we are worthless. If we no longer impact the world or our immediate community we are worthless.

WORTHLESS SALT

- ❑ You must buy the right type of salt to use it for preserving foods. Pickling salt and kosher salt, which are both free of chemicals and additives, are the best choices. Salt must be pure in order to be a good preservative, which is why pickling salt and kosher salts are sold separately as distinct entities. Table salt contains additives such as iodine not found in other more natural salts. ¹
- ❑ Application: We need to be pure and holy (set apart) if we are to be effective moral preservatives in the world.

¹ www.ehow.com

WORTHLESS SALT

- Eph 5:3-7 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person - such a man is an idolater - has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

USELESS LIGHT

- ❑ Are you fulfilling your purpose? If those who are supposed to be the salt of the earth cease to impact our world, they are fit only to be thrown out.
 - We should not ask, "What is wrong with the world?" for that diagnosis has already been given. Rather, we should ask, "What has happened to the salt and light?" (John Stott)
- ❑ "Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl..."
 - Just as there is worthless salt so there is useless light. The purpose of light is to illuminate and expose what is hidden in the darkness. If the light source is hidden under a bowl, it is no longer useful.

USELESS LIGHT

- ❑ Jesus didn't just call us 'salt' - he said we are the 'salt of the earth'. We are not just called light - but the 'light of the world'.
- ❑ This again reminds us that the life Jesus calls us to is not to be lived in isolation. There have been those in the past who thought that the inner qualities Jesus wants, can be developed or displayed in isolation from the world - by living in a cave or a monastery. In reality Jesus wants us to live out these qualities before the world.
- ❑ Jesus said that we must "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds..."

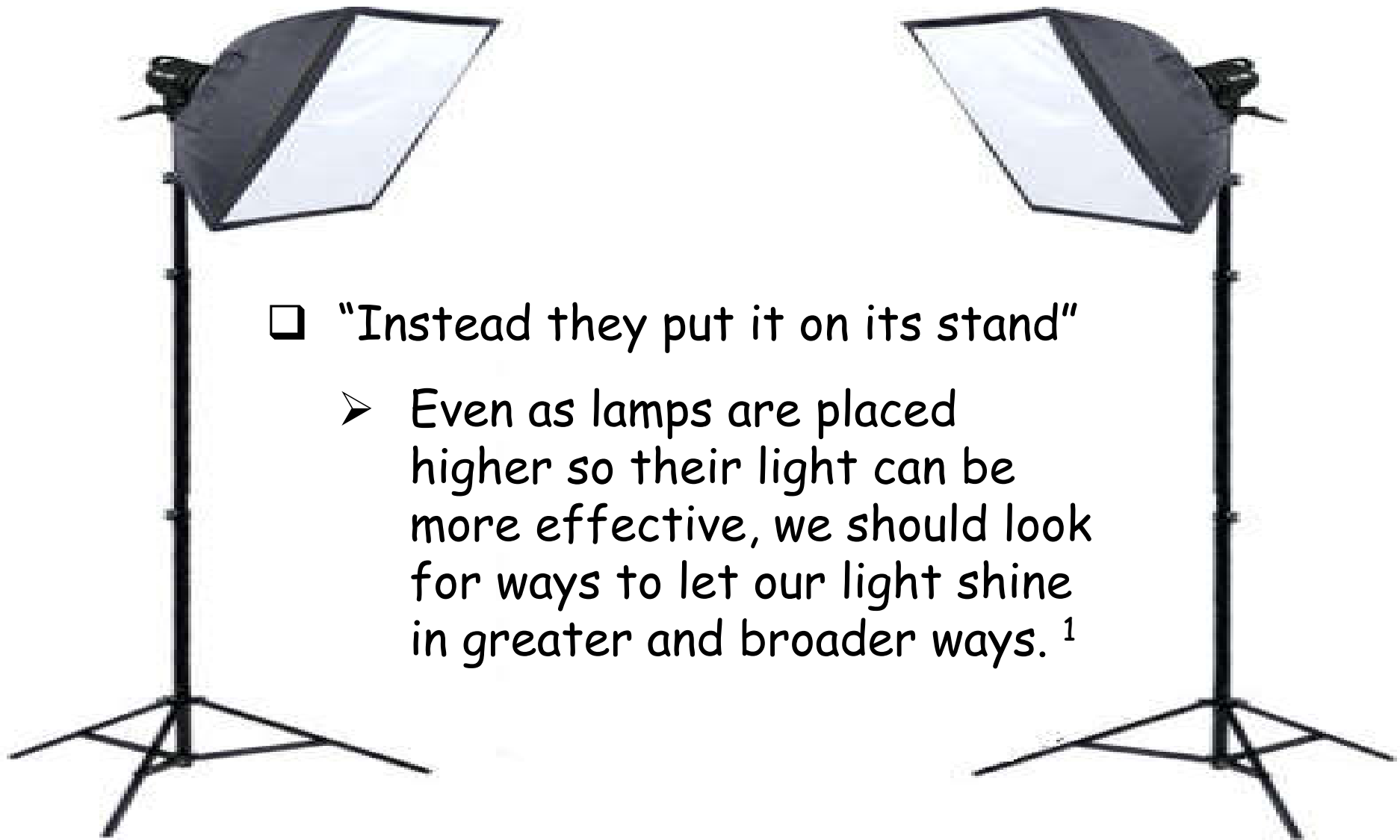
USELESS LIGHT

- ❑ "A city on a hill cannot be hidden."
- ❑ For the purpose of strong defense, ancient cities were built on hills. Naturally such cities could be seen from far.
- ❑ Just as a city on a hill cannot be hidden, it goes against the very nature and purpose of light for it to be hidden. The city was not built on the hill to be hidden. It was built there to offer a strong defense against the enemy.
- ❑ In the same way we must shine our light so that all can see and so that we can offer a visible, defensible barrier to ungodliness.

USELESS LIGHT

- ❑ What is your testimony like? If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you or would the case be thrown out of court due to lack of evidence?
- ❑ Some people are "secret Christians". And some have kept the secret so well that even God doesn't know about it.
- ❑ If a Christian hides their light, they have lost their very purpose and become as useful as a light under a bowl.
 - Mark 8:38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

EFFECTIVE LIGHT



- “Instead they put it on its stand”
 - Even as lamps are placed higher so their light can be more effective, we should look for ways to let our light shine in greater and broader ways. ¹

¹ David Guzik <http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries>

DISTINCTION

- ❑ A key thought in both the pictures of salt and light is distinction. Salt is needed because the world is rotting and decaying and if our Christianity is also rotting and decaying, it won't be any good. Light is needed because the world is in darkness, and if our Christianity imitates the darkness, we have nothing to show the world. ¹
- ❑ Are we different from the world? Do we laugh at the same jokes, listen to the same music, read the same books, watch the same movies, have the same standards?

¹ Ibid

DISTINCTION

- ❑ In Jesus' prayer to his Father he said that his disciples were "in the world", but "not of the world."
 - "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world" (John 17:11)
 - I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. (John 17:14)
- ❑ You can have the ship in the sea, but you have a problem if the sea is in the ship.
- ❑ To be effective salt and light we need to be different from the world we seek to influence. We cannot change the world for God by becoming just like the world.

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